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HOW BIVOCATIONAL PASTORS UNDERSTAND THE THEOLOGY OF WORK

By

GARY D. ERICKSON

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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Abstract

The United Pentecostal Church International has approximately four thousand and two hundred churches in North America. An informal study done by the researcher determined that approximately sixty percent are bivocational. That means over two thousand and five hundred pastors are serving their churches and also working in a secular career. The literature reviewed indicates that these numbers are consistent with other denominations. In spite of these large numbers of bivocational pastors, there is little being done to help them express their concerns, share their resources, connect with other ministers, get informed, and find inspiration.

Bivocational pastors face a number of challenges: time restraints, divided focus, isolation from other ministers, waning inspiration, insufficient daily devotional life, and inability to do some pastoral duties or attend denominational meetings. Their roles bring blessings as well: they can relate to unchurched people, improve their incomes, develop new skills, learn time management, provide a great example of the work ethic to their congregation, and are motivated to delegate responsibilities and grow the abilities of others.

The following research questions guided the qualitative research: How do bivocational pastors describe their theology of work? How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their secular work on their ministry work? How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their ministry work on their secular work? How do bivocational pastors describe their ministry? This study employed a qualitative design of a case study using a semi-structured interview protocol with seven participants who are bivocational pastors. The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method.

The findings of the study were that bivocational pastors in the UPCI do not have a well-developed theology of work. These bivocational pastors view work primarily as a means to an end. They have not thought deeply about the theology of work.

This study is significant for bivocational pastors, ministers, and church leaders who are responsible for guiding the church, especially in areas of work and careers. The study will also benefit Christian laypeople in that they can embrace their vocations as worship.

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I would like to thank my wife, Judy, for her love, support, and encouragement in the undertaking of this study. One of the chief factors for my completion of this dissertation was her willing sacrifice on my behalf.

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Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction to Work and Meaning

Work and vocation consume a huge slice of people's lives. If a Christian believer is ambivalent about what the Bible says about work and vocation, it can leave them confused about their role in life, cause them to lack personal fulfillment, and adversely affect their Christian commitment. This is even truer for a modern bivocational pastor. He lives and works in a dual-role world of work and ministry. If he lacks clear understanding of how his roles contribute to his relationship with God and service to others, it can be frustrating.

Lester DeKoster, in his book *Work: The Meaning of Your Life,* says, "Work is the form in which we make ourselves useful to others. . . . That is why work gives meaning to life. . . . through work that serves others, we also serve God."[1] DeKoster believes what a person does with their time and talents gives life meaning, purpose, and personal dignity. Through work people find significance. This engagement of time and talents is called "vocation," "career," "occupation," "calling," and other terms that may suit a person's concept of life's work. John Bernbaum and Simon Steer, in their book *Why*

[1] Lester DeKoster, *Work: The Meaning of Your Life* (Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, Inc., 1982), 1-2.

Work? Careers and Employment in Biblical Perspective, say, "Occupation has become a primary criterion for assessing personal worth—we are what we do." [2] They go on to warn that in Western culture occupation has become so central to life it is idolatrous for many. The following observation makes their point:

> Consider the sacrifices we lay at the feet of this modern-day idol: the sacrifice of money spent on college tuition fees; of time (measured in years) given to medical school, law school, or other forms of training; of energy expended in study preparation, often at hours when most civilized people are quite unconscious.[3]

Bernbaum and Steer point out convincingly that westerners put enormous time and effort into their occupation. The amount of career preparation indicates the great value put on our daily work.

Biblical View of Work

A. C. McGiffert, in his book *Protestant Thought Before Kant,* agrees with Bernbaum and Steer and places even more emphasis on the biblical significance of work with these words: "The Bible sees work as woven into the very structure of life. Far from being an extra or a by-product, it exists at the core of the God-world relationship."[4] These Christian authors place great biblical importance on work as a primary source of meaning and significance. It is through meaning in work that individuals find significant purpose in life. Work gives people significance as players in their world and a place of belonging.

The significance of work is found early in the drama of humanity. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,

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[2] John A. Bernbaum and Simon M. Steer, *Why Work? Careers and Employment in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 1.

[3] Ibid., 1.

[4] A. C. McGiffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007), 33.

and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'"[5] Genesis 2:15 says, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." The responsibility to "dress," "keep," "subdue," and "have dominion" was given to Adam and Eve before the Fall. This indicates that from the beginning God made man and woman for work. This job description comes from a God who is himself a worker. As creatures created in God's image, human beings are workers as well.

The Fall brought a curse not only on the physical world, but to the nature of work as well. Work was there before and continued after the Fall; but it changed. In a fallen world, work includes toil, natural impediments, and human limitation. This makes work bittersweet. Bernbaum and Steer put it in these words:

> As a result of the fall, work is no longer the pure joy that God intended it to be. The blessing became a burden and the joy became toil. This profound change is described in Genesis 3:16-19, a passage which emphasizes that the labor of childbirth will be fraught with pain, as will other types of physical labor.[6]

The Fall brought sweeping changes in the world in many negative ways. Life was not replaced with something different, but things continued in an altered state. Work was one of those aspects of life that continued, but it was tainted by the bitterness of toil and boredom.

Work is a primary medium for self-fulfillment, personal development, connection with others, provision for sustenance, and, for the Christian worker, a means of

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[5] Genesis 1:28.

[6] Bernbaum and Steer, 3.

witnessing and expressing worship. Work, for believers, is part of God's redemptive mission in the world for the whole of life.

Edward Harris, in his book *God and Our Daily Work,* agrees with the previous authors about the centrality of work. He points out the importance of work in these words: "Work is not something peripheral to human life but is part of God's designed purpose for man. Labor is not some appendage to man's existence nor is it some man-appointed duty. It is of the very substance of human life as God intends it to be."[7]

Harris continues this line of thought by emphasizing the church's role in giving work meaning:

> We recognize and understand that to live is to labor, so that one searching and realistic description of man is *Homo faber*, Man the worker. It is, then, abundantly clear that unless our religion can address itself to our work with powerful and illuminating insights, our religion will be out of touch with a large and important part of our life and will be hard put to escape the damaging charge of irrelevancy.[8]

Harris clarifies the important role the church plays in giving work meaning and purpose. He warns that if the church is silent on such an important issue, the church may become irrelevant to many workers.

DeKoster answers Harris's challenge by addressing two primary aspects of biblical work that give it meaning: "(1) God himself chooses to be served through work that serves others, and therefore molds working into culture to provide workers with ever

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[7] Edward G. Harris, *God and Our Daily Work* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), 16-17.

[8] Ibid., 9.

better means of service; and (2) God has so made us that through working we actually sculpt the kind of selves we each are becoming, in time and for eternity."[9]

The Pseudo-Dichotomy: Spirituality and Work

Sherman and Hendricks describe a false separation between the spiritual and the physical as a "two-story view of work." They explain: "By two-story, I mean a system that sets up a dichotomy or hierarchy among things. Things are separated into two categories, one of which is inherently superior."[10] Some believe that physical work is something people do out of necessity and not for some higher cause. Darrell Cosden, in his book *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, puts it this way: "For so many of us in the west, and throughout the world, work is something we do, and often endure, simply to keep life and limb together. Most of us put up with the difficult realities of our daily work because we have to."[11] A number of writers point out that for some, work is only the means to make money to pay our bills. Work, for them, is at the bottom of the eternal-temporal hierarchy. Some think work is a distraction from the more spiritual things of life. This thinking leads people to believe that to be truly productive one must engage in spiritual things and avoid wasting time doing chores and tending to occupational duties. This view assumes that the body and the physical world are not sacred. Some ministers and missionaries encourage people to forsake the temporal world and give their lives to what some call "real ministry."

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[9] DeKoster, 17.

[10] Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, *Your Work Matters to God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987), 47.

[11] Darrell Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006), 4.

David Westcott, in his book *Work Well: Live Well,* says frankly that "the separation of work from worship is totally unjustified."[12] God has made humanity for his pleasure.[13] He wants a relationship with mankind—not in just the church-going aspect, but in life's totality. His promise to the Hebrews is assuring:

> I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright.[14]

God abides in the human heart and believers abide in God. Paul used this analogy: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."[15] R. Paul Stevens, in his book *The Other Six Days,* says, "The practice of the presence of God is not the exclusive vocation of professional ministers and cloistered monks. Nor is it a sacred interlude but woven into the warp and woof of everyday life. It is part of our calling."[16]

The New Testament makes it clear—there are diverse ministries in the church. Each person is a distinct member of the body of Christ having particular areas of ministry.[17] Paul said, "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with

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[12] David Westcott, *Work Well: Live Well* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1996), 31.

[13] Psalm 149:4.

[14] Leviticus 26:11-13, NKJV.

[15] I Corinthians 6:19-20. (See also I Corinthians 3:16-19; Revelation 21:3.)

[16] R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1999), 92.

[17] I Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:1-8; Ephesians 4:11.

God."[18] Paul exhorted further that everyone has a place of calling: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."[19] By using one's talents and abilities they are pleasing God. Striving for perfection in one's work is one way believers can practice good stewardship. "A worker who produces poor work is not a good steward, and in turn, he is not a good worshiper. He is failing to give glory to the ultimate Creator. All labor, including physical labor, is honorable."[20]

Vocation, Work, and Ministry

The work a person engages in may not be just a personal choice. R. Paul Stevens points out that the term "vocation" has an interesting meaning.

> The Christian doctrine of vocation—so central to the theology of the whole people of God—starts with being called to *Someone* before we are called to *something*. And it is not something we choose, like a career. We are chosen. The Latin roots of the word "vocation," *vocatio* and *voco*, mean simply to be called or to have a calling. We might do well to eliminate the word "vocation" for a while and substitute "calling," which invites the question, "*Who* called?"[21]

Stevens explains that the term "call" has embedded in it the need for a "caller." This makes a response to a calling a fulfillment of God's desires for one's life. Stevens emphasizes the strong connection between "call" and "vocation," and how a "career" would be a sequential step in our work. According to him, there is a divine propensity toward work which dignifies all work that is a response to a divine "calling."

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[18] I Corinthians 7:24.

[19] I Corinthians 12:18.

[20] Gary D. Erickson, *Pentecostal Worship: A Biblical and Practical Approach* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 2001), 220.

[21] R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days,* 72.

Stevens presents a biblical doctrine of vocation by suggesting that the whole of a person's life includes three vocations: "personal," "Christian," and "human." He states that the alternative to not having a theology of vocation might result in the following:

> Without any theology of vocation we lapse into debilitating alternatives: fatalism (doing what is required by the "forces" and the "powers"); luck (which denies purposefulness in life and reduces our life to a bundle of accidents); karma (which ties performance to future rewards); nihilism (which denies that there is any good end to which the travail of history might lead); and, the most common alternative today, self-actualization (in which we invent the meaning and purpose of our lives, making us magicians). In contrast the biblical doctrine of vocation proposes that the whole of our lives finds meaning in relation to the sweet summons of a good God.[22]

According to Stevens, when an individual embraces a vocation, they honor the sovereignty of God by answering a divine call. He points out a number of bad theological results from a poor understanding of vocation. Not recognizing God's role in work can lead to an unhappy career and theological pitfalls.

The Bivocational Pastor

It is from a milieu of callings, giftings, financial needs, ministry opportunities, spiritual aspirations, and a host of other influences that the bivocational pastor emerges. These dual-role ministry workers are not an obscure few. Here is one evangelical denomination's estimate: "It is estimated that even in our existing Southern Baptist churches, 60-65% are being served by bivocational pastors."[23] George Barna's research determined a smaller percentage among all Protestant pastors. He says that twelve

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Steve Nerger, *Bivocational Church Planters* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2008), 27.

percent are bivocational.[24] John Elliott reports, "Fifteen percent of all Episcopal priests nationally are self-supporting."[25] Luther Dorr saw a bivocational trend back in 1988 due to contemporary needs: "Bivocationalism has become an emphasis today for at least three reasons. These reasons are economic constraints, evangelism needs, and a personal performance/call fulfillment."[26] Ronald Brushwyler also determined from his bivocational research, that bivocationalism among pastors will increase in the future:

> Church leaders anticipate that a greater percentage of clergy in the future will be bivocational (also called tentmakers, shared-time ministers, or worker-priests). Bi-vocational clergy normally need to supplement part-time professional ministry with a second job, either in another form of professional ministry or in secular employment. Some intentionally choose to be bi-vocational, others are forced to take a second job in order to survive financially or because they are unable to secure a full-time call.[27]

This prediction was made in 1992. This prognostication seems to be coming to pass. The *2011 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* reports a continuing decline in membership of virtually all mainline denominations.[28] If these trends continue, churches will become static or decline in membership. In addition, the economy has suffered a severe setback due to the housing bubble burst in 2008. According to *Forbes* magazine, the younger generation will have a lower standard of living than their

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[24] George Barna, *Today's Pastors* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 39.

[25] John Y. Elliott, *Our Pastor Has an Outside Job* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1980), 19.

[26] Luther Dorr, *The Bivocational Pastor* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 28.

[27] L. Ronald Brushwyler, "Bi-vocational Pastors: A Research Report" (Westchester, IL: The Midwest Ministry Development Service, 1992), 3.

[28] Eileen Lindner, ed., "Trends Continue in Church Membership Growth or Decline, Reports *2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches*." http://www.ncccusa.org/news/110210yearbook2011 (accessed Oct. 15, 2013).

parents.[29] These trends indicate the bivocational pastor may become a more frequent arrangement due to declining church finances.

These high-energy and well-organized leaders are an amazing group. The Southern Baptists call them "Iron Men."[30] Studies have shown that many bivocational pastors are happy with their arrangement. Brushwyler describes his research in a paper titled, "Bi-Vocational Pastors: A Research Report":

> We concentrated our study on 106 Midwestern bi-vocational pastors in four mainline denominations [37 Presbyterian Church, USA; 25 American Baptist Churches, USA; 19 United Church of Christ; 9 Episcopal Church; 8 Christian Church (Disciples); 8 other]. We obtained our sample from names submitted to us by denominational executives.[31]

In this study, a surprising number of bivocational pastors were happy in their dual roles. This information contradicts the notion that all bivocational pastors are longing to be full-time pastors. The following results were reported concerning bivocational pastors' satisfaction:

> Each bi-vocational pastor who participated in the study was asked to rate his or her level of satisfaction on a six-point scale, with 1 being very low satisfaction and 6 being very high satisfaction. The results were as follows:
> 6 = 26% 3 = 10%
> 5 = 40% 2 = 4%
> 4 = 18% 1 = 2%[32]

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[29] Laura Shin, "Gen X and Late Boomers May Have Lower Standard Of Living In Retirement, Study Says," *Forbes*, 5/16/13. www.forbes.com (accessed Oct. 15, 2013).

[30] Joe Conway, "Bivocational Pastors: Iron Men of the SBC" North American Missions Board, http://www.namb.net, 2012, (accessed Sept. 12, 2013).

[31] Brushwyler, 3.

[32] Ibid., 8.

As you can see, instead of finding these dual-role pastors unhappy and dissatisfied with their responsibilities, this study shows a different story. In his book *Lectures on the History of Preaching,* John Broadus colorfully paraphrases John Chrysostom about a contemporary bivocational church planter:

> One might see these godly bivocational church planters working daily on a farm, driving a wrecker, working as a lawyer, or lending at a bank. Yet at another time, you would see them fashioning the Word of God so as to clean up the sins of men's souls. These bivocational church planters are not ashamed of hard work but of idleness. They are good and useful men and these godly preachers of the good news have thrived in every period, country, and persuasion in which Christianity was making any real and rapid progress.[33]

Chrysostom and modern-day Broadus describe many contemporary bivocational pastors at work. They move between their dual career settings with skill and determination.

Even though many bivocational pastors are happy, Luther Dorr states that everyone is not pleased with the bivocational pastoral arrangement. He says,

> Some people have objected to bivocationalism, saying that preachers should not serve the Lord and work at a secular job. Scripture has often been quoted to support this objection. One such verse is Matthew 6:24, where Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The reasoning follows that a "full-time minister of God" can't serve a church and work for money at a secular job.[34]

Dorr does not agree with this idea. He goes on to explain that serving God should not be reserved only for those who work for the church—many forms of work can be serving God. Paul defends supporting the ministry financially in I Corinthians 9:7-14. In verse twelve he also supports the minister's right to work if he chooses.

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[33] John Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching*, Homilies on the Statutes, vol. XIX (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1879), 50–51.

[34] Dorr, 53.

Biblical Bivocationalism

Bivocational ministry is not something new. It has strong biblical precedence. Stevens offers a surprising analysis of bivocationalism: "The tent-making model—in which a person would have two areas in which to serve God, the workplace and the church—was the form of church leadership that dominated the first three centuries of the church's history . . ."[35] Having two careers can have its advantages. Stevens says,

> The Puritan William Perkins once said that every person needs two strings to his or her bow, referring to the need of a back-up, replacement string in a set of bow-and-arrows. In what way would having a second capacity for daily work be a sign of lacking faith, and in what way could it be an expression of genuine faith? Is it practical in today's world? If not, why?[36]

Perkins's emphatic support of bivocationalism points to the practical advantages of having two areas of daily work. Having a career safety net can be a great comfort when dealing with the whims of parishioners.

Many church planters are bivocational. The Southern Baptists report the following concerning bivocational church planters:

> It is found as early as the Old Testament. It is as biblical as the New Testament. It is as current as the 21st century. The work of the bivocational church planting pastor has been around for quite a while. Nearly one-third of Southern Baptist new church plants are started each year with bivocational servants of God. In every area of our country, these missionaries, planters, and evangelists work a regular job outside of the local church. After a day of work, they attend to and care for the needs of growing and launching a new church.[37]

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[35] R. Paul Stevens, *Work Matters: Lessons from Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 147.

[36] R. Paul Stevens, *Work Matters*, 153.

[37] Nerger, 23.

Bivocational church planters find opportunities to witness in the workplace. Pastoral bivocationalism can directly or indirectly contribute to making the world a better place. Work can be a service rendered to God and to others. Jerram Barrs, in his book *The Heart of Evangelism,* says, "The front lines of evangelism in any moment of history will be, first the family then the workplace. For most adult believers (unless our immediate family members are non-Christians), the context in which we are most likely to meet unbelievers is our place of employment."[38]

Barrs says the workplace is an excellent place to exercise diligence and practice good work habits. Believers are encouraged by Paul to give their best: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."[39] Being a good worker fulfills the agreement between employee and employer. It is an honest exchange of work for pay.

Bivocational Challenges

Bivocational pastorship has its challenges. Gary Farley and Luther Dorr call attention to an Eastern Tennessee survey of one hundred bivocational ministers. The following liabilities were reported:

> (1) discrimination by denominational leaders; (2) personal weaknesses seen by fellow workers in the secular job which hurt their testimony; (3) an independence which tempts them to run away and not deal with church problems; (4) falling into a rut in ways of doing things; (5) lack of time to serve the church as needed;

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[38] Jerram Barrs, *The Heart of Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 59.

[39] Colossians 3:23-25.

> (6) no time for fellowship with other ministers; (7) shifting from the secular role to the church role.[40]

This survey provides evidence that bivocational pastors have their own challenges that need addressing. The question should be asked, "Could the church do more to help and encourage them?"

Dennis Bickers has been a bivocational pastor several years and has written extensively about the subject. He adds to the list by saying that envy can be a problem as well. "A bivocational pastor is sometimes able to enjoy a higher standard of living than a fully supported pastor."[41] A small church pastor may suffer from a lack of adequate income and envy the bivocational pastor's financial comforts.

Problem Statement

Research indicates many bivocational pastors carry their dual responsibilities gladly and actually enjoy the challenge. They find great fulfillment in both careers and have no plans to change their multiple roles. Others may find the challenges enormously difficult and long for the time when they can focus on just one career. In either case, the challenges are real and can be overwhelming in the secular workplace and the church. The following challenges may face bivocational pastors: Do they question the time spent in secular work as wasted time and not profitable for the kingdom of God? Does a secular career pare away their time for church growth, career growth, maturity development, and ministerial care needs? Are they able to attend ministerial conferences, social events, conventions, and educational opportunities? Do they deal with self-esteem issues due to

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[40] Gary Farley, "The Bi-vocational Minister," *Search*, Summer 1977, 60, quoted by Dorr, 80.

[41] Dennis W. Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 40.

the lack of perceived ministerial achievement? Do they long to focus on one primary skill set instead of being divided into many directions of pursuit? Do they find it difficult to meet the ministerial demands of their congregation (i.e., funerals, visitation, counseling, sermon preparation, plant management, civic involvement, and so forth)? Do they find it difficult to achieve advancement in their secular career due to possibility of increased workload and the distraction of the church needs?

The dual responsibility of church and secular career may have advantages as well. The following questions need to be answered: Can bivocational pastors relate to the challenges of the workers in their congregations better than the full-time pastor? Do they have opportunity to develop a strong work ethic due to the workload they carry? Do they have opportunity to be a witness in the workplace due to their close contact with unchurched people? Do they have opportunity to develop talents, abilities, discipline, and time management skills as they cope with multiple tasks? Do they avoid burdening the church financially, allowing funds to do other church things? Are they able to adequately provide for their families and avoid poverty?

It is important that bivocational pastors have a biblical understanding of their roles in ministry and in the workplace. Do they believe their secular work has spiritual value? Do they find equal fulfillment in their dual roles? Do they believe their secular work has eternal significance?

Purpose Statement

A high percentage of pastors are bivocational. There are indicators that the percentage could grow in the future. These dual-role pastors face special challenges and opportunities that need to be identified in a postmodern culture. Theological ambivalence

concerning the biblical nature and purpose of work needs to be evaluated for the benefit of those in the pulpit and the pew. If a bivocational pastor has a poor theology of work, could it lead to bad decisions, poor effectiveness, confusion, diminished morale, and a lack of personal fulfillment?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the qualitative research:

(1) How do bivocational pastors describe their theology of work?

(2) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their secular work on their ministry work?

(3) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of the ministry work on their secular work?

(4) How do bivocational pastors describe their ministry?

Significance of Study

As mentioned above, the bivocational pastor comprises a large percentage of pastors today. This study will provide a rich resource for bivocational pastors, their congregation, and their denomination for effectively navigating the challenges and embracing the advantages of pastoral ministry.

Definition of Terms

Avocation—something a person does in addition to a principal occupation, especially for pleasure; hobby.

Bivocational—this term is used synonymously with the term commonly referred to in the Christian community as “tentmakers.” It includes all those who hold a recognized primary leadership position within the church—pastor, assistant pastor, or some other

primary leadership role—who subsidize their income through work in some other trade or profession. Bivocational does not imply a hierarchy of vocations or a rigid separation of vocations. This definition does not deny that for the believer the only true vocation is to live as a dedicated Christian.

Calling—this term indicates that *Someone* is doing the calling and that is God.

Career—a venue of work that provides the primary source of income.

Full Time—holding a position that requires at least a forty-hour workweek.

Gifting—God-given talents and abilities.

Marketplace—this term refers to the secular world (non-church world) of work.

Occupation—a venue of work that brings the worker a sizable percentage of income.

Tentmaker—a bivocational pastor. This term comes from Paul's bivocational ministry as a tentmaker.

Vocation—from the Christian perspective, it is the same as a "calling." Vocation fulfills the call. A calling precedes a vocation.

Work—exertion or effort directed to produce or accomplish something. "Work is the form in which we make ourselves useful to others."[42]

[42] DeKoster, 1.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to discover how bivocational pastors understand the theology of work and how it is experienced in their dual-role responsibilities. An array of literature was consulted and is arranged broadly in the following sections: (1) Bivocationalism Biblically and Theologically, (2) Bivocationalism Historically, and (3) Bivocationalism Today and Tomorrow.

Bivocationalism Biblically and Theologically

Since this paper deals with vocation, work, and ministry in the local church, a biblical evaluation of these topics will be considered at the beginning. The biblical view of work, vocation, and ministry is different from other myths of origins. The Bible opens with a grandiose description of God at work. God is not in conflict. He is not at war with other deities. He is a working God—creating and designing the universe for his pleasure. God is depicted as designing the cosmos with joy and amazing creativity. He is even described structuring his work to a seven-day workweek. Timothy Keller writes about the theology of vocation in his book *Every Good Endeavor.* He integrates the Christian life with daily work in an easy-to-read fashion. He points out the following about God as a worker:

> The creation narrative in the book of Genesis is unique among ancient accounts of origins. Many cultures had stories that depicted the beginning of the world and human history as the result of a struggle between warring cosmic forces. . . . Creation, then, is not the aftermath of a battle but the plan of a craftsman. God

> made the world not as a warrior digs a trench but as an artist makes a masterpiece.[43]

Keller points out that God included work in Paradise. That is an outstanding concept and is the exception among myths of origins. People normally think of work as something negative (i.e., as part of the curse). Nevertheless, God is not only a worker in Creation, but Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[44]

Work and Meaning

DeKoster elaborates colorfully on the vital importance of work toward forming a person's identity and a tool for personal expression.

> Work is Everyman's artistry, a kind of poetry of the world, for through it is woven the delicate and balanced rhythmic structure of culture and civilization. Work is Everyman as artists. For through our work each of us not only fashions goods and services pleasing to another, but each in the same process sculpts himself, or herself, into ultimate destiny we are really seeking. Work makes an artist's studio out of shop, kitchen, office, whatever . . .[45]

This expression portrays everyday work on a high level of importance. According to DeKoster, work can be a personal expression of a person's God-given talents and abilities for others to see and enjoy.

Darrell Cosden writes comprehensively about the theology of work in his book *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation*. Below is his summation of the essence of work that agrees with DeKoster's estimation. Cosden adds an eternal significance to daily work.

> Human work is a transformative activity essentially consisting of dynamically interrelated instrumental, relational, and ontological dimensions: whereby, along

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[43] Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor* (New York: Penguin Group US, 2012, Kindle Edition), 33-34.

[44] John 5:17.

[45] DeKoster, 61.

> with work being an end in itself, the worker's and other's needs are providentially met; believers' sanctification is occasioned; and workers express, explore and develop their humanness while building up their natural, social and cultural environments thereby contributing protectively and productively to the order of this world and the one to come.[46]

Cosden not only gives work credit for transforming human existence and earthly societies, but he says it also has eternal values as well. He says that work is not only an end in itself, but has spiritual and eternal significance. He believes that when a person utilizes their talents and abilities they are fulfilling God's intention for their life.

In spite of the joy of work and its essential role toward forming personal identity, there is a prevailing ambivalence about the love/hate relationship many have for this ubiquitous part of life. Russian author Leo Tolstoy, in his famous novel *War and Peace,* describes eloquently the paradox of work and the dilemma humankind copes with. Although this book was first published in 1869, it is still relevant today.

> The bible [sic] legend tells us that the absence of labor—idleness—was a condition of the first man's blessedness before the Fall. Fallen man has retained a love of idleness but the curse weighs on the race not only because we have to seek our bread in the sweat of our brow, but because our moral nature is such that we cannot be both idle and at ease. An inner voice tells us we are wrong if we are idle. If man could find a state in which he felt that though idle he was fulfilling his duty, he would have found one of the conditions of man's primitive blessedness.[47]

Even though Tolstoy misinterprets Adam and Eve's initial circumstances, he articulates the ambivalence many deal with concerning work and rest. The Fall produced a paradox—a love and hate for work. It set the stage for much of the ambivalence among believers concerning the nature of work—its curse and its blessing.

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[46] Darrell Cosden, *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2004), 178-179.

[47] Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace,* Book 7, Chapter 1, Kindle location 10066.

Calvin Redekop and Urie Bender, in their book *Who Am I? What Am I?: Searching for Meaning in Your Work*, point out the apparent paradox many have about work that puts its definition in flux. They describe three paradoxes. First, since many kinds of work are onerous, people applaud technologies that eliminate drudgery in the workplace. At the same time people fear the unemployment it creates. Second, most believe that work is at the heart of meaningful human existence, yet many support institutional forces that exert effort to make work undesirable. Third, some acknowledge the need for work in order to make a living. At the same time, they hate work forced upon them that is necessary to live the good life.[48] They go on to explain:

> These facets of the paradox are laden with pathos and irony. . . . the new day before us may well eliminate the necessary experience of work for many people . . . If this dawning reality has done nothing else, it has certainly laid starkly bare our strikingly inconsistent expectations; delighted with freedom from work but panic-stricken by the absence of work possibilities; wanting to be able to work but not wanting to work; searching urgently for meaning in life but turning away from one of the fundamental experiences through which meaning is found.[49]

These authors express well the paradox workers and society face as they navigate through innovation, work, and calling. People want innovation, but it eliminates the need for workers.

God is a worker. As human beings created in God's image, people are workers as well. Keller emphasizes the vital place work has in a person's daily life:

> Work is as much a basic human need as food, beauty, rest, friendship, prayer, and sexuality; it is not simply medicine but food for our soul. Without meaningful work we sense significant inner loss and emptiness. People who are cut off from

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[48] Calvin Redekop and Urie A. Bender, *Who Am I? What Am I? Searching for Meaning in Your Work* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 20.

[49] Ibid., 21.

> work because of physical or other reasons quickly discover how much they need work to thrive emotionally, physically, and spiritually.[50]

Keller believes that work is essential to human well-being. Nevertheless, Ben Witherington, in his book *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor,* believes there is confusion among Christians about work. He says, "Christianity in general, and Protestant Christianity in particular, seem to raise to a particular degree the issue of how we should view work. Is it a blessing or bane? Is it duty or privilege? Do we work to live, or live to work?"[51] He goes on to say that many Americans have little understanding of what the Bible actually says about work, play, career, retirement, and other work-related issues, even though the Bible is replete with the portrayal and meaning of work. He says that part of the problem is a poor definition of what work is. Witherington offers his definition of a Christian's work in the following terms: "[Work is] any necessary and meaningful task that God calls and gifts a person to do and that which can be undertaken to the glory of God and for the edification and aid of human beings, being inspired by the Holy Spirit and foreshadowing the realities of the new creation."[52]

Witherington makes serving God and humanity a core purpose of work. Lester DeKoster provides another definition: "Work is the form in which we make ourselves useful to others. . . .That is why work gives meaning to life. . . . through work that serves others, we also serve God. . . ."[53] Keller nuances the definition even further:

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[50] Keller, 37.

[51] Ben Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), vii.

[52] Ibid., xii.

[53] DeKoster, 1-2.

> When we work, we are, as those in the Lutheran tradition often put it, the "fingers of God," the agents of his providential love for others. This understanding elevates the purpose of work from making a living to loving our neighbor and at the same time releases us from the crushing burden of working primarily to prove ourselves.[54]

Keller's insight explains work not as a performance, but as a ministry to others. These authors include in their definition the aspect of serving God and others through work. Secular understanding of work is different from a biblical one. R. Paul Stevens points out that work is difficult to define in a general sense.[55] Even though the definitions above are excellent, the worker cooking crack or practicing prostitution is not working in a Christian sense. He defines work in more all-encompassing terms as, "purposeful activity involving mental, emotional or physical energy, or all three, whether remunerated or not."[56] This simplistic definition does not satisfy the biblical definition of work. Biblically, work should be an offering to God and a service to other human beings.

Darrell Cosden gives an extensive definition of work by elaborating on what he calls a "three-fold nature of work": *instrumental, relational,* and *ontological*. He goes further than the other authors in his definition: "Work as it ought to be, is constituted when each of these three aspects (instrumental, relational, and ontological) exist together in a mutual and interdependent relationship."[57] He says, "The instrumental aspect of work is the most readily perceived. . . . Instrumentally, work is seen as a means to some end whether that be mundane, or, as is often the case in theology, spiritual."[58] Instrumental

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[54] Keller, 20.

[55] Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, 106.

[56] Ibid., 107.

[57] Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 10.

work can be for a provision for sustenance, character building, acts of charity, or to maturing of one's spiritual life.

Cosden defines the *relational* aspect of work in these words:

> As distinguished from the instrumental, the relational aspect of work refers to work's aim toward appropriate social relationships and / or to some form of human existential realization and fulfillment. By social relationships I mean the way we humans organize work, and its effect on our social order or structures. Here work is viewed as critical for establishing right relationships in society.[59]

Cosden offers in this definition a vital aspect of Christian work—the involvement of others. Of the nine fruit of the Spirit, six could be defined as having direct relationship to others.[60] Of the Ten Commandments, six concern direct relationship with others.[61]

Cosden clarifies what he means by the ontological aspect of work in these words:

> By the term "ontological" with reference to work I mean that work in its broadest richness is considered to be more than, or its fuller meaning is understood to incorporate but to transcend, both its instrumental and relational functions. By defining it as ontological, I speak of work as a thing in itself with its own intrinsic value apart from but of course related to these functions. Rather than simply seeing work's combined practical uses as constituent of its essence. I understand work's essential nature to be derived ontologically from its having been built into the fabric of creation by God. The person is a worker, not as an accident of nature but because God first is a worker and persons are created in his image.[62]

This defining aspect gives work a distinction that transcends work done for practical reasons alone. It is one way that human beings harmonize with God's divine plan for the ages—restoring a fallen world.

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[58] Ibid., 11.

[59] Ibid., 12.

[60] Galatians 5:22-23.

[61] Exodus 20:1-17.

[62] Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 17.

John A. Bernbaum and Simon M. Steer draw several biblical conclusions about work in their book *Why Work?: Careers and Employment in Biblical Perspective*. They say, first of all, that work is a part of God's original intention—not only that humanity works, but God is a worker as well. They point out that the Fall turned a blessing of joy into a burden and curse. The third point is that God has redeemed work. Even Jesus worked at the carpenter's bench bringing dignity to manual work. The fourth point is that work can now be a service unto the Lord. Work is a part of a believer's sacred stewardship.[63] These four aspects of work give a well-rounded snapshot of work from a biblical perspective.

Many authors point out that work was a part of Creation before the Fall. Even though work is not the result of the Fall, it added a new dimension. Leland Ryken, in his book *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective*, says this about the origin of work:

> A biblical understanding of work reaches back to the very beginning of the world. As we look at the doctrine of creation, we find human work placed into a context of God's work, of human creation in the image of God, of God's command for people to work as part of his provision for human life, and of human cooperation with God in work. . . . the Fall did not introduce work into the world. Work as a blessing was already present. The new element is that work has now become a curse.[64]

Ryken explains clearly the origin of work and the alteration that the Fall brought about. Work can be pleasurable, but can quickly turn burdensome. Peter Drucker, who has been called the father of modern management, speaks from a secular view of work and comes to the same conclusion. In his book *The Daily Drucker*, he says:

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[63] Bernbaum and Steer, 3-5.

[64] Leland Ryken, *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987), 128-129.

> Work, we know, is both a burden and a need, both a curse and a blessing. Unemployment we long ago learned creates severe psychological disturbances, not because of economic deprivation, but primarily because it undermines self-respect. Work is an extension of personality. It is achievement. It is one of the ways in which a person defines himself or herself, measures his worth, and his humanity.[65]

Drucker strikes at the heart of the human conundrum—many people try to eliminate and avoid work, but at the same time they are creatures who need work to find fulfillment and self-expression.

Having a good understanding of the theology of work will not only help the lay person working in the factory, but the minister will benefit as well. Thomas H. Holland, in his book *The Work of the Preacher Is Working*, warns pastors about their work with these sobering words:

> But the work of preaching can be easily abused and it will be abused by laziness. Most preachers are on their honor so far as the amount of time that they give to the Lord's work. The danger of abuse is so real that preachers need discipline, an organized schedule, and an occasional evaluation of both the quality and quantity of their work.[66]

Holland's book urges pastors to embrace their ministry as work that requires investment of time and energy for the glory of God. Their job is not different from the factory worker when it comes to accountability and faithfulness.

Vocation and Calling

Paul Minear emphasizes the prominence of work in the Bible in his book *Work and Vocation.* He says the Bible is "an album of casual photographs of laborers. . . . A

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[65] Peter F. Drucker, *The Daily Drucker* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004), 189.

[66] Thomas H. Holland, *The Work of the Preacher Is Working* (Brentwood, TN: Penmann Books, 2001), 18-19.

book by workers, about workers, for workers—that's the Bible."[67] Early in the Bible, the sons of Lamech provide a possible foundation of three basic occupational fields: Jabal was the father of such that raise cattle (agriculture); Jubal was the father of those who handle the harp and organ (the arts); Tubal-cain was an instructor of those who work with brass and iron (industry).[68] Even though ancient life was simple compared to the diversity of careers today, ancient people in Scripture were dedicated to specialized fields of work.

Sometimes people refer to their career as a "calling." Even though a person may feel they are chosen by God for a particular career, caution is important. A Christian "calling" should mean more than a career. Bernbaum and Steer nuance this idea in the following way:

> Calling is a remarkably rich concept referring to the entire process of salvation initiated by God in Christ. As Christians ours is a total calling to discipleship in the body of Christ (Rom. 1:7), to citizenship in the kingdom of God (I Thess. 2:12), and to salvation (Rom. 11:29). The choice of a career therefore does not involve the search for a separate, distinct calling, but should be seen as an important part of our response to the all-encompassing call of God to salvation.[69]

Bernbaum and Steer point out the tandem nature of calling. Divine callings are packaged with providential purpose involving the spiritual and the secular. Many secular theories of vocation are a form of determinism that focuses on heredity, socioeconomic factors, psychological limits, natural talents, and the developmental process. They assume that humankind is the sole determiner and measure of all things. Bernbaum and Steer say,

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[67] Paul Minear, "Work and Vocation in Scripture," in *Work and Vocation*, ed. J. Nelson (New York: Harper's, 1954), 33.

[68] Genesis 4:19-22.

[69] Bernbaum and Steer, 12.

"Since God is orderly, we can safely conclude that his plan includes his children, those who have been saved by his grace through faith in Jesus Christ."[70]

For the Christian, a career can be a calling since God is sovereign. Stevens elaborates further concerning the nature of callings:

> Contrary to much of our present cultural emphasis that deifies personal choice, a biblical worldview begins not with human choice, but with a good and sovereign God who is not only the Creator but also the Caller. Here in the Genesis narrative, before humanity's fall into sin and resulting corruption of the world and our work, we are given two bedrock truths regarding human work and vocation: we were created with an important stewardship in mind, to cultivate creation and to keep it; and we are commissioned by God to nurture, care for, and protect his creation."[71]

Stevens points out the principle of stewardship in work. Believers serve the Creator. Therefore, they work to care for his creation.

One's perception and attitude about work has a great influence upon whether or not it could be justifiably called a "calling." Keller nuances the meaning of calling even further by pointing out the etymology of "vocation."

> The Latin word *vocare*—to call—is at the root of our common word "vocation." Today the word often means simply a job, but that was not the original sense. A job is a vocation only if someone else calls you to do it and you do it for them rather than for yourself. And so our work can be a calling only if it is reimagined as a mission of service to something beyond merely our own interests.[72]

Hugh Whelchel, in his book *How Then Should We Work?*, agrees with Stevens and Keller, but draws a distinction between career and calling in the following way:

> In the secular world, *career* is the term we most often hear regarding work. The word *career* originates from the medieval Latin noun *carraria*, which means "a road for vehicles." It is fitting that we commonly use the term *career path*. A

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[70] Ibid., 34.

[71] Stevens, *Work Matters*, 25.

[72] Keller, 19.

> career is usually associated with a certain occupation. Becoming a lawyer or a securities analyst is a career choice; however it is usually not the same as a calling.[73]

For the Christian, work should be more than a career choice; it should be a calling. Two questions arise: What about jobs a Christian does out of economic necessity? Does God call people to jobs that they are not suited for so that they might fulfill some purpose other than personal fulfillment?

Ministry Versus Secular Work

John C. Knapp, in his book *How the Church Fails Businesspeople*, says there is a breach between the church and the business world. He believes church members are not getting guidance and affirmation concerning God's significance in their careers.[74] Knapp used a study done by Doug Sherman and William Hendricks as one proof. The survey reported the following results:

> An organization I founded, Career Impact Ministries, polled about 2000 people who called themselves Christians and who regularly attend church. We asked each of them, "Have you ever in your life heard a sermon, read a book, listened to a tape, or been to a seminar that applied biblical principles to everyday work issues?" More than ninety percent replied no.[75]

Keller seems to agree with Knapp. He points out that many pastors have a misconception of businesspeople; this in turn gives them a lack of appreciation for their work and can even lead to suspicion of their motives.

> But so many ministers assume that investors and entrepreneurs are solely out to make money without regard for advancing the common good. If ministers don't

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[73] Hugh Whelchel, *How Then Should We Work?* (Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press, 2012), 75.

[74] John C. Knapp, *How the Church Fails Businesspeople* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 25.

[75] Sherman and Hendricks, 16.

> yet see business as a way of making culture and of cultivating creation, they will fail to support, appreciate, and properly lead many members of their congregation.[76]

Viewing work as "cultivating creation" is vital for understanding what is happening in the workplace. Sherman and Hendricks continue to emphasize this absence of workplace focus in the church by pointing out that most people spend sixty percent of their lives in the workplace, and another thirty to thirty-five percent with family and personal interests. That leaves five to ten percent for church-related activities. They point out the dearth of attention given this important aspect of life.

> Yet most Christian teaching addresses these areas in precisely the opposite proportions: a very heavy emphasis on religious matters, some help in regard to marriage and family, but little that speaks directly to the workplace. The result: millions of people go to work every day unaided, disillusioned, and unchallenged by the Word of God.[77]

Sherman and Hendricks see a dearth in teaching and preaching that addresses the workplace and how it relates to the Christian life. This lack of focus and attention can lead to misguided ideas about work. One pitfall is building a spiritual hierarchy of careers. Knapp continues by critiquing the church's hierarchy of occupations.

> Anyone who has spent much time in the church is likely aware of its hierarchy of occupations. At the peak of the pyramid are full-time clergy and missionaries, followed closely by other paid workers in Christian ministry. Their jobs are seen as genuine *callings*, often validated by special ceremonies and rituals. Just below them in rank are the so-called helping professions—social workers, nurses, and the like—whose work aligns neatly with the church's ministry priorities. Moving further down the pyramid we find the vast majority of Christians—salespeople, postal workers, accountants, business owners, electricians, corporate executives, lawyers, and countless others who comprise most of the body of Christ.[78]

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[76] Keller, 62.

[77] Sherman and Hendricks, 16-17.

[78] Knapp, 27.

Cosden agrees with Keller and Knapp. He comments as well on this failure of the church to properly address the Christian in the workplace. He says the church has a tendency to build a hierarchy of importance in work order. " 'Second-class' Christians, then, are categorized according to the unofficial 'hierarchy of callings' that often emerges in congregational life. This spiritually disastrous practice categorizes people's work in a descending order of value according to perceived spiritual significance."[79]

"Given the nature of justification, no calling or work could ever be as spiritually higher than any other. This is because no work(s) can be spiritually good—that is, of any heavenly good—since no work(s) can contribute anything to us spiritually in our ultimate journey toward eternal salvation."[80]

Cosden points out that the believer's career is a divine calling and the worker who fulfills that calling is doing the purpose of God. There can be no higher calling than to do exactly what God calls one to do and to do it with all one's might.

Stevens explains that Martin Luther was a reformer of the theology of work. There was a great divide between "sacred" work and "physical" work during his lifetime. He provides Luther's view of work as another act of sacredness.

> The idea that service to God should have to do with a church altar, singing, reading, sacrifice, and the like is without doubt but the worst trick of the devil. How could the devil have led us more effectively astray than by the narrow conception that service to God takes place only in church and by works done therein.[81]

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[79] Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, 22.

[80] Ibid., 40.

[81] Stevens, *Work Matters,* 109.

Cosden points out that Luther's understanding of justification destroyed the spiritual hierarchy. "Thus collapsed the hierarchy of callings Luther faced. The doctrine of justification demolished the medieval hierarchy of callings because nothing believers do has any positive value in relation to heaven."[82] Being true to one's calling was considered fulfilling God's plan for the restoration of all things.

So many people view their work as drudgery—an essential evil. Knapp observes the prevailing view of work today: "Work is performed with little sense of serving God. All too often it is just something to be endured—a means to other ends, such as paying the rent, feeding the family, and supporting the church (which in turn hires people to do God's work on our behalf)."[83] He explains the prevailing theology in the evangelical and pietistic tradition this way:

> Believers are exhorted to keep their eyes on the eternal, for things of this earth will not last. . . . This emphasis is evident in preaching, teaching, and popular books that speak of the workplace solely as a mission field for evangelism. . . . While it is true that prayer and meditation are essential to the Christian life, these are not means of escaping reality; rather, they are to strengthen us so that we may lean ever harder into the reality of the here and now.[84]

Knapp points out that this dichotomy of sacred and secular causes a lack of support for believers who spend their lives in the workplace. This dichotomy tends to prevail in many churches. Keller agrees: "Christians tend to divide the world into 'worldly' and 'sacred' spaces and activities, as if sin affects only things out in the world; yet absolutely every part of human life—soul and body, private and public, praying and laboring—is

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[82] Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, 40.

[83] Knapp, 33.

[84] Ibid., 34-35.

affected by sin."[85] A pastor may believe an entrepreneur in his congregation is only pursuing money, whilethey will be tempted with the same allurement. Working in ministry does not shelter a believer from all of the fleshly temptations.

Keller explains the dignity of all work: "No task is too small a vessel to hold the immense dignity of work given by God. Simple physical labor is God's work no less than the formulation of theological truth. . . . . This also means that 'secular' work has no less dignity and nobility than the 'sacred' work of ministry."[86] Keller points out that simple menial labor has inherent value to God. Paul says in I Corinthians 7:17: "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches." The question arises: Is this speaking of a spiritual calling or a vocational calling? Keller explains this verse with these words:

> In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, Paul counsels readers that when they become Christians it is unnecessary to change what they are currently doing in life—their marital state, job, or social station—in order to live their lives before God in a way that pleases him. . . . Elsewhere, Paul has spoken of God calling people into a saving relationship with him, and assigning them spiritual gifts to do ministry and build up the Christian community (Romans 12: 3 and 2 Corinthians 10: 13). Paul uses these same two words here when he says that every Christian should remain in the work God has "assigned to him, and to which God has called him." Yet Paul is not referring in this case to church ministries, but to common social and economic tasks—"secular jobs," we might say—and naming them God's callings and assignments. The implication is clear: Just as God equips Christians for building up the Body of Christ, so he also equips all people with talents and gifts for various kinds of work, for the purpose of building up the human community.[87]

Keller explains clearly the nature of conversion and its impact on a person's station in life. Conversion is a radical spiritual transition, but that transition does not include

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[85] Keller, 86.

[86] Ibid., 49, 51-52.

[87] Ibid., 65-66.

abandoning responsibilities. Obligations take on a different meaning after conversion—everything is now unto the Lord and Savior. Keller encapsulates the principle with these words: "Our daily work can be a calling only if it is reconceived as God's assignment to serve others. And that is exactly how the Bible teaches us to view work."[88]

Keller and Cosden agree there is a failure to see the eternal nature of work in the here and now—not to earn salvation, but to participate in God's divine cosmic scheme.[89] Keller points out the eternal nature of work with this observation: "There will be work in the paradise of the future just like there was in the paradise of the past, because God himself takes joy in his work."[90] Cosden attempts to prove the continuation of some aspects of this physical life into the realm of eternal life. He says that Jesus did not rise from the dead and simply pass through the stone blocking the entrance. The stone was rolled away, showing the physical confinements He imposed upon himself. After the resurrection Jesus invited his doubtful followers to consider his hands and feet. He retained the scars of crucifixion in his resurrected body. Does this indicate that vestiges of this physical life will be retained in heaven? The disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus. He evidently looked different, but He was the same Jesus. Later that day, at the breaking of bread, they recognized him. Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."[91]

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[88] Ibid., 66.

[89] See Acts 3:19-21.

[90] Keller, 96.

[91] I Corinthians 15:58.

The link between the physical world and the eternal world of the future may be greater than some may think. Cosden says,

> Christ's work involves bringing "everything," all of creation, both the spiritual and secular, under his Lordship. Jesus' spiritual work in resurrection has as much to do with transforming mundane and even hostile earthly realities as it does the religious aspects of life. Indeed, the "Lord's work" here includes everything so that in the end "God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28). That this "everything" that exists will include what we have added to creation through our "working" seems evident, though this too will need to be purged of all evil—the power and remnants of death—like everything else.[92]

Cosden believes all of creation, spiritual and natural, is being restored. The believer's contribution, at whatever level, is considered the "Lord's work."

It is common for those entering into Christian service to be asked, "Are you called?" The question is an important one. Does God call individuals into full-time ministry? Bernbaum and Steer believe God does: "Although biblical passages are relatively scarce, there is sufficient revelation to warrant the assertion that a call should precede entry to a Christian-service career."[93] Many Old Testament leaders and prophets spoke about being called.[94] Speaking of the priesthood, the writer of Hebrews said, "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."[95] Jesus chose his twelve apostles. Paul spoke of being called an apostle.[96] He even said, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me;

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[92] Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, 65-66.

[93] Bernbaum and Steer, 36.

[94] Abraham, Moses, Noah, David, and Samuel, along with others, were dramatically called by God into ministry leadership. Many prophets spoke of a compelling call on their lives (e.g., Amos 7:14-15 and Jeremiah 20:9).

[95] Hebrews 5:4.

[96] Romans 1:1, 6; 8:28; I Corinthians 1:1, 24; Acts 16:10; II Timothy 1:11.

yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"[97] Thomas C. Oden, in his book *Pastoral Theology*, uses the following metaphors to emphasize the distinction between the two:

> There remains a line as thin as hair, but as hard as a diamond, between ordained ministry and the faithful layperson. For in ordination spiritual gifts are recognized and the gifted are commissioned to preach and celebrate the sacraments and to act in the name of the whole church and with the authority of the apostolic tradition.[98]

Roles of work may be equal but divinely distinct in nature. Many questions arise. Is it possible to confuse the two? Is God's calling an imperative? Are certain roles and callings sacred and deserving of exceptional loyalty?

Many things can affect a choice of work—availability, financial circumstances, geography, capability and competence, family arrangement, friends, and faith. Bernbaum and Steer say this about the call to Christian service:

> The first indication usually is a consciousness within our own minds that God desires this for us. . . . This awareness is more a mental conviction than an emotional upheaval. The work of God within the mind produces both a desire and a sense of necessity. . . . Paul wrote, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (I Tim. 3:1 [KJV]). . . . Another indicator of God's leadership into a Christian-service career is the insight and testimony of godly persons. For instance, the church members at Antioch recognized God's call of Barnabas and Saul to missionary service at least as quickly as the missionaries themselves did.[99]

Is the call into Christian service different than a call to be an engineer or medical doctor? Is there some uniqueness to the mystical urging and longings of a call to ministry?

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[97] I Corinthians 9:16.

[98] Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1983), 87.

[99] Bernbaum and Steer, 38.

Biblical Bivocationalism

Pastoral bivocationalism is not a new thing. It has strong Old Testament and New Testament precedence. Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, was also a great shipbuilder and zookeeper. Job was an outstanding entrepreneur while providing a living oracle of the struggle to maintain faith in God in spite of enormous losses. Abraham was a cattleman and patriarch. Melchizedek was a king and priest. Moses was a shepherd, spiritual leader, prophet, and writer. Joseph was a shepherd, bookkeeper, interpreter of dreams, and ultimately became a prominent ruler in Egypt. Amos was a prophet to Israel while also working as a shepherd and picker of sycamore fruit (figs). Isaiah was an outstanding prophet and writer while serving as court administrator. David was a shepherd, warrior, musician, psalmist, prophet, and ultimately the king of Israel. Although Esther was the queen of Persia, she risked her life to become a savior of the Jewish people. Daniel served the king of Persia as a statesman and was an outstanding prophetic voice to his generation and to the current day. Nehemiah was a governor, spiritual leader, and builder. Peter, James, and John were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector. Jesus was a carpenter. Luke was a doctor and author of one-fourth of the New Testament—Luke and The Acts of the Apostles. Lydia was a purple-dye seller who opened her house for a church in Thyatira. Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers with Paul. Dorr says,

> The apostle Paul was perhaps the greatest man in the early church. He was a great Christian, evangelist, missionary, church planter, theologian, and writer of some of the New Testament. He was also a bivocational preacher. Bivocationalism has no more an illustrious example than the apostle Paul, the tentmaker-preacher. He could well be called the "Father of Bivocationalism."[100]

[100] Dorr, 1.

It is from the experience and teaching of Paul that give the greatest resource and insight into bivocationalism within church leadership. Paul was living in a society that was strongly influenced by Greek culture. The world around him had a dim view of work. Labor was to be done by slaves and the lower classes. Paul brought dignity to the work ethic as something of worth and acceptable as worship to God. Idleness was something to be avoided. Paul said, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."[101] Paul taught that the minister should be paid for his work: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."[102] At the same time, he took exception by not receiving payment for ministry. Paul told the church at Thessalonica, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."[103] His tentmaking job was marketable and portable. He worked as a tentmaker at Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus.[104] Dorr states the strong scriptural basis for bivocationalism with these words: "When we turn to the New Testament, we find the clearest biblical testimony of bivocationalism in all the Bible.

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[101] II Thessalonians 3:10. (See also I Timothy 5:13.)

[102] I Timothy 5:17-18.

[103] II Thessalonians 3:8-9.

[104] I Thessalonians 2:9; II Thessalonians 3:9; I Corinthians 9:18; II Corinthians 12:15; Acts 20:31-34.

That testimony comes from the practice and teachings of Paul the tentmaker. Paul's practice has influenced many ministers."[105]

Bivocationalism Historically

When looking at pastoral bivocationalism historically, a look at the prevailing philosophy of work at that time will be helpful. The church has been influenced by the world around them over the generations. Ryken says, "Western culture rests on two foundations—the classical (Greco-Roman) and biblical (Judeo-Christian)."[106] Although the church was not led totally by these influences, briefly looking at these philosophies will provide some insight for understanding trends of thought about work in the church.

100-600

The classical Greek view of work is explained by Ryken:

> To the Greeks work was a curse, something beneath the dignity of a free person. Their word for work was taken from the same root that produced the word *sorrow*. Physical work, especially, was regarded as degrading to human dignity. . . . According to such a view, the only way to redeem the curse of work was to avoid work. [107]

Aristotle and Socrates held this view. Work was the activity of slaves. This idea coincided with their low view of the physical world and the human body. True virtue was achieved by allowing time for contemplation and the pursuit of truth and beauty.

The church did not hold this view of work. It has already been stated that Jesus, working as a carpenter apprentice with Joseph, lifted the dignity of work. Paul was a

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[105] Dorr, 20.

[106] Leland Ryken, *Redeeming the Time: A Christian Approach to Work and Leisure* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 71.

[107] Ibid.

tentmaker, and others in the church were bivocational. The teaching of the church proclaimed work to be a worthy endeavor.

Dorr says, "Most clergymen in the first few centuries supported themselves."[108] A statement from the *Didache* (second century) reflects the thinking of that time: "When the apostle goeth forth, let him take nothing but bread, [to suffice] till he reach his lodging: if he ask money he is a false prophet."[109] Dorr goes on to say, "The testimony of research is almost universal that bivocationalism was the normal practice in the early church."[110]

600-1500

It was during the Middle Ages that a sacred-secular dichotomy arose. Ryken says,

> The main contribution of the Middle Ages to the history of attitudes toward work was to divide work into two great categories—the sacred and the secular. The roots of such an attitude were already present in the classical social distinction between free people and slaves. The Middle Ages simply gave this hierarchy a spiritual cast.[111]

According to Ryken, the difference in the two types of work was not difference of degree, but of kind. Catholics and Protestants adopted the idea that "full-time Christian service" was superior to other forms of work. During this time the ascetic philosophy developed—the idea that work was not done for its inherent dignity, but that the pain and humiliation served as atonement or penance. Therefore, work was ascribed to those living in monasteries.

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[108] Dorr, 22.

[109] Henry Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 85.

[110] Dorr, 22.

[111] Ryken, *Redeeming the Time*, 73.

Dorr agrees with Ryken and explains further: "The monastic orders were a powerful force for over a thousand years in the Christian church. Manual labor was the practice of these brothers."[112] Receiving money was frowned upon by the Benedictine order, Francis of Assisi, and by John Wycliffe during this period. Dorr says that some pastors did receive income from their ministry during this period, but others chose to work in a secular field of labor to earn their livelihood (A.D. 500-1500). Bettenson quotes John Wycliffe's instruction to his followers: "Friars are bound to gain livelihood by the labours of their hands, and not by begging."[113]

1500-1900

Ryken draws a sharp distinction between the Renaissance and the Reformation. He says, "The Renaissance asserted the dignity of labor and especially valued the work of one's hands."[114] Although individual craftsman-like work and artistry were greatly valued, the Renaissance was humanistic. Ryken explains the prevailing Reformation concept of work, with its inclusion of God, in these words:

> Even more decisive, however, was the influence of Luther, Calvin, and the Puritans. . . . The Reformers began by rejecting the medieval division of work into sacred and secular. To this rejection they added the doctrine of vocation or calling, by which they meant that God called people to tasks in the world. The dignity of common work never stood higher than at this moment in history.[115]

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[112] Dorr, 23.

[113] Bettenson, 174.

[114] Ryken, *Redeeming the Time*, 75.

[115] Ibid., 76.

Ryken says the cornerstone of Protestant thought was the sovereignty of God over all of life. Flowing from this was an awareness of God's Creation and a belief in the providential nature of God concerning it.

Many ministers during the Reformation were not a part of apostolic succession. As a result, they did not receive the blessing of the Catholic Church. Many pastors during this period were bivocational, especially in colonial America, on the western frontier. Dorr says, "A minister supported by the church was frowned upon by many frontier people. . . . Early frontier history in America is a history of bivocational preachers who built churches."[116] Nerger, in his book *Bivocational Church Planters,* says about those early American frontier days:

> Paid preachers were few and far between, because there was little money during the expansion of America. Denominations, such as Baptist, were desired simply because they had established that a pastor did not have to be over-educated and/or paid. Farmers, cattlemen, and businessmen all brought the gospel to the West as they had received it, making a living and faithfully serving as lay or bivocational pastors.[117]

The Protestant Ethic

Max Weber wrote *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in 1930. The Protestant ethic has also been called "the Puritan ethic." According to Ryken, Weber unjustifiably argued there was a connection between the "Protestant ethic" and "the spirit of modern capitalism." He says, "Scholars have long since shown the inadequacy of Weber's book, showing that instead of the Protestant ethic influencing capitalism, the

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[116] Dorr, 25.

[117] Nerger, 18.

influence worked the other way . . ."[118] Ryken points out several modern misconceptions about the Protestant ethic: (1) Work should absorb all of a person's time. Puritan writers warned about the consequences of overindulging in work. (2) Self-interest is the sole motivation of work. Evidence shows that Puritans believed work should be done to serve others. (3) Getting rich is the goal of life. Reformers and Puritans warned about the love of money. (4) People can be successful through their own efforts alone. The whole of Protestant theology is bent toward salvation by faith and not works. (5) Wealth is a sign of God's favor and evidence of one's salvation. This idea is absent among Puritan writers. (6) The Protestant ethic approved all types of business competition. Puritans denounced economic abuses.[119]

Adam Smith and Karl Marx

Miroslav Volf in his book *Work in the Spirit*, wrote about the ideas of Adam Smith and Karl Marx concerning work. These two thinkers greatly influenced modern ideas about work. Volf says this about their influence:

> Marx and Smith influenced the reality and understanding of work in today's world more than any other thinkers, past or present. As is well known, the two philosophers and economists—as both Smith and Marx were—are the progenitors of modern capitalism and socialism, which in their various versions still dominate both life and thought in the world today.[120]

Volf says Smith believed human beings were made for work and that work was a great end for which all human beings were created. He believed work was a means for

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[118] Ryken, *Redeeming the Time*, 96.

[119] Ibid., 96-101.

[120] Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 46.

achieving happiness. Even though he gave work a central place, it did not have dignity. He considered work to be a necessary evil to obtain goods and services. Smith also believed that people not only determine what kind of work they do, but what they do determines who they are. According to Volf, Smith also believed civilized societies used a "division of labor" to assist one another. This caused "alienation," which is the price they paid for being economically advanced. Alienation is the powerlessness of workers, the exploitation of workers, and the estrangement of the workers from themselves.[121]

According to Volf, Karl Marx was influenced by Smith, but chose a different approach to deal with the alienation of workers. He decided the "division of labor" had to go along with the whole structure of market economy. Marx believed that work was "a means for human beings to keep their soul and body together."[122] Although Marx changed some of his ideas in later writings, he never gave up the idea that work should be enjoyed. Volf says, "The analysis of the capitalist society and of the alienation that human beings experience in it was the most important part of Marx's lifelong study of economy."[123] Ryken also offers his analysis: "The Marxist diagnosis of the problem was accurate, no matter how much we may disagree with its proposed solutions. . . . We should not allow its lack of success in Communist countries to obscure its insights into the problems of work that are important to an understanding of work in the modern world."[124]

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[121] Ibid., 53-54.

[122] Ibid., 57.

[123] Ibid., 58.

[124] Ryken, *Redeeming the Time*, 79-80.

Ryken is speaking in particular about the alienation of workers in factories and other working conditions where people are seen only as capitalist commodities. Volf and Ryken agree that Marxism was totally a secular philosophy. Ryken believes the "Romantic" philosophy, responding to the Industrial Revolution, was an influence. He says John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle were the foremost spokesmen for this Romantic idealization of work. These writers did not believe work was a service to God and society, but considered the work of one's hands and craftsmanship to be an expression of their ability. This was a Victorian exaltation of work.

Ryken makes the following observation concerning where the church is today:

> No single attitude toward work dominates the present century, but various viewpoints tend to share a secular bias. Work is no longer discussed in a religious context. Whereas theologians were once the people to theorize about work, in our century the discussion is largely conducted by economists and sociologists. Within the prevailing secular context, the population is divided into a range of attitudes.[125]

Bivocationalism Today and Tomorrow

Bivocational pastorship is strong in America today. Literature reviewed offers varying numbers and percentages. Dorr sums things up with these words:

> Because economic reasons are thrusting many ministers into bivocationalism, they are asking for genuine acceptance as true ministers. Many desire help and support from the religious community and denominational hierarchy. Therefore, bivocationalism is receiving attention in the form of recognition, encouragement, and help.[126]

[125] Ibid., 82.

[126] Dorr, 38.

George Barna, in his book *Today's Pastors*, says, "Seven out of ten churches have a single paid professional, the pastor."[127] Patricia Chang, in her article "Factors Shaping Clergy Careers: A Wakeup Call for Protestant Denominations and Pastors," says,

> The combination of fewer senior pastor positions, a growing number of small churches that cannot afford a full time pastor, and declining denominational membership means that there are fewer opportunities for full time employment, and fewer opportunities for upward mobility within these denominations.[128]

A survey was conducted by the researcher to determine the extent of bivocationalism within the United Pentecostal Church International in September 2013. Sixty-five North American Missions district directors were contacted and asked how many bivocational pastors were serving churches in their districts. The following questions were asked on the survey:

1. What percentage of pastors in your district are bivocational (estimate)?
2. What percentage of church planters (churches five years old or less) are bivocational (estimate)?

> What is meant by "bivocational" is they pastor a church and supplement their pastoral income by working in other employment either part time or full time.[129]

These directors have access to personal information of this nature relating to pastors in their respective districts. This is not a scientific report, but is a good approximation of the pastoral status in North America. The United Pentecostal Church International has four thousand two hundred churches in North America. Of the sixty-five

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[127] Barna, 82.

[128] Patricia Chang, "Factors Shaping Clergy Careers: A Wakeup Call for Protestant Denominations and Pastors," Pulpit and Pew Research on Pastoral Leadership, Duke Divinity School, 2005, www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu (visited Sept. 16, 2013).

[129] This informal survey was sent via email and responses were collected in the same way. The North American Missions district directors are fairly well known in their districts and were elected to their positions by popular vote. They not only have access to records and reports, but travel extensively around their districts getting to know about pastors' personal lives.

districts, twenty-eight districts (forty percent participation) reported with the following results: fifty-eight percent of the 2412 churches reporting are pastored by bivocational pastors (1394). This is an amazing finding! Over half of the pastors are bivocational. These numbers do not include pastors who do not work in secular careers, but draw Social Security. Neither does it include many pastors' spouses who work in secular careers in order that their pastor-spouse can be full-time pastors. The report also indicated that bivocational church planters range from ninety percent to one hundred percent.

The general director of UPCI North American Missions states that the denomination does not have an organized support program specifically for these pastors. Bivocationalism could be greater among non-pastor ministers. Voters attending the annual UPCI General Conference normally range from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred. This is from a total ministerial constituency of nine thousand licensed ministers. The small attendance could be largely due to so many ministers being bivocational.

Contemporary Bivocational Challenges

Dennis W. Bickers has been a bivocational pastor and has written extensively about bivocational pastors. In his book *The Tentmaking Pastor*, he offers six challenges for the dual role: difficulties at the secular job, identity problems, jealousy of other pastors, difficulty changing churches, time constraints, and lack of growth.[130] Many secular jobs require the worker to be on-site forty or more hours a week. A bivocational pastor can take only so many days off work. Bickers says, "It is important to maintain your integrity with your employer. Your employer is paying you to work for him, not to witness to your fellow employee or to do other ministerial functions during the work

[130] Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor,* 37-45.

day."[131] He warns about attitude in the workplace with this admonition: "Bivocational ministers need to make sure they do not view their ministry as a godly calling and their second job as merely a means of paying bills."[132]

A Second Job

When a bivocational pastor works forty hours a week in a secular career, plus commute time, the remaining hours for pastoral duties are quite limited. If the pastor has children at home, spending family time is critical. Many bivocational pastors' spouses work as well. This can put enormous stress on the family. Pastoral duties include sermon preparation, visitation, administrative work, campus management, and counseling. In addition, there will be weddings, funerals, and baby dedications. The pastor must also take time for prayer and self-care.

Identity Problems

A bivocational pastor may feel they are an underachiever by not having a full-time pastoral position. They may be influenced by things people say or with the idea that they are a part-time pastor. Bickers says, "A bivocational pastor is not a part-time pastor. We are on call twenty-four hours a day just as other pastors."[133]

Jealousy of Other Pastors

The bivocational pastor may enjoy more income than a neighboring pastor. They may also enjoy more security—having another source of income. Bickers says, "It is not

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[131] Ibid., 38.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid., 40.

difficult to understand why some pastors may be jealous of a bivocational pastor who is not completely dependent on a church for his family's financial well-being."[134]

Difficulty Changing Churches

Moving to another pastorate may create a problem with the pastor's secular job. If the job is not portable, resigning and moving may cause a loss of retirement and seniority. The new location may not have an equivalent job, or the new church may not want a bivocational pastor.

Time Constraints

Many laypeople do not realize how demanding a pastor's work really is. Peter Brain, in his book *Going the Distance,* says the average pastor actually works fifteen more hours per week than the congregation's estimates.[135] He says many pastors try too hard to please their congregation: "Along with this drivenness is the *Messiah complex* that is alive amongst us pastors. This desire, which manifests itself in the need to be seen and approved of by people, makes it very hard for us to even say 'no,' and drives us to attempt everything."[136] Brain quotes a minister as saying, "God gave me the gospel and a horse. I've killed the horse, so I can no longer preach the gospel."[137] (He was speaking of his body.) He goes on to say, "Church members do not expect us to work excessive hours, and they will not thank us when we run ourselves into the ground."[138] Elliott

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[134] Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor*, 41.

[135] Peter Brain, *Going the Distance* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2006), 17.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., 20.

[138] Ibid., 37.

suggests the following workload boundary: "The practical limitation of an individual's stamina does not go beyond sixty-five hours a week. . . . the CODE study revealed that it does take a higher level of energy to be a Dual Role minister."[139] This performance expectation from the congregation can take its toll on the bivocational pastor.

Dorr offers this advice to the bivocational pastor:

> Since the flock will need more ministry than even a full-time pastor can possibly give, the pastor can delegate some of this ministry to others. He can help his church become a caring people. He can urge and teach his classes and organizations to minister to their members. The deacons and other church leaders can also be trained to provide ministry to the church family.[140]

James W. Highland, in his book *Serving as a Bivocational Pastor,* offers this advice for getting things done more efficiently: "Ministry Teams are the most effective organizational approach to creating congregational involvement in ministry."[141] Highland points out the following advantages of teams: they have a single focus, people make connections with others, action-oriented people can participate, skills and knowledge of others can be brought together, teams become a dynamic force for ministry, and they add new dimensions to the members' personal lives.[142] He recommends bivocational pastors learn to delegate many of the ministry roles to such teams.

Lack of Growth in the Church

Many bivocational pastors serve in rural areas where the potential is limited; the church may be in a transient area that has little denominational presence; or it may have a

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[139] Elliott, 9.

[140] Dorr, 92.

[141] James W. Highland, *Serving as a Bivocational Pastor* (Newburgh, IN: Newburgh Press, 2012), Kindle location 1551.

[142] Ibid., location 1550.

problematic history. Bickers says, "Our society rewards growth, and church culture is no different. Walk into any Christian bookstore and you will see displays of books that explain how church growth should occur in every church."[143] The expectation for growth can take its toll on the bivocational pastor. Bickers says,

> This is unfortunate thinking. In the first place, when we think of church growth, we should not think of only numerical growth. We look at numerical growth because anyone can count nickels and noses, but what about the growth that occurs in the lives of the members of a church when they are served by a caring pastor who faithfully teaches them the Bible and points the way to Jesus Christ every week?[144]

In *Our Pastor Has an Outside Job,* John Y. Elliott reports extensively on a project conducted in Western New York called "Clergy Occupational Development and Employment" (CODE).[145] He sees a growing trend toward more bivocational pastors. He explains the rising demands this way: "In 1950 a congregation with 60 persons attending regularly could afford a full-time pastor. In 1980 a congregation must have 150 persons who attend regularly to support a full-time pastor."[146]

Elliott says, "There is a fear among many church leaders, particularly those in area executive positions, that Dual Role might downgrade ordination and educational standards. Dual Role, however, should increase the need for trained clergy."[147]

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[143] Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor,* 44-45.

[144] Ibid., 45.

[145] Elliott, 5-6. (The Clergy Occupational Development and Employment (CODE) project was sponsored by the Lilly Foundation from 1975-1979. Four denominations were a focused point of the study. The survey included 188 clergy, 57 laity, and 8 retired clergy. The author was a participant in the project.)

[146] Ibid., 6.

[147] Ibid., 14-15.

Elliott warns against a minister becoming bivocational when driven by money alone.

> If economics is the primary motive, a secular position probably is the better answer, leaving the ministry altogether. A Dual Role pastor must want the partnership ministry, the small church, and a moderate level in the secular job. He must want the dual responsibility which permeates his life and family.[148]

Contemporary Bivocational Positives

Being a bivocational pastor is not all bad. Elliott says, "We have come to learn that Dual Role has many more positive components than negative ones."[149] He goes on to say, "Dual Role pastors report an almost unanimous feeling of achievement undreamed of outside of Dual Role. They report a much more efficient life, a more total production of one's life."[150]

Benefits for the Bivocational Pastor

Dorr suggests many benefits for the minister, the minister's family, the church, the denomination, and the community. The bivocational pastor has the joy of fulfilling secular employment. Dorr says,

> Some ministers work in areas in which they have always had an interest. . . . Most secular positions are open for advancement. Competition is often keen. A bivocational pastor minister can experience personal joy and advancement by successfully performing secular duties and advancing up the ladder of success.[151]

The bivocational pastor can develop and enjoy friendships outside the church, make an adequate living outside the church, enjoy a sense of financial independence, feel

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[148] Ibid., 49.

[149] Ibid., 6.

[150] Elliott, 24.

[151] Dorr, 63.

satisfaction in knowing they are not being a financial burden to the church, have a satisfying diversion from the stress of pastoring, find additional opportunities for ministry and evangelism, relate to the circumstances of the laypeople, blend the sacred and the secular as it should be, and avoid being underemployed and bored. Lee Eclov, in his book *Pastoral Graces*, describes the secular workplace and other environments people live in as they go about their responsibilities. His language is vivid.

> Some offices, of course, are filthier than sewers. Some schools are darker than underground tunnels. Some families are toxic. A lot of Christians spend their week trying to keep the gunk off their hearts, trying to keep their souls from smelling like a cesspool. Good shepherds know. We think about where people have come from when they come to worship. If we are thoughtful, that will nuance how we grace what we do in the service. As my friend Brandon put it, "There is a degree of intimate knowing that a pastor brings."[152]

A bivocational pastor can relate to these conditions and not have to imagine what life is like for his members.

Benefits for the Bivocational Pastor's Family

One of the most obvious benefits is a better financial income for the family. Sometimes the mother can stay at home with young children when otherwise she would have to work outside the home. There is more stability with two incomes than with one. Another advantage is the opportunity to own a private home and not live in a parsonage. If the bivocational pastor lives in a community other than the church community, it will help avoid the fishbowl arrangement that makes pastoring uncomfortable for the pastor's family.

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[152] Lee Eclov, *Pastoral Graces: Reflections on the Care of Souls* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), Kindle Edition, 48-49.

Benefits for the Bivocational Church

Dorr says, "One advantage is found in the caliber of minister available to the church through bivocationalism. The church can have a trained minister because the minister will be able to provide some or most of his own salary himself."[153] Because the pastor is not there all the time, the members will assume much of the work. This will cause the people to grow spiritually and in leadership skills. Laypeople will feel that their pastor understands them better than a full-time pastor. In smaller churches, sometimes the pastor will give his tithing and offerings into the church account and give the church a financial boost.

Benefits for the Bivocational Pastor's Denomination

A bivocational pastor can save a small church from closing. Dorr says, "Often a trained, committed bivocational pastor can give more quality leadership to a church than an untrained full-time person can give."[154] The bivocational pastor can help the church financially, and, in turn, help the church give more toward denominational causes.

Benefits for the Bivocational Pastor's Community

Dorr says, "Some workers benefit a community. Some drain a community's resources, but most bivocational pastors should prove an asset to the workforce in the community. They should be more stable. They care for its people, its problems, and its dreams and goals."[155] Bivocational pastors will have leadership skills and can transfer

[153] Ibid., 67.

[154] Ibid., 69.

[155] Ibid., 70-71.

those skills to the community needs. In small towns the bivocational pastor will have a great presence in the community.

Elliott points out that some of the candidates on the CODE panel were able to secure information on the Dual Role pastor's job, such as job objectives, general management attitudes in developing leadership, and some of the other realities of working in the secular world. He offers the following quote from Priscila Specht and J. Wayne Toal, both personnel specialists:

> Dual Role clergy are seen to be those who are involved and on the go, wherever they are; who feel they can be doing more and want to. Their spouses agree that scheduling is of prime importance, and for one, "there has not been a great difference or change in life style with Dual-Role; only the names of the meetings have changed.
>
> Dual Role offers to business and industry and others, highly qualified, productive employees; and to the church, experienced, skilled pastors who function at high levels in both jobs.[156]

Highland served as a full-time pastor and as a bivocational pastor during his ministry tenures. He describes the positives of bivocationalism in these words:

> There are benefits. As a full-time pastor 90% of my regular contacts were within the church. Now a large portion of my contacts are outside of the local congregation. As a full-time pastor, my one source of income was the church. Sometimes this can create anxiety. As a bivocational pastor I have two sources of income, providing me a sense of security and independence. As a pastor, I often sensed that I and my family lived in a glass house. Finally, as a full-time pastor, I felt the expectations of the people were unrealistic. Now the church people have very limited expectations and it is enjoyable to exceed those expectations.[157]

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[156] Elliott, 51.

[157] Highland, Kindle location 2032.

A bivocational pastor can live at a higher standard of living than the typical small church pastor. Having a career that brings another source of income gives the bivocational pastor more independence.

Pastoring a small church, especially in a rural area, can be unchallenging. Elliott says, "If ministers serve a congregation of only fifty to one hundred members, they probably are underemployed. Their skill, training, and experience are not being used to capacity. There is a need to fit the talents of these very capable clergy into the areas of greater need."[158] A pastor can waste time puttering around or get overly involved in hobbies or recreational activities. Highland recommends that pastors continue their education.

Conclusions

The principle of work is a major theme of Scripture. The necessity of work is not a result of the Fall, but was assigned by God as a basic responsibility for Adam and Eve before the Fall. After the Fall, everything was cursed—including the nature of work. Even though work can be monotonous and tiring, it is also pleasurable and rewarding. Work done as Christians is not just a necessary evil to keep the wolf away from the door, but is one of the major ways believers worhsip God. Martin Luther King Jr. expressed the idea poetically:

> If it falls to your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep the streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, like Shakespeare wrote poetry, like Beethoven composed music; sweep streets so well that all the host of Heaven and earth will have to pause and say, "Here lived a great street sweeper, who swept his job well."[159]

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[158] Ibid., 15.

[159] Martin Luther King Jr., "What Is Your Life's Blueprint?" (speech, Barratt Junior High School, Philadelphia, October 26, 1967) quoted in David Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith and Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 19.

Even though work is a need of life, Keller warns about imbalances in work with these words: “But when we feel that our lives are completely absorbed by work, remember that we must also honor work’s limits. There is no better starting point for a meaningful work life than a firm grasp of this balanced work and rest theology.[160]

Secular work is no less dignifying before God than spiritual work. Keller says, “This also means that ‘secular’ work has no less dignity and nobility than the ‘sacred’ work of ministry.”[161]

The bivocational pastor who pastors a small church may become bored due to a lack of activity. Dorr says, “Bivocational people are often multitalented.”[162] John Elliott maintains, “The Dual Role Pastor generally fits the biblical pattern of the ten-talented person.”[163]

The literature leads the researcher to believe the following things are true. There is a lack of clear biblical understanding of the theology of work in the church today. Church members who work in secular careers are not receiving instruction, encouragement, and support for their career from preaching and teaching. The number of bivocational pastors is larger than some people think, especially in the UPCI. The majority of bivocational pastors are happy in their work, but could use more support from their congregations, denominations, and neighboring pastors. Bivocational pastors could be helped by gaining a greater understanding of their roles in ministry and in their

[160] Keller, 43.

[161] Ibid., 52.

[162] Dorr, 59.

[163] Elliott, 24.

careers. Bivocational pastors struggle with their dual responsibilities in a fast-paced world—time management, delegation of responsibilities, family issues, sermon preparation, counseling, self-esteem, and isolation. There is an increase in bivocational pastorships due to a poor economy, smaller churches, more educated ministers, and a desire among pastors to be less dependent on their congregations. Most of the bivocational research data is old (from the 1980s). There is a need for some new surveys among Christian churches.

Chapter Three

Project Methodology

The purpose of this study was to discover how bivocational pastors understand the theology of work and how it is experienced in their dual-role responsibilities. An array of literature was consulted and was arranged broadly in the following sections: (1) Bivocationalism Biblically and Theologically; (2) Bivocationalism Historically; and (3) Bivocationalism Today and Tomorrow. These important areas provide a foundation for the four research questions that guided this study:

The following research questions guided the qualitative research:

(1) How do bivocational pastors describe their theology of work?

(2) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their secular work on their ministry work?

(3) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of the ministry work on their secular work?

(4) How do bivocational pastors describe their ministry?

Design of the Study

The research design of this study follows a qualitative approach. Sharan B. Merriam, in Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation, says that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have

constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world."[164] In this study, qualitative research provided the researcher an opportunity to understand and learn from the experiences of pastors who have served as bivocational pastors for several years.

Merriam mentions four characteristics that are important to understanding the nature of qualitative research: first, "the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning;" second, "the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis;" third, "the process is inductive;" and fourth, "the product is richly descriptive."[165] These characteristics are well-suited for understanding how bivocational pastors overcome the challenges they face.

Pastors who have served as bivocational pastors for several years have unique experiences that can help other ministers who find themselves in similar situations. The purpose of this study was to understand the bivocational pastorship experience. Qualitative research has permitted the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of bivocational pastors, how they understand the theology of work, and how it influences their dual roles. Since each pastor is unique, as is each pastoral setting, the experiences of the bivocational pastor will naturally vary. However, since the researcher was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the researcher was able to adapt to the varied responses and, as Merriam says, "explore unusual or unanticipated

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[164] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2009), 13.

[165] Ibid., 14.

responses."[166] She states further that, "rather than deductively testing hypotheses,"[167] the researcher explored what is yet unknown in the experiences of the pastors interviewed and then looked for common themes and inductively drew conclusions. Finally, since qualitative research is "richly descriptive,"[168] the researcher took note of phrases used and narratives recounted by those interviewed, which gave greater meaning to the experiences conveyed and the lessons learned.

Participant Sample Selection

In order to gain meaningful data for this study, the researcher interviewed eight United Pentecostal Church International pastors who have served in a bivocational role for five years or more. This duration of time was selected so as to assure that the pastors interviewed would have had sufficient opportunity to evaluate their ministry effectiveness in light of the struggles that attend such ministry. A bivocational pastor is defined by this researcher as a pastor who receives part-time or full-time income from work other than his pastoral income. Congregations pastored by a bivocational pastor ranged in size from as few as thirty to as many as 175 regular participants.

Furthermore, the researcher limited the interview pool to UPCI pastors. In order to limit variables that are not of interest for this analysis, it was important that all participants in the study hold similar theological convictions regarding the Word of God, the sovereignty of God, the spiritual nature of the contemporary church, and the nature of

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[166] Ibid., 15.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid., 16.

Christian ministry. Differing views in these areas may greatly influence a minister's response to God's call and the way one evaluates their roles.

Where possible, the researcher's intention was to interview pastors from diverse regions of the United States. Hopefully, a wide geographic diversity and a diversity of the type of work contributed to the richness of the data collected, providing for a wide variation of cultural context.

Data Collection

The researcher either travel to the pastor's church or home where he interviewed face to face, or it was done by telephone. The interviews were taken between one and one-half hours depending on how verbose the participants were.

The interviews follows a semi-structured format, which, according to Merriam, is based on "flexibly worded" questions, which "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic."[169] The advantage to such a format is that it gives the researcher the flexibility to adapt and respond in order to get to the most helpful data. The following questions served as the interview protocol:

Tell me what led you to become a bivocational pastor.

Explain your concept of work from your theological perspective.

Tell me what you think about being called to ministry and being called to other types of work. Explain the difference between the two.

Explain your perception of secular work as it relates to the kingdom of God.

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[169] Ibid., 90.

How do you know you are doing the right things at the right place as a bivocational pastor?

Looking forward, what do you see in your future as a pastor?

Explain what are your greatest challenges as a bivocational pastor?

Explain how your congregation perceives your bivocational role.

Explain how you feel about your relationships with other pastors and leaders in your denomination.

In what ways could your denomination help you with your challenges as a bivocational pastor?

What do you look for in your dual roles that gives you a sense of fulfillment and achievement?

What steps have you taken to insure your spiritual health?

How do you deal with demands of job and pastoral ministry that are impossible for you to achieve?

Explain how your bivocational ministry gives you an advantage over a full-time pastor.

What are some of the disadvantages you deal with that a full-time pastor does not deal with?

Because the interviews followed a semi-structured format, the order of the questions may vary and, in some cases, some questions may be left out entirely, depending on the interview and the direction it took.

Finally, the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed immediately following the interview.

Data Analysis

The researcher studied the transcriptions of the interviews using the constant comparative method, which, according to Merriam, "involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences."[170] Merriam continues, "Data are grouped together . . . [and] tentatively given a name; it then becomes a category. The overall object of this analysis is to identify patterns in the data. These patterns are arranged in relationship to each other in the building of a grounded theory."[171] That is, "a theory that emerges from, or is 'grounded' in, the data."[172] Data was coded for themes and contrasts to answer research questions. Using the constant comparative method, the researcher was able to analyze the experiences of one bivocational pastor in comparison to others from a variety of perspectives, thereby making sense of those experiences and suggesting a theory about how bivocational pastors learn to embrace their dual role of responsibilities and how they evaluate their effectiveness in them.

Researcher's Position

Since in qualitative studies the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, all observations and analysis were filtered through the researcher's perspectives and values. Therefore, researchers must be aware of how their own bias or subjectivity shapes the research process. Moreover, as Merriam states, the

[170] Ibid., 30.

[171] Ibid., 30-31.

[172] Ibid., 29.

researcher's "assumptions, experiences, worldviews, and theoretical orientation"[173] should be identified and stated up front.

The researcher conducting this study served as a bivocational pastor at two different churches. Both congregations had approximately fifty in regular attendance. He was a bivocational pastor for a total of eight years. He then served as a full-time pastor for thirteen years for a congregation that grew to 130 attendees. The researcher was raised in a home that put great value on hard work. Ever since the researcher was a young minister he has felt there was a lack of teaching and preaching on the theology of work in his denomination. This has resulted in a lack of theological clarity. It is also the opinion of the researcher that, due to the Pentecostal denomination's emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit, some pastors avoid the hard work of ministry. These beliefs and experiences could have influenced his opinions concerning some aspects of bivocational pastorates. For the past fourteen years he served as an executive for his denomination.

Study Limitations

Given that only seven pastors were interviewed, that they all come from the Apostolic Pentecostal tradition, and that the researcher has limited resources and time to invest in the collection of data, it must be acknowledged that the conclusions drawn will not necessarily have universal application to every situation.

Another limitation is that the research concerns one specific denomination's cultural context. Since all of the interviewees were male, this study is limited by a lack of female perspective. This study did not seek the opinions of the bivocational pastor's church members.

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[173] Ibid., 219.

The researcher did not interview a woman pastor. Since all of the pastors interviewed were male, there is a lack of female opinions expressed.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover how bivocational pastors understand the theology of work and how it is experienced in their dual-role responsibilities. In order to research the subject, it was important for the researcher to understand how bivocational pastors experience their dual-role responsibilities.

The following research questions guided the qualitative research:

(1) How do bivocational pastors describe their theology of work?

(2) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their secular work on their ministry work?

(3) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their ministry work on their secular work?

(4) How do bivocational pastors describe their ministry?

In order to answer these questions, eight bivocational pastors were interviewed. In this chapter these participants will be introduced and their insights concerning the study questions will be presented.

Introduction to Individuals Interviewed During This Study

The names of the participants have been changed in order to protect their identities. These introductions will allow comparisons and contrasts to be made concerning size and age of churches, backgrounds of the individual participants, nature of

their secular careers, and how these factors might affect their perception of bivocational pastorship.

Sam is a bivocational pastor from a small southern town who accepted his call into the ministry at the age of nineteen. At that time he was working at a post office and attending college. His ministry progressed from preaching on weekends at local churches to becoming an assistant pastor. He served as an assistant pastor for six years before becoming a pastor himself. For the past twenty-three years he has continued to work at the post office and pastor a church that ranged in attendance from 100 to 170. He not only served as pastor and postmaster, but served in a number of denominational leadership roles and also leadership roles in his post office career. He has demonstrated enormous energy and a strong work ethic. Although he retired from postal work and resigned his church a few months ago, he continues to work full time as an executive for his denomination.

Aaron lives in a small southern town where he serves as a bivocational pastor. He worked for six years as an accountant before accepting a call into ministry. After entering the ministry, he immediately became a pastor where he has continued to serve the same church for the past thirty-two years. When he was elected pastor the church had fourteen voting members and could not support a pastor financially. Aaron started his own tax preparation company that has grown to seven employees. He has never taken a salary from the church even though it has grown to 150 to 175 people in attendance. In addition, Aaron also travels and conducts seminars about ministerial tax laws and finances. He also served for a time in the city government.

Larry is a bivocational pastor in Alaska. He was saved in 1973 while serving in the US Air Force. Three and a half years later he was pastoring his first church. He pastored churches in two other Alaska locations. Larry deliberately worked toward getting his Ph.D. so he could be a bivocational pastor. He became a psychologist because he had a background in medicine, and he determined that the hours would be compatible with pastoring. His city is four hundred air miles from the nearest major city. His city has a population of sixty-two hundred and is surrounded by about fifty villages totaling approximately twenty-eight thousand people. The city has no roads leading in or out of the city. Travel outside the city is by air or boat. The church has one hundred and higher in attendance and has been in existence for twenty-five years. Larry has been the pastor for twenty of those years working simultaneously as a psychologist.

Gregory is a church planter in a western city of the U.S. He is forty-six years old and has four children. Two are married and two are in college. Gregory works full time as a computer scientist designing computer systems for businesses. He was not a member of any church when a troubled marriage led him to seek God. As a result, he and his wife experienced an unusual conversion. Soon after accepting his call into ministry he moved to another city and planted the church he has pastored for the past five years. He now has a membership of approximately five families and a number of other peripheral attendees. He has his own business as well as working for other firms in his city.

José is a Hispanic bivocational pastor. His church is a Spanish-speaking church that runs around 150 in attendance. The church is a daughter church of a large church in the Midwest. His congregation meets in the family center for services and social events. José came to America from Guatemala and has been in the church for only ten years. He

has no formal theological training and is a passionate believer and church builder. He works two jobs in addition to pastoring. He is a vinyl siding contractor and also cleans a theater every morning. He receives no income from the church. He is not fluent in English so the interview was done through an interpreter. Ellis, who is a mutual friend and is fluent in English and Spanish, interpreted the interview. Ellis grew up as a missionary's son in South America.

Mike is a church planter in a large city of a southern state. He also works full time (fifty hours per week) as a chaplain for a hospice provider. Linda, his wife, works on a contract basis as a dyslexia therapist advisor. Mike is thirty-seven years old, and he and his wife have one son. After he and Linda received their degrees from a seminary in 2006, they moved to their current location and started the church. The church is approximately seven years old and runs around seventy people in attendance. They are renting a facility for services, but have purchased three and one-half acres right across the street from city hall.

Darrell is a pastor and church planter in the inner city of a major city in the Midwest. He was saved at the age of fifteen years and quickly felt he wanted to work for God. He served in the United States Army and was stationed in Germany where he began his ministry. He got his bachelor's degree and master's degree while carrying heavy responsibility in the church. He now works full time as a psychologist in the Human Resources Department for a distinguished university. In addition, he has his own counseling service, which he has operated for several years. He also travels frequently as an itinerate speaker. He and his wife have five children. His church is approximately

sixteen years old and has an average attendance of sixty. The church has also started two daughter churches and has plans for starting three more.

These individuals come from a different part of the country (Mississippi, Alaska, Colorado, Arkansas, Texas, and two are from Missouri). Their occupations are varied (postmaster, business owner, psychologist, computer scientist, building contractor, and hospice chaplain). Their church sizes range from forty-five to 175. All of the pastors are married and have from one to six children. Some have children still at home and others have children married and moved away. Some are partially supported by their congregations and others receive no income from their service as pastor. One pastor is Hispanic and his church is Spanish-speaking. One pastor was African American. Three interviewees are church planters. The educational backgrounds are varied (two of the interviewees have Ph.Ds., one has a master's degree, one has a bachelor's degree, two have some college, and the others have only high school diplomas). Three of the bivocational pastors have daughter churches.

It is hoped that these profiles will better serve the reader in understanding the theological perspectives and practices of bivocational pastors serving in United Pentecostal churches. With this orientation to the research participants complete, the interview data that answers the four guiding research questions will now be presented.

Bivocational Pastors and the Theology of Work

All of these bivocational pastors have a strong work ethic. They are busy people who have learned to multitask and delegate responsibility. When the researcher probed for their theology of work, they answered in ways that revealed an indifference to a biblical evaluation; they wanted to talk more about the practical aspects of work. The

idea that work could inherently have spiritual and eternal significance was not the first thing that crossed their minds. They view work as something natural to life and essential to achievement, but, standing alone, work is not that spiritually significant. Work's spiritual and eternal value is significant only if it builds the church.

The Theology of Work

The bivocational pastors interviewed offered limited insight toward defining their theology of work. It seems they have not thought about this subject that deeply. Even when the interviewer mentioned biblical teaching on work, the interviewees did not respond in theological terms. All of the interviewees were asked, directly or indirectly, "What is your theology of work?" The answers were surprising. An example is the response Sam, the postmaster, gave:

> You know work is good. I came from a family of nine boys and one girl, and it was not an option about working. In our house we had to work. We must work. We worked all of our lives. My dad had a service station and I started pumping gas when I was twelve years old. We thought work was just logical. You couldn't live without work. And when we entered ministry we started working, and so our theology of work is that it is good. It increased our standard of living. It gave us a concept that God and work do mix sometimes. In my later years I found out that if I had something to do at church or work, I was comfortable to do that.

When expressing their view of work, they all gave a positive response. But making connections to a biblical theology was not at the core of their answers. Most of the answers were subjective evaluations of their personal choice of being bivocational. Work was something that was inherently tethered to their pastoral ministry as a result of circumstances. It suited their gifting and met their financial needs. They found fulfillment in secular work as well as pastoral work, but they did not give theological reasons for embracing this heavy workload. Most of the pastors answered the theological/work

question by talking about the practical things that led them into serving in a dual role. Gregory, the computer scientist, is a good example:

> The technicality of work is what has driven me to do it. You know, when you come to the Lord sort of later in life . . . you've already established your standard of living. Your wife is already used to working and living the way she lives her life. . . . You've got yourself a big mortgage and work just never seems to stop. It's not an option. So I didn't evaluate it that way. For me there's been a tremendous breach between having faith for God to provide and jumping more fully into the ministry.

Having a passion to minister drives the bivocational pastor to do whatever is necessary to fulfill that passion. They all appear to enjoy their secular jobs, but ministry is their primary focus. It seems to be a passion to do the work of ministry and not the theology of work that motivates. Darrell, who has the heart of a church planter, expressed this best when he said,

> For me, it was more the theology of staying in the field versus the theology of work and around work. Probably what was built into me is more of what you're talking about, the theology of actually getting out there and working and earning, and providing for family and all that kind of stuff. I think as a pastor, not so much thinking about it in terms of the theology of work. I've never really gone that route—or as an offering as unto the Lord. It's just always been in the field. I want to stay as close to the field as possible.

The pastors interviewed believe strongly in the work ethic, but from a practical and utilitarian view. Darrell made a statement that clarifies his view of the essential need for work with these words: "I think a person who sits home and does nothing will die spiritually and physically."

Eternal Value of Work

When Darrell was asked if work had eternal value, he answered emphatically, "Outside of soul winning—no—zero!" The interviewer reminded him that God is in a process of restoration. He is restoring what was lost. All of an individual's contributions

and productive behaviors are contributing toward the restoration process. He said, “On the front lines, I don’t have the luxury for that.” He appeared to be saying that the theology of work was a lofty subject for thinkers and theologians. He, and other bivocational pastors, seemed to be more concerned about the immediate and the imperative—winning the lost and building their churches. Delving into the intricacies of work analysis was a lofty project for people who are not in the trenches doing the hard work of the kingdom. Work was just one more element toward accomplishing their church-building goal.

Mike conceded that work does have eternal value:

> [A man] is called to be the provider for his family; to be the one that sustains . . . to be the priest in his household. So he has a calling to be a dad, a husband, and an individual . . . and by virtue of that, your higher calling could be to serve your family; to actually see your family grow and come to the Lord. That in itself has eternal consequences, and certainly has an eternal calling to it.

He seems to be saying that work in itself has no inherent eternal value. The only eternal value is what work will help accomplish toward winning souls and growing the kingdom of God.

Vocation (Calling)

All of the interviewees believe that God calls people into vocations other than the ministry. There is a strong belief that God gives each individual talents and abilities and it is their responsibility and privilege to contribute what they have been given to the kingdom of God. Darrell agrees that God calls people to do specific things: “I was talking to a pastor recently and he talked about a guy who was a cook. He said, ‘I think he is just anointed to do that.’ And I was, like, Yeah! I agree with that.” Mike says,

> I do believe that every person has a calling . . . it is vitally important that every person passionately pursue their God-given calling. Sometimes vocation just means an area of service; say health care—or, say they are good at technology, something on the technical side. Maybe marketing. I do believe that every area we are involved in potentially can give glory to the Lord. So I think it is vital that we consider what that looks like in our relationship with God. . . . is it just a job that we punch in nine to five? . . . is it truly a vocational calling?

Callings may be varied and individualistic, but in addition, people have callings that are pervasive and universal. Mike continued by putting it in these terms: "I think we're all called to be soul winners. . . . We are all called to serve the kingdom of God. We are all called to be disciples of the Lord. Sometimes that manifests in different ways."

The pastors were asked if they thought there was a hierarchy of callings. Most responded no. Larry believes the preaching ministry has suffered a diminished role of importance in a contemporary culture. Parents more and more want their children to pursue professional careers. He believes the ministry needs to be lifted to a higher level of importance. He puts it in these words:

> My feeling has been that in recent years there has been a bit of, "Well why don't you be something [secular]? Don't be a preacher." . . . I think we must put that calling out front and say, "Wait a minute. If God has called you into the ministry, then that is the highest calling—as far as the preaching ministry."

He goes on to explain that some are called to "Babylon." They may be called to go into the workplace as a carpenter or plumber and fulfill their calling there as a witness. José believes that God calls people into various vocations, but the ministry is a higher calling than any other. All of the interviewees believe the ministry is an important calling, but not all think there is a gradient level of vocations.

Work and Worship

All the pastors interviewed agree that work can be worship unto the Lord. Some added the clarification that the work must in some way advance the kingdom of God. There was not universal agreement that work in itself was worship. Sam said, "I think everything we do should be 'as unto the Lord.' Every day is a new day and it is unto the Lord." José states that work can give God glory when believers do it unto him:

> As the Bible says, when I work and someone is over me I need to work for him because he's my boss. I need to work for him as if I'm working for God. When I work for God I need to do the same as I would for my natural boss. I work for God with love and excellence and I must do the same for my employer.

Larry said, "Not everybody is going to be called to a pastoral ministry or one of the four or five ministries. But everything should be a ministry. Believers should see that whatever they do they should do it unto the Lord."

How Secular Work Impacts Pastoral Work

Three pastors have jobs that are ministry related—two psychologists and a hospice counselor. Mike says, "I have a unique opportunity to be there and stand beside someone during their most difficult and distraught time of life. It may be a dad, mom, uncle, or a mother or son." These pastors have an ideal situation for ministry. The other pastors have jobs that are not directly related to ministry. Their jobs affect the church with factors like finances, time, and focus. Larry said, "I think we have impacted this community by me being a bivocational pastor, by me being a psychologist. I think it has had a very positive impact."

Finances

One of the most obvious benefits of secular work is the additional income it brings to the pastor and his family. Not only does it raise the pastor's standard of living, it can also give the church more financial power. Aaron said he had never received an income from the church he has pastored for the past thirty-two years. When asked about taking a salary he said, "I never took a salary from that church. I could have, but didn't. If you've ever seen our building here you would know why. We have a beautiful building in a great location. It took a lot of money to put it back into the building and that's what I did by choice."

José also said he has never taken a salary for his pastoral service. Mike, who is a church planter, said he plans to hire two church staff people before he ever considers taking a salary from the church.

Not all the pastors were asked directly if they took a salary, but obviously the financial strength of both pastor and church will be enhanced with more income.

Time Restraints

All of the pastors indicated that time restraints was a challenging issue. Aaron was asked, "Explain what are your greatest challenges as a bivocational pastor." He answered, "Time, time, time! There is never enough time. You just have to set a schedule and stay with it as much as possible. And yes, the church comes first over the secular work." Mike was asked the same question: "Time! I feel like I strain and juggle the time that I have with my congregational needs, my employment responsibilities, and my family's needs. Sometimes I feel like since I have a fifty-hour-a-week job a lot of my church work gets pushed into the evenings and weekends." When asked about his greatest disadvantage

over a full-time pastor, José said, “The greatest disadvantage would be time.” Larry said, “I think the biggest thing I find it impossible to do is to have time to just lie around. I don’t have a lot of downtime. My wife and I teach Bible studies all the time. That’s been one of our tools for winning souls.” Sam said, “You have to learn how to manage time between two entities that are pulling at you—your work’s pulling at you and your church is pulling at you. So you got to find a happy medium inside of that.” Gregory said time management is his greatest challenge.

Aaron owns his own business and insists on managing his time with the following routine:

> Everyone knows it. My clients know it. My staff knows it. On Wednesday afternoons at around 2:00 to 2:30 I’m through at this office. I go to the church. I have to prepare for that night. I may already have a thought, but that’s just time. . . . During tax season it’s demanding. It just has to be that we work six days a week. But on Saturday by two o’clock, I’m through. I’m going to the church. I’m going to spend that time there.

Aaron related a story concerning a neighboring pastor who had a small congregation of around forty people. He complained to Aaron about how busy he was. Aaron asked him, “Why are you so busy?” He said, “I’m trying to pastor this church. I’m full time.” Aaron called him later, but he was unavailable all morning due to taking a ride on his four-wheeler. It is possible some bivocational pastors are more devoted to their churches than full-time pastors.

Interaction with the Community

All of the interviewees believe their secular jobs put them in touch with unchurched working people that they would otherwise never meet. Mike, the hospice

counselor, sees his work as an occasion to meet new people and be a witness. He says this about his opportunities to witness in the workplace:

> This past Sunday four of my co-workers attended church. One has been baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost. The other three—God's doing a work. This past Sunday she broke down in tears during prayer time. She was at a point of desperation, but because of the relationship I have at work with these folks—they have seen me working for five years beside them—I have the unique opportunity to hope and speak into five lives. These are families that I wouldn't have had if I had been a full-time pastor. I would never have been able to actually let my actions live out my faith in front of these folks. So I guess there are advantages to working as a bivocational pastor.

Darrell, who is a church planter, calls the workplace the "field." He works as a psychologist at a university and has his own private counseling service. This puts him in contact with many people. He decided to be a bivocational pastor for the purpose of working in the field. He explains: "How can I stay in the field? How can I replicate myself in the field? What's the most effective, efficient way of doing the work in the field? That's what work has been about for me. It's never been about, "We need to eat and that's it." It's never been about amassing wealth. It's never been about any of that." Aaron, who owns an accounting firm, has found great opportunities for his church in his community due to his secular work. His office is in the downtown area of his city, and people not only come to the business for accounting help, but for prayer and counseling. He says the following concerning his secular work:

> I've had people walk in and say to the staff up front (there's a staff of seven people here), "Is this a place where I can come and get some prayer? I need prayer." We'll just stop everything we're doing and all of us will go pray for them. There's to me quite a merging of the two. . . . Some feel it is negative; however, it is a positive position because one can come into contact with many more people and can witness to more by being involved in a secular job. The potential to reach more people is readily available.

Aaron's strategic location and his reputation in the community make his place of business also a place of ministry. He says twelve thousand people pass by his office every day. In addition, his tax service helps many pastors and churches around the country. He talks on the phone to an average of forty to sixty people a day. It is clear that Aaron sees his pastorship and the workplace interwoven.

Gregory, the computer systems scientist, sees his secular work as an opportunity to build relationships:

> I feel as though in my particular profession the opportunity exists for me to make relationships with people I work with. So in some sense I would be sure I could meet people and talk to people that I may have not met before. I guess it's a little different than being a checker at Wal-Mart. You build deeper relationships over time.

Whether it's being a witness in "Babylon" or a place to sow seeds in the "field," the workplace is viewed as a place of ministry by these bivocational pastors.

Relating to the Congregation

The church planters and some of the other bivocational pastors say their churches do not know what it's like to have a full-time pastor. The congregations have grown under their leadership, and they accept their role as something normal.

The bivocational pastors who responded to the question about their congregation's view of their bivocational role believe their willingness to work gives them rapport with their membership. They feel it helps them have more empathy with the stresses of the workplace. Sam, who worked as a postmaster, made the following observation: "It also gave me an understanding of people in my church when they were tired and came to church on Wednesday night, or when they had to work overtime. Nobody could use the excuse, 'I had to work today!' because I had the same excuse."

The bivocational pastor will normally have more empathy with his congregation. In the workplace they face the same challenges as their members. Mike believes the church members would rather he be a full-time pastor, but they understand. He says, “There is an expectation of a pastor being available. But because I am working, and they understand I am working, I think a lot of them appreciate that I have a job that is ultimately funding myself and my family.” The congregation will understand that the bivocational pastor is not lazy, but industrious.

How Pastoral Work Affects Secular Work

According to the bivocational pastors interviewed, an employer understands that the bivocational pastor will have limited time, and his interests will be divided. This may give the employer pause when hiring a bivocational pastor. The employer will also be sensitive to any distraction if the bivocational pastor has not had time to prove himself. If the employer is a non-believer, he may have unfounded negative ideas about the bivocational pastor.

Taking Time Off

All of the pastors have found cooperation from employers when they need time off. None of the pastors interviewed found taking time off for pastoral duties to be a problem. One pastor is self-employed and others have a lot of flexibility. Even those who have more regimented commitments found cooperation with management.

When José was asked, “Do you find that most of your secular employers understand your dual role?” He said, “I don’t think they understand, but I think God has given them a special grace because they’ve never denied me when I needed something.” Sam also found cooperation:

> One good thing about us is we had a flexible schedule. If we had somebody in the hospital, I could call my clerk and say, "Listen, I'm not coming in until ten, eleven, or twelve—can you work a little extra?"—which they were very happy to do. . . . I normally didn't like to work on weekends, but I had to work a few Saturdays to make up for the extra time I needed to be off somewhere else.

Gregory said he is up front with employers about the times he has to be off. He has found this to be the best approach.

> I make very clear what times are off limits for work, so they don't even go there. I tell them, "You can't have Sunday. You can't have Thursday nights." The second thing I do is I default to the church. If I have to choose between visiting saints and working a little extra hours to get a job done, I visit. If I have to choose between going to the hospital and meeting a deadline, I go to the hospital. I was worried at first that this might cost me my job, but it never has. Somehow it always works out.

Darrell made arrangements with his employer when he was hired. Church members are allowed to call him if they need to. He explains: "I do let them call me if I'm at work. I have jobs that are flexible enough that I can take a call. When I came here they knew I was a pastor. They knew I spoke out, and it was a condition of my coming here—that I continue all that."

Brings Opportunities

Some of the bivocational pastors view their ministry as an asset in the workplace by providing opportunities for ministry. Larry says,

> Most people in this community know I am a pastor, by osmosis I guess . . . whether or not they attend our church. But there are times when they will ask me, or I will just say to them, "Can I pray for you?" That's an opportunity right there. I may be working from a secular model, but at the same time, the opportunity is there to pray with them. And I pray with them.

Sam says that in spite of his pastoral duties and other administrative responsibilities with his denomination, he has been selected for leadership roles in his secular work. Being a minister brought attention to his abilities to work with people.

> For the past twenty-three years I was a postmaster. During those times I also was the chaplain for the National Association of Postmasters in the USA (NAPUS). In Mississippi I was a chaplain for about nine years. I also served as vice president and then the next year served as president of NAPUS. . . . Over the years I have been a shop steward.

Misperceptions

People in the workplace have varied perceptions of pastors. For some, being a pastor brings respect and honor. In other environments, pastors are viewed with suspicion. Gregory, who lives in Colorado, says,

> For some strange reason in my particular profession, if I tell an employer I'm a pastor he looks at me like maybe he should hire someone else because I'm not fully engaged. He fears that I'll not give myself fully to the job. So I find that I get passed up for jobs. Again, there is this tension to keep work separate from church so I can operate, get jobs, and put it on the table. In my particular job situation there are lots of people with different faiths. . . . people are not that accepting. I don't know if it's too many Muslims or whatever else is going on. I don't know if Christianity is starting to get a bad name or it's just this area of the world. Colorado is pretty liberal.

Divided Focus

Being a bivocational pastor requires great discipline. Not just discipline to work hard, but discipline of the mind. They have to be nimble and quick on their feet, so to speak. They have to move from one line of work to another, because the two normally require different disciplines. They also have the pressure to stay proficient in both professions. Larry, who is a psychologist, expressed his frustration with trying to be current in both professions:

> As a professional, I'm trying to stay current in both fields, to feel as if I'm staying on the cutting edge in both fields . . . I struggle with that. . . . A lot of people think psychology is counseling, and a lot of people do therapy and counseling. . . . I think the greatest challenge is to stay current in all of these different domains.

José has a large family, works two secular jobs, teaches home Bible studies, and pastors. He finds that God helps him make the transition.

> First, I ask God to give me wisdom to be a father, husband, and pastor. He puts the stages of my life together, giving time in my life. My youngest son is three years old, and my oldest is twenty-one. I also instruct the leaders and disciples in the church. I also spend time teaching home Bible studies on Thursdays and Fridays. I understand it is God who gives us the strength for all of this. Physically, my body feels good. I have not felt stressed. I have always had strength; I know that strength isn't just mine, but it comes from God.

How Bivocational Pastors Describe their Ministry

The bivocational pastor faces many problems that a full-time pastor does not face. Due to varied backgrounds, size of church, geography, nature of the workplace, family situation, educational experience, and ministry gifting, every pastor handles their challenges differently. In order to answer the question "How do bivocational pastors describe their ministry?" several subheadings are provided.

Church Planters

Three of the pastors interviewed are church planters: Darrell, Mike, and Gregory. Also, Aaron, Larry, and José became pastors when their churches were small and have built them up. One common challenge for church planters is finances. There are few programs to support them. Being bivocational is a practical way to plant a church. This allows the income from the church to pay the rent and utilities, and eventually purchase property. Many times a young church has not had time to train people and much of the responsibility falls on the pastor.

The church planters are focused on winning souls. Evangelism and discipleship are more important than things full-time pastors deal with. Darrell describes his ministry as a church planter in these terms:

> I'm bringing Christ into their world, into their environment as I go into their homes. That really excites me. In downtown St. Louis, we have the largest counseling service in the city of St. Louis. Eighty percent of our clientele lives within five miles of our church. As I go into people's homes and help them, I see those efforts as being just the feet and hands of Jesus. You can give me that or give me Sunday service; I see them very similarly. So I feel a lot of satisfaction in that, but again, it's more around sowing and planting and touching people.

For Darrell, it is not just about having church services. It's about touching people with the gospel.

Mike is a hospice chaplain and church planter. Not only does he find the challenge of time restraints, but energy and emotional strength as well.

> A lot of my pastoral work has to be after hours. So at 5:30 every evening I am doing Bible studies or preparing sermons. I may be going to the hospital. Whereas, if I was doing some of that during the day, that would free up some of my evenings. I could spend time with my family or be able to have different kinds of conversations with different kinds of people in a different setting. I've got to shift away from family and congregational needs. It has to be because of the nature of working. That squeeze of time does come; and it can be emotionally draining. Hospice is not for everyone. You're dealing with people dying every day, and that can be emotionally draining. So you must build your reservoir up somehow or some way to find a place of renewal. This job will burn you out critically to the point where you will start to see your family life go down, and/or your congregation will suffer because of the roles you're playing.

Mike deals with people's problems just like Darrell. Doing the same nature of work seven days a week can be tiring. Having a diversion, such as computer science or construction, may be helpful. Constantly helping people with problems can be stressful.

Gregory deals with the tension of going full time and continuing as a bivocational pastor. He likes his secular work, but sees that it steals his time and energy from his church. He has bills to pay if he wants to maintain his current standard of living. If he went full time as a pastor, his church would grow. But would it grow enough to support his family? He expressed his frustration in these terms:

> I say, "I need to quit making tents and start spending more time in the ministry." How do you do that? That's the struggle I've had. . . .Right now, if I went full time and the church didn't grow, I would end up losing my house. This is one of those constant reminders of my humanity and battle of the flesh versus my spirit.

This is added pressure when dealing with guilt about not doing enough for the church and not doing enough for the family. Nevertheless, these church planters are establishing new churches and doing it without support.

Gifting and Calling

All of the interviewees believe God calls men into pastoral ministry. They also believe He calls people into secular work as well, but their cases are different. Some of the pastors deliberately sought specialized education in order to become a bivocational pastor. It was planned from the beginning. Aaron believes God called him to be bivocational:

> I strongly felt God was calling me to do more than just pastor this local assembly; that his call was to help churches and help ministers. It's probably been thirty-one or thirty-two years ago. My son was just a small boy. I sat down one night with my wife to talk about our future. We had only been pastoring a few short years. I remember making the statement that I felt somewhere down the road I would be doing more than just pastoring this church. In fact, I really felt the time frame of some thirty years of pastoring and after that I would be available to travel more. I felt that strongly. And that's what has come to pass.

Larry also made a decision to become a bivocational pastor and enrolled in a Ph.D. program to become a psychologist. He explained how God led him toward his career in psychology.

> I decided I wanted to get something that's marketable, that I could use in the ministry and be able to feed myself. Psychology did interest me. I had a medical background. I had been five years in the Air Force as a medic. And I had worked in the medical field while in Hoonah. But I decided that I was not going to be in medicine. It would have tied me down eighty hours a week. Psychology was more flexible. It allowed me to set my hours.

Larry strategized and worked several years going to school and serving internship to get his degree in order to pastor a church in Alaska. A number of these pastors did not meander on their journey waiting for fate to control their destiny. They were deliberate and planned their current positions.

Darrell found that at times in his life he felt a specific calling, but some of his journey has been serendipitous. His present job at the university sought him out. He was not looking for this job. He had his counseling service. He says this about determining the call of God:

> I have a very simple model that I've always used. Number one: Will this hurt the church and us planting churches? If the answer is yes, then my answer would be no, not interested! . . . If you feel God is saying this is something you can do—then do it! On the one side of my model are my personal goals that I feel like God has given to me and that's starting the churches, the importance of education, the importance of health, and on the other half I have another boundary. So, I've got my values and my goals. What are my goals? What are my values? As long as it does not violate my goals or my values that I believe are from God, then I believe God can bless it. Then I pretty much can flow in it. I always check with my wife because she is so intuitive and can save me from a lot of stuff. I really want to know, "God, what is this about? Where am I to be used here?" Then, as long as I believe that's happening I can be at that place. When I think it's not happening, then it's time to go and do something different. I have a lot of opportunities, and that's how I decide what opportunities I add to my load.

Some pastors were called into ministry after they were established in a career. Gregory was a computer scientist when he was converted. He was able to move his career with him to the city where he is planting a church. José was a vinyl siding contractor before being called into ministry. Sam was a postmaster when he was called into ministry and did not resign his postal position.

Even though Mike had a Master of Theological Studies, he went back to school to get a CDE and then served a year of internship as a chaplain. He did this so he could

become a bivocational church planter. The sacrifices these pastors have made are outstanding.

Sense of Accomplishment

Of necessity, the interviewees described their pursuit of God's will for their lives in a dual dimension. These are the questions that beg to be answered: Which of their careers brings the most fulfillment? Do they love their secular careers and just pastor to satisfy a desire to do something for God? Do they love pastoral ministry and work secularly to support their pastorate? All of them, without exception, said they get more fulfillment from ministry than from the secular jobs. Some have secular jobs that are similar to pastoral work, but most do not.

Larry finds accomplishment in his work as a forensic and clinical psychologist, but his greatest sense of satisfaction is described as follows:

> My greatest sense of achievement is in the work of God. That's my call. As far as the other role is concerned, I'm helping people. Sometimes when I'm doing psychological testing it's kind of investigative. At times I feel like I've helped somebody. In that sense I'm helping people. So I guess my greatest satisfaction is just helping people.

Mike was asked, "On a typical day do you find fulfillment in knowing that what you're doing contributes to the kingdom?" He answered, "Certainly! Of all the jobs a church planter could have, I get to be a chaplain, an individual who is paid by a company to provide spiritual care and show compassion to folks in our community. It's an amazing opportunity." He described his work in more detail in the following statement:

> I get to serve my community as an actual spiritual care coordinator or chaplain. My role is that and much more; it's like I'm receiving payment for something that I should really be volunteering to do—serving my community. So it's such a unique role that I have. But I do believe there is something to be said about me

> supporting my family and funding the mission and the vision of the ultimate calling; and that is, we're here to plant a church in Deer Park.

Even though he finds immense fulfillment in his chaplaincy work, he confirmed that his ultimate goal was to plant a church in his city. Pastoring remains his primary purpose.

For Darrell, he does not want to be a full-time pastor. He wants to be bivocational. He explains it this way:

> I've always looked at it in terms of so many full-time ministers are out of touch at some point with people around them. These aren't bad people; they are people who are just administrating the church. It's consuming. I didn't want to be that person. For me, it was more the theology of staying in the field versus the theology of work and around work.

He believes that working in the workplace gives him insights and rapport with people that may be missing with a full-time pastor. He has a full-time job at the university, but also runs a counseling service. This was his evaluation of the counseling job:

> My counseling service is less structured full time. . . . We have the largest counseling service in the city of St. Louis. Eighty percent of our clientele live within five miles of our church. I go into people's homes and help them. And I see those efforts as being the feet and hands of Jesus. You can give me that or give me Sunday service; I see them very similarly. So I feel a lot of satisfaction in that. But again, it's more around sowing and planting and touching people.

Aaron finds his secular work interwoven with his pastoral work. Being bivocational is a choice and not a necessity. He could be a full-time pastor, but he chooses not to take a salary from the church. It is clear that he has a love for both jobs. He has built his business to fifteen hundred clients. With his years of experience and tax and finance expertise, he is helping ministers and churches solve their tax and financial issues. He has recently turned the pastoral responsibilities over to his son, who also works in the business. He plans to travel more, giving financial assistance to churches and pastors.

Sam's work as a postmaster was not related to his pastoral work, but he feels great satisfaction at this stage of life that he continued to serve as a bivocational pastor.

> Well, I can't speak for everybody, but I think my work actually paid off. I was privileged last year to officially retire from the US Postal Service—with my sick leave and actual work time of over thirty-six years. So while I never thought about that as a teenager—never thought about it as a twenty-, thirty-, or 40-year-old—but at fifty years old it sure makes a difference in our lives. It's just a balance of learning how to work and to focus on church also.

Sam's choice to stay in his secular work was more discipline than calling. He could have been a full-time pastor, but chose to work and provide a better income for his family. He made the sacrifice and now it is paying off with his retirement benefits. He works as a full-time executive for his denomination and receives retirement income as well.

Gregory, the computer scientist, enjoys his secular work, but that is not his first love. He describes his priorities in these words:

> I get great satisfaction out of bringing the Word of God to people. That's really what drives me. As far as work goes, I like to have something I can accomplish, and it's gratifying to be surrounded by people who appreciate me. And I certainly look forward to a paycheck. You know, I could let go of work. I really could. It's not that I don't really love work, but because it's what makes the difference for me.

When asked if he would prefer to be a full-time pastor, Gregory responded,

> As far as my preference for what type of work I do, I had rather do ministry work. I believe I enjoy it more. But I enjoy working too. If I were a full-time pastor, I know there'd be times when I wished I could just work my computer stuff. No emotions. No problems. I just need the computer for some quiet time—meditative. So I would probably make a hobby out of what used to be my full-time job.

Gregory worries about his retirement; he doesn't want to be a burden on his kids. He could just "trust God" and let the chips fall where they may, or continue to work in his secular profession. He admits this is a big issue for him.

When José was asked, “In your dual roles, where do you find the greatest fulfillment?” he answered, “It is spiritual.” It was obvious that his passion is helping people.

> I’m working with many different people. I have a family I’ve been working on for four or five months. God has set them free from alcohol and filled them with the Holy Ghost. Every Thursday we are in their home. My wife and I are teaching them. We talk to them daily—in the morning and afternoon. For me, that’s the best there is.

Mentoring and Delegating

Darrell believes that being a bivocational pastor can accelerate the mentoring process. Due to time restraints, pastors are more motivated to solicit help from church members. He describes his church in these words:

> Our people have real autonomy. I was gone this weekend and the weather was bad. Two of our men went downtown and saw the streets by our church were just ice—they never get plowed. They called me and said, “Pastor we’re going to cancel the service. It’s too dangerous.” I said, “You’re on the ground; make the call.” They made the call and I hung up the phone. They have autonomy. They don’t have the ability to “sync” the church, but they have the autonomy to move it a little bit to the left or a little bit to the right under the terms I give to them. If they make a mistake, we mentor through it. But we don’t correct it in terms of, “Here, you did this wrong.” In their departments, they raise their own money. They plan their own stuff. They run everything by me, but it’s just cursory—just kind of, “Are we missing anything? Is this conflicting with anything?” I stamp it and they go.

Aaron, the accountant, agrees with Darrell. He has sired ministers who are now active as pastors. He doesn’t encourage them to be like him, but to find God’s will for themselves. He says,

> I have mentored several young men who are now pastoring all over the United States. I try to mentor them in regard to work. If God calls you and you have to work, here’s what you’ve got to do . . . And if you don’t have to work, thank God for it, take advantage of it, and give it the best you’ve got. So I think a bivocational pastor sees both sides of the fence, so to speak, and certainly can

> help mentor that young man or whoever . . . in whatever direction God is calling them.

Aaron has now given the church to his son, whom he has taught the principles of mentoring and delegation. Aaron says,

> He's been pastoring about two and a half years, but he's mentored about four young men, three of whom are laymen in the church. I believe you can train them and should train them to do things that take the load off the pastor. Among the Israelites there were men who were designed to be priests, but there were also the men who pulled up the stakes, carried the Tabernacle, tended the fires, and all that kind of stuff. You know, a pastor doesn't have to do everything. He can train someone else to do it.

Sam believes strongly in delegation and practices it. He describes the success he has had over the years:

> It's hard to be successful without delegation. We had a number of young men that got their license. Most of them are pastoring churches that we started from our church. So it's just a part of life. You delegate on the job. You delegate at the church and let everybody be involved in leadership so the pastor doesn't carry the load all alone.

Bivocational pastors are pressed to get more people involved due to their limited time and energy. This is one of the positive byproducts of bivocationalism.

Relationship with Other Ministers

All the interviewees are positive about their relationships with other pastors. They do not always feel understood, but believe they get respect and courtesy they deserve. Darrell, however, has gotten some negative feedback. He explains:

> I don't think they always get it. . . . I think probably the most consistent feedback—it's been subtle and maybe passively aggressively communicated—is that, "You're kind of cheating your church. You're involved in so many things there's no way you can be focused on your people." I don't think that's accurate, but I do think the more things you're involved in the less energy you have. It's kind of common sense. But I'm not doing what they're doing.

He explains that he is not trying to build a church of five hundred in St. Louis, but he is starting daughter works around the city. He sees his church as a ministry training center. The church has had three people come, not to be members but to be trained to go out into ministry at other places. He is satisfied that his mission is different from other pastors. Their lack of perception doesn't bother him because he has a clear mission.

Sam was asked if he ever felt resentment from other pastors due to his financial superiority. He believes that he did. He explains, "When anybody looks successful, there are people who are jealous. They think you are not preaching the doctrine or that you are lowering the standard if you're blessed financially." Sam says that he dealt with this in his own way. For example, he preached a three-night revival for a struggling pastor for free. He took an offering each night and gave the money to the pastor. He also took the pastor and his wife to dinner each evening. This was his way of giving back to God for blessing him. Gregory disagrees with Sam. He comes from a different experience. He was amused by the thought that someone might envy him.

Some of the pastors live in areas where there are many bivocational pastors. It is accepted as something normal. Larry lives in a remote Alaskan city and has little fellowship with other pastors. The churches are distant from one another due to the vast expanse of the state. Gregory is in the Colorado District where the churches are far apart and many are bivocational. Mike also describes the Austin, Texas, area as having a number of bivocational pastors. His only negative response was to his lack of attendance at sectional and district functions. Denominational leaders want pastors to attend their meetings, and bivocational pastors cannot attend some events.

Aaron had an interesting response to the question about acceptance among his peers. He told the story of receiving a phone call from a pastor friend. The man was crying and asking Aaron for his forgiveness. The pastor explained that he was envious of Aaron's circumstances, even though he was a successful pastor of a church having close to five hundred in attendance. The pastor said, "You've been very successful. You're not bound to a group of people. If I could quit today and make a living I would. But the only thing I can do adequately, besides pastoring, is pump gas, and they don't have much of a need for that anymore." Aaron pointed out that he was financially independent and not subject to the whims of disgruntled church members. This is a luxury many pastors do not have.

Spiritual Renewal

Due to the workload, bivocational pastors need frequent spiritual renewal. All of the pastors interviewed have their daily time of devotion. This seems to be consistent among all the pastors.

Gregory explains his thoughts about renewal:

> I do certain things for the purpose of trying to stay right with God. I've got to pray every day. I can't show up at the pulpit without having prayed. And I need to have my time in the Word every day. I've got to hear something spiritual—a preaching tape or something God oriented. I have to saturate myself every day. Those things take time. I will be late for work to get my prayer time in.

Mike attends spiritual renewal events.

> One thing I try to do every year is attend a conference, a spiritual growth or spiritual renewal conference in Alexandria. That often sets the tone for the year for me. It gives my wife and me an opportunity to get away for about two or three days, bask in the presence of God, and get that spiritual renewal we need to continue forward. In the summertime we are allowed to attend . . . for North American missionaries. We do these two conferences to kind of structure

> ourselves. A pastor with full-time employment needs—yeah, it can be very taxing.

All the pastors interviewed default to their churches at times of crisis. They use discipline to take time for prayer, Bible study, and sermon preparation. Some mentioned taking vacations and time off as another way they keep fresh.

José responded differently than the other pastors to the question of spiritual renewal. When asked, "What do you do to insure your spiritual health?" he responded, "Fasting. This year we started with forty days. Then we did twenty-one. Then we did seven. Yesterday we finished a twenty-day fast. I'm living my life right now as if I just became a new convert—just gave my life to God." Further inquiry discovered that some of his fasts are not abstinence from food and water. Sometimes he eats one meal a day. This is still an enormous sacrifice. He related to the interviewer stories of miracles that have occurred this past year as a result (e.g., a lady was healed of leukemia). Since José has no formal training, he has a number of mentors that give him counsel regularly.

Where Help is Needed

Each of the interviewees was asked how their denomination could help the bivocational pastors. Since the majority of pastors are bivocational, they all feel it is not given enough attention. Larry suggested that it needs to be talked about more, and seminars should be provided at the annual general conferences.

Gregory talked about not being able to attend denominational meetings and the isolation he experiences. He said, "Pretty soon, you haven't seen anybody else. You feel like you're out here on your own." His greatest need was anything that would bring bivocational pastors together and make them feel as though they were a part of things.

Even though Sam enjoyed six weeks of vacation annually, which gave him freedom to attend meetings, he suggested that the number of meetings be reduced. This would require the meetings to be more compact and concentrated.

Aaron was most enthusiastic about this question. He knows of only one seminar session in the past nine years in the UPCI. The session was for one hour and the room was packed to overflowing. He was the seminar teacher. He makes the following suggestion:

> We go to conferences and meetings all year long. We are told, "This is what your church can do!" The guy gets hyped and goes home only to work and struggle. He needs some kind of encouragement. Sixty-five percent of our ministers are bivocational. There needs to be something on an annual basis that lets them air their frustrations and ask questions.

Darrell suggested that the organization produce teaching material and make it available for bivocational pastors. He went on to say, "If those people are going to be bivocational, then how can we sow into that, or how can they sow back into us? I think there could be way more collaboration. I think it would help the pastors and it would help the churches." He spoke about the potential of a bivocational interchange of information and ideas.

> I'm connected to so many different things that are not connected to the UPCI. That means the UPCI could potentially connect to any of those things they wanted or needed; plus my business supports six or seven other businesses just with financial contributions. We could easily pour so much of that back into the organization. But we're not tapped in. I don't even know all the needs and they don't even know what we do. There could be a beautiful relationship that would flow back and forth for those of us who are bivocational.

Mike suggested, "There is a potential for things the organization could do such as funding and resources that could be allocated specifically for the bivocational." He said there are retreats and meetings for pastors that he is unable to enjoy due to work. He said,

“I do think we as an organization could do a better job. It takes resources. It would probably be challenging to make happen, but there is always room for growth.”

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study w.as to discover how bivocational pastors understand the theology of work and how it is experienced in their dual-role responsibilities. In order to research the subject, it was important for the researcher to understand how bivocational pastors experience their dual-role responsibilities.

The following research questions guided the qualitative research:

(1) How do bivocational pastors describe their theology of work?

(2) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their secular work on their ministry work?

(3) How do bivocational pastors describe the impact of their ministry work on their secular work?

(4) How do bivocational pastors describe their ministry?

In chapter two, the review of literature focused on three major areas of study: literature highlighting bivocational pastors biblically and theologically, literature highlighting bivocationalism today, and literature highlighting bivocationalism in the future. In chapter three, research methodology was identified, describing how participants were selected, data collected, interviews conducted, and data analyzed. Additionally, researcher position and study limitations were noted. Chapter four presented the findings from the interviews. This chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations based

on the combination of data from the literature review of chapter two and the interviews of chapter four.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the data from the literature reviewed and participants interviewed will interact in order to identify findings that encourage bivocational pastors, full-time pastors, laypeople, and denominational leaders. The findings will be categorized into the areas of bivocational pastors and the theology of work, how secular work impacts pastoral work, how pastoral work affects secular work, and how bivocational pastors describe their ministry.

Bivocational Pastors and the Theology of Work

I discovered in my research that bivocational pastors in the UPCI have a strong appreciation for work, but an underdeveloped theology. They believe that work is a good thing because it is a means to an end. It provides money for the family's sustenance and facilitates the work of the church with necessary funds. It provides the opportunity for the Christian believer to be a witness in the workplace, and it provides a venue for God's giftings to be put into service. Work is essential to emotional well-being, giving dignity and significance to one's life. Outside of these practical benefits from work, these pastors gave little significance to their daily toil. The areas that seemed to be less developed were work as worship; the eternal significance of work; God as a worker component; the dignity of work; the nature of divine callings (vocations); and a false career hierarchy.

The Theology of Work

There needs to be an effort made to educate ministers and laypeople about the theology of work. People spend two thousand or more hours a year in the workplace. It is

a huge segment of a church member's time and energy. They need to be reminded that God is a worker and as human beings created in God's image, they are workers as well. Timothy Keller emphasizes the vital place work has in a person's daily life:

> Work is as much a basic human need as food, beauty, rest, friendship, prayer, and sexuality; it is not simply medicine but food for our soul. Without meaningful work we sense significant inner loss and emptiness. People who are cut off from work because of physical or other reasons quickly discover how much they need work to thrive emotionally, physically, and spiritually.[174]

I am sixty-five years of age and have been raised in the UPCI. I have held ministerial licenses with them for thirty-eight years. I served in numerous administrative roles and then served full-time as an executive for the organization for fourteen years. I have never heard a sermon or lesson on work—other than the ones I preached. In my experience I was told implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, that the church was first and that careers were just a necessary evil. The ministry was lifted to a high level of esteem and called the "greatest calling." People in professional careers were admired, but not for any spiritual achievement. I was repeatedly told, "If you want to do something great for God, be a preacher." The heroes of the church were the great preachers and pastors. We say we do not believe in a career hierarchy, but we practice a pecking order as if we do. It goes something like this: pastors, missionaries, music directors, children's ministers, church administrative workers, and on down the list until you get to the secular group—doctors, nurses, social workers, and other humanitarian careers. Somewhere down the list are the plumbers, carpenters, and truck drivers.

Keller believes that work is essential to human well-being. Nevertheless, Ben Witherington believes there is confusion among Christians about work. He says,

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[174] Keller, 37.

"Christianity in general, and Protestant Christianity in particular, seem to raise to a particular degree the issue of how we should view work. Is it a blessing or bane? Is it duty or privilege? Do we work to live, or live to work?"[175] He goes on to say that many Americans have little understanding of what the Bible actually says about work, play, career, retirement, and other work-related issues, even though the Bible is replete with the portrayal and meaning of work. He says that part of the problem is a poor definition of what work is. Witherington offers his definition of a Christian's work in the following terms: "[Work is] any necessary and meaningful task that God calls and gifts a person to do and that which can be undertaken to the glory of God and for the edification and aid of human beings, being inspired by the Holy Spirit and foreshadowing the realities of the new creation."[176]

Lester DeKoster provides another definition: "Work is the form in which we make ourselves useful to others. . . . That is why work gives meaning to life. . . . through work that serves others, we also serve God . . . "[177]

Darrell Cosden gives an extensive definition of work by elaborating on what he calls a "three-fold nature of work": *instrumental*, *relational*, and *ontological*. What he calls the "ontological" aspect of work is most intriguing. He clarifies what he means by the ontological aspect of work in these words:

> By the term "ontological" with reference to work I mean that work in its broadest richness is considered to be more than, or its fuller meaning is understood to incorporate but to transcend, both its instrumental and relational functions. By defining it as ontological, I speak of work as a thing in itself with its own intrinsic

[175] Witherington, vii.

[176] Ibid., xii.

[177] DeKoster, 1-2.

> value apart from but of course related to these functions rather than simply seeing work's combined practical uses as constituent of its essence. I understand work's essential nature to be derived ontologically from its having been built into the fabric of creation by God. The person is a worker, not as an accident of nature but because God first is a worker and persons are created in his image.[178]

This defining aspect gives work a distinction that transcends work done for practical reasons alone. It is one way that we harmonize with God's divine plan for the ages—restoring a fallen world. I believe this is one of the most overlooked aspects of work.

I personally believe the lack of biblical clarity about work has had a negative influence on the church. I believe it has caused young adults to be low achievers, and as a result, stymied in their career advancement. It has caused many church members to spend a large segment of their lives in the workplace, never really understanding they were fulfilling a mission for God. Having poor work theology could have led some young men to enter ministry when they were not called—thinking that the ministry would be the route to recognition and significance. These men might have been more effective in other vocations.

I will address a few theological factors that I believe would help give more clarity to church members, ministers, and especially bivocational pastors.

Eternal Value of Work

When Darrell was asked if work had eternal value, he answered emphatically, "Outside of soul winning—no—zero!" One interviewee, Mike, conceded that work does have eternal value:

> [A man] is called to be the provider for his family; to be the one that sustains . . . to be the priest in his household. He has a calling to be a dad, a husband, and an

[178] Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 17.

> individual . . . and by virtue of that, your higher calling could be to serve your family; to actually see your family grow and come to the Lord. That in itself has eternal consequences, and certainly has an eternal calling to it.

Mike is correct, but is there more? Keller points out the eternal nature of work with this observation: "There will be work in the paradise of the future just like there was in the paradise of the past, because God himself takes joy in his work."[179] Keller and Cosden agree that there is a failure to see the eternal nature of work in the here and now, not to earn salvation but to participate in God's divine cosmic scheme. Cosden attempts to prove the continuation of some aspects of this physical life into the realm of eternal life. He says that Jesus did not rise from the dead and simply pass through the stone blocking the entrance. The stone was rolled away showing the physical confinements he imposed upon himself. After the resurrection Jesus invited his doubtful followers to consider his hands and feet. He retained the scars of crucifixion in his resurrected body. Does this indicate that vestiges of this physical life will be retained in heaven? The disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus. He evidently looked different, but he was the same Jesus. Later that day, at the breaking of bread, they recognized him.

Below is Cosden's summation of the essence of work. He adds an eternal significance to daily work.

> Human work is a transformative activity essentially consisting of dynamically interrelated instrumental, relational, and ontological dimensions: whereby, along with work being an end in itself, the worker's and other's needs are providentially met; believers' sanctification is occasioned; and workers express, explore and develop their humanness while building up their natural, social and cultural environments thereby contributing protectively and productively to the order of this world and the one to come.[180]

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[179] Keller, 96.

[180] Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 178-179.

Paul said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”[181] When we work as unto the Lord, it has lasting value.

God is in a process of restoration not only of lost souls, but everything. Daily work can contribute to that divine scheme. From that perspective, we are helping God build the future.[182]

Vocation (Calling)

Even though the bivocational pastors interviewed believe in career callings, there is a lack of guidance for young people on how to find their giftings and how to educate themselves for choosing a career. Young adults need evaluation tools such as personality/temperament questionnaires and aptitude tests to help them determine their calling in life. There is a lack of encouragement for working adults to embrace their careers as a calling and ministry unto the Lord. Work and careers need to be talked about more frequently at church. In an effort to emphasize the spiritual aspects of life, we could send the wrong message—a message that says jobs are a waste of time and that going to church, praying, or Bible reading are the only times a person is really being spiritual. A message could be sent that says that if you are not called into full-time ministry, you are a sub-standard Christian. This is not a correct message.

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[181] I Corinthians 15:58.

[182] See Acts 3:19-21.

Stevens explains that Martin Luther was a reformer of the theology of work. There was a great divide between "sacred" work and "physical" work during his lifetime. He provides Luther's view of work as another act of sacredness.

> The idea that the service to God should have to do with a church altar, singing, reading, sacrifice, and the like is without doubt but the worst trick of the devil. How could the devil have led us more effectively astray than by the narrow conception that service to God takes place only in church and by works done therein.[183]

Pastors and other ministers many times preach from their own experience. They are divinely called to be in ministry, but not everyone will be called to work for the church. Pastors should not push their personal calling on others. As Darrell points out, believers need to be in the field, and the workplace can be that field.

The majority of interviewees do not believe in a hierarchy of work per se. They believe the ministry is a special calling and should be distinguished, but concede that God calls people to secular work as well. They understand that God only expects a believer to fulfill their own gifting and calling. Paul says in I Corinthians 7:17, "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches." The question arises, "Is this speaking of a spiritual calling or a vocational calling?" Keller explains this verse with these words:

> In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, Paul counsels readers that when they become Christians it is unnecessary to change what they are currently doing in life—their marital state, job, or social station—in order to live their lives before God in a way that pleases him. . . . Elsewhere, Paul has spoken of God calling people into a saving relationship with him, and assigning them spiritual gifts to do ministry and build up the Christian community (Romans 12: 3 and 2 Corinthians 10: 13). Paul uses these same two words here when he says that every Christian should remain in the work God has "assigned to him, and to which God has called him." Yet Paul is not referring in this case to church ministries, but to common social and

[183] Stevens, *Work Matters,* 109.

> economic tasks—secular jobs," we might say—and naming them God's callings and assignments. The implication is clear: Just as God equips Christians for building up the Body of Christ, so he also equips all people with talents and gifts for various kinds of work, for the purpose of building up the human community.[184]

Keller encapsulates the principle with these words: "Our daily work can be a calling only if it is reconceived as God's assignment to serve others. And that is exactly how the Bible teaches us to view work."[185]

A calling is more than being called into a career. Bernbaum and Steer nuance this idea in the following way:

> Calling is a remarkably rich concept referring to the entire process of salvation initiated by God in Christ. As Christians ours is a total calling to discipleship in the body of Christ (Rom. 1:7), to citizenship in the kingdom of God (I Thess. 2:12), and to salvation (Rom. 11:29). The choice of a career therefore does not involve the search for a separate, distinct calling, but should be seen as an important part of our response to the all-encompassing call of God to salvation.[186]

We are also universally called to be disciples. Mike put it in these terms: "I think we're all called to be soul winners. . . . We are all called to serve the kingdom of God. We are all called to be disciples of the Lord. Sometimes that manifests in different ways." The call to salvation and discipleship are different from the call into a career, but can still be a divine call.

Work and Worship

Not all of the pastors interviewed warmed to the idea that work could be worship, but this is a biblical principle. We naturally think of worship as something we do at

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[184] Ibid., 65-66.

[185] Ibid., 66.

[186] Bernbaum and Steer, 12.

church. David Westcott says frankly that "the separation of work from worship is totally unjustified."[187] God has made human beings for his pleasure.[188] He wants a relationship with mankind—not in just the church-going aspect, but in life's totality. His promise to the Hebrews is assuring:

> I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright.[189]

God abides within the human heart and believers abide in God. Paul used this analogy: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."[190] R. Paul Stevens says, "The practice of the presence of God is not the exclusive vocation of professional ministers and cloistered monks. Nor is it a sacred interlude but woven into the warp and woof of everyday life. It is part of our calling."[191]

The New Testament makes it clear—there are diverse ministries in the church. Each person is a distinct member of the body of Christ having particular areas of ministry.[192] Paul said, "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with

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[187] Westcott, 31.

[188] Psalm 149:4.

[189] Leviticus 26:11-13, NKJV.

[190] I Corinthian 6:19-20 (See also I Corinthians 3:16-19; Revelation 21:3.).

[191] R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days,* 92.

[192] I Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:1-8; Ephesians 4:11.

God."[193] Paul exhorted further that everyone has a place of calling: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."[194] By using one's talents and abilities they are pleasing God. Striving for perfection in work is one way a person can practice good stewardship. "A worker who produces poor work is not a good steward, and in turn, he is not a good worshiper. He is failing to give glory to the ultimate Creator. All labor, including physical labor, is honorable."[195]

Larry is correct in saying, "Not everybody is going to be called to a pastoral ministry or one of the four or five ministries. But everything should be a ministry. We should see that whatever we do we should do it unto the Lord."

Biblical Bivocational Pastor

Pastoral bivocationalism is not a new thing. It has strong Old Testament and New Testament precedence. Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, was also a great shipbuilder and zookeeper. Job was an outstanding entrepreneur while providing a living oracle of the struggle to maintain faith in God in spite of enormous losses. Abraham was a cattleman and patriarch. Melchizedek was a king and priest. Moses was a shepherd, spiritual leader, prophet, and writer. Joseph was a shepherd, bookkeeper, interpreter of dreams, and ultimately became a prominent ruler in Egypt. Amos was a prophet to Israel while also working as a shepherd and picker of sycamore fruit (figs). Isaiah was an outstanding prophet and writer while serving as court administrator. David was a shepherd, warrior, musician, psalmist, prophet, and ultimately the king of Israel.

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[193] I Corinthians 7:24.

[194] I Corinthian 12:18.

[195] Erickson, 220.

Although Esther was the queen of Persia, she risked her life to become a savior of the Jewish people. Daniel served the king of Babylon as a statesman and was an outstanding prophetic voice to his generation and those alive today. Nehemiah was a governor, spiritual leader, and builder. Peter, James, and John were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector. Jesus was a carpenter. Luke was a doctor and author of one-fourth of the New Testament—The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles. Lydia was a purple-dye seller who opened her house for a church in Thyatira. Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers with Paul. Dorr says,

> The apostle Paul was perhaps the greatest man in the early church. He was a great Christian, evangelist, missionary, church planter, theologian, and writer of some of the New Testament. He was also a bivocational preacher. Bivocationalism has no more an illustrious example than the apostle Paul, the tentmaker-preacher. He could well be called the "Father of Bivocationalism."[196]

There is no biblical argument against bivocational pastorship. It has been a useful arrangement from the beginning. Every pastor will have their own set of circumstances. They must seek God and decide if it is right for them and their church. When doing the work of God, a pastor should not drain the church of funds, nor allow their family to suffer in poverty if the pastor can do otherwise.

How Secular Work Impacts Pastoral Work

All of the pastors interviewed believe their secular jobs have positive influences on their church work. These bivocational pastors display a strong work ethic to the community and are out in the field being seen as a part of the community life.

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[196] Dorr, 1.

Finances

Naturally, the financial status of the pastor and church is enhanced by the bivocational pastor. Darrell explained how his counseling service has financed the expenses of daughter works. Aaron was the most outstanding in this regard. He has never taken a salary from his church after thirty-two years of ministry. His secular business has allowed him to give to the church as well. This has been an enormous financial benefit to the church he pastors. Not only has the business been financially helpful to the church, but it has blessed many pastors and churches with financial and tax preparation assistance from someone who can relate to their needs. The work of the pastor and their secular career can work together synergistically. This is not always the case, but most of these pastors interviewed described it that way.

The bivocational pastor is not dependent upon the church members for their income. That can be liberating, making their financial liability less precarious. Church members can move away, pass away, suffer financial setbacks, protest decisions by holding back their giving, or be critical of the pastor's salary. When a pastor has their own source of income, they will be freed from these potential problems. Having two careers can have its advantages. Stevens says,

> The Puritan William Perkins once said that every person needs two strings to his or her bow, referring to the need of a back-up, replacement string in a set of bow-and-arrows. In what way would having a second capacity for daily work be a sign of lacking faith, and in what way could it be an expression of genuine faith? Is it practical in today's world? If not, why?[197]

[197] R. Paul Stevens, *Work Matters,* 153.

Perkins's emphatic support of bivocationalism points to the practical advantages of having two areas of daily work. Having a career safety net can be a great comfort when dealing with the whims of parishioners.

It is wrong for a pastor to allow their family to suffer financially if they are able to work. Paul said in I Timothy 5:8, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." It is also wrong to take the funds from the church and allow the church's image to be damaged due to poor financial management. Paul said, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without."[198] Sometimes a full-time pastor may be forced to go to work in a secular job to avoid financial embarrassment for the church. This is a commendable action.

Time Restraints

Aaron was asked, "Explain what are your greatest challenges as a bivocational pastor." He answered, "Time, time, time!" The bivocational pastor's secular job will always take time from his church. This is something that has to be worked around through scheduling and delegating. Sam had six weeks of vacation, sick leave, holidays, and workers that were willing to trade hours with him. This gave him a lot of freedom for church-related activities. Bivocational pastors will not always have that kind of luxury.

Peter Brain, in his book *Going the Distance*, says the average pastor actually works fifteen more hours per week than the congregation estimates.[199] If this is the case with full-time pastors, bivocational pastors can add forty more hours to that. Brain says, "Church members do not expect us to work excessive hours, and they will not thank us

[198] Colossians 4:5.

[199] Brain, 17.

when we run ourselves into the ground."[200] A pastor must do what they do as unto the Lord. People can be ungrateful for your sacrifice.

A full-time pastor can be just as challenged with time if they do not use time wisely. The pastor of a small church can get involved with hobbies and personal projects to the neglect of his church. Aaron related a story concerning a neighboring pastor who had a small congregation of around forty people. He complained to Aaron about how busy he was. Aaron asked him, "Why are you so busy?" He said, "I'm trying to pastor this church. I'm full time." Aaron called him later, and he was unavailable all morning due to taking a ride on his four-wheeler. Possibly, some bivocational pastors are more devoted to their churches than full-time pastors.

The bivocational pastor has to make tough choices and be up front with priorities. Gregory said he is up front with employers about the times he has to be off. He has found this to be the best approach.

> I make very clear what times are off limits for work, so they don't even go there. I tell them, "You can't have Sunday. You can't have Thursday nights." The second thing I do is I default to the church. If I have to choose between visiting saints and working a little extra hours to get a job done, I visit. If I have to choose between going to the hospital and meeting a deadline, I go to the hospital. I was worried at first that this might cost me my job, but it never has. Somehow it always works out.

A bivocational pastor can do things to enhance their time management. They can stay organized, delegate responsibilities to others, be efficient with work habits, remain time conscious, and never waste time. I found that the bivocational pastors I interviewed were time conscious and looked for ways to conserve time. One pastor wrote answers to the interview questions on his lunch break and emailed them to me. He said, "I'm doing

[200] Ibid., 37.

this to save you time." Of course, that was not the methodology I'm using. He understood after I explained that to him.

Interaction with the Community

A full-time pastor can become isolated from the people of a community. They can become so preoccupied with maintenance that they loses contact with the unchurched. The bivocational pastor is forced out of the church office into the workplace. Aaron's business office is located in a strategic part of the city where twelve thousand motorists drive by on a daily basis. He has served as an officer in his city government and has seven employees who are a part of his team even when someone comes into the office for prayer.

Larry says that being a psychologist and having a Ph.D. brings favor to his church. Mike has brought people from his workplace to his church who are seeking after God. Darrell, who is a church planter, calls the workplace the "field." He works as a psychologist at a university and has his own private counseling service. This puts him in contact with many people. He decided to be a bivocational pastor for the purpose of working in the field. Gregory sees his secular work as an opportunity to build relationships:

> I feel that in my particular profession the opportunity exists for me to make relationships with people that I work with. So in some sense I would be sure I could meet people and talk to people that I may have not met before. I guess it's a little different than being a checker at Wal-Mart. You build deeper relationships over time.

The bivocational pastor can develop and enjoy friendships outside the church, make an adequate living outside the church, enjoy a sense of financial independence and satisfaction knowing they are not a financial burden to the church, have a satisfying

diversion from the stress of pastoring, find additional opportunities for ministry and evangelism, relate to the circumstances of the laypeople, blend the sacred and the secular as it should be, and avoid being underemployed and bored.

Relating to the Congregation

Bivocational pastors are not idle people. Their lives are full of activity, which is a healthy thing for them and their churches. These pastors are a living example of the work ethic. They can relate to their congregation as a working man. Some laypeople have the idea that pastors lie around all day and think about sermons. The bivocational pastor shatters this myth. It is still essential that the bivocational pastor spend time in prayer, Bible study, meditation, and sermon building.

Lee Eclov, in his book *Pastoral Graces*, describes the secular workplace and other environments people live in as they go about their responsibilities. His language is vivid.

> Some offices, of course, are filthier than sewers. Some schools are darker than underground tunnels. Some families are toxic. A lot of Christians spend their week trying to keep the gunk off their hearts, trying to keep their souls from smelling like a cesspool. Good shepherds know. We think about where people have come from when they come to worship. If we are thoughtful, that will nuance how we grace what we do in the service. As my friend Brandon put it, "There is a degree of intimate knowing that a pastor brings."[201]

A bivocational pastor can relate to these conditions and not have to imagine what life is like for his members.

The bivocational pastors that responded to the question about their congregation's view of their bivocational role believe that their willingness to work gives them rapport with their membership. They feel it helps them have more empathy with the stresses of

[201] Eclov, Kindle Edition, 48-49.

the workplace. Sam, who worked as a postmaster, made the following observation: “It also gave me an understanding of people in my church when they were tired and came to church on Wednesday night, or when they had to work overtime. Nobody could use the excuse, ‘I had to work today!’ because I had the same excuse.”

The bivocational pastor will normally have more empathy with his congregation. In the workplace they face the same challenges as their members. They are able to demonstrate how to be a witness in the workplace. They meet many more unchurched people than they would if they were full-time pastors. This will open doors of opportunity. They are motivated to delegate and mentor others in ministry, and this is biblical. They develop talents and gain knowledge in the workplace. Sam was given a Harvard business course by the US Postal Service. The work had to be completed on the job.

How Pastoral Work Affects Secular Work

Being a bivocational pastor will have positive and negative effects on an employer. An employer understands that the bivocational pastor will have limited time, and his interests will be divided. This may give the employer pause when hiring a pastor, but he also may see him as more desirable due to his work ethic and experience. Many times a pastor will have better social skills, management skills, dress nicer, and have more education. The greatest positive thing the bivocational pastor brings to the workplace is Jesus!

Taking Time Off

An employer can be sensitive to a pastor taking time off initially. The pastor will have to prove himself. The bivocational pastor needs to be careful at first not to overstep their bounds.

All of the pastors interviewed found cooperation from employers when they needed time off. None of the pastors interviewed found taking time off for pastoral duties to be a problem. One pastor is self-employed and others have a lot of flexibility. Even those who have more regimented commitments found cooperation with management.

When José was asked, "Do you find that most of your secular employers understand your dual role?" he said, "I don't think they understand, but I think God has given them a special grace because they have never denied me when I needed something." Sam also found cooperation:

> One good thing about us is we had a flexible schedule. If we had somebody in the hospital, I could call my clerk and say, "Listen, I'm not coming in until ten, eleven, or twelve—can you work a little extra?"—which they were very happy to do. . . . I normally didn't like to work on weekends, but I had to work a few Saturdays to make up for the extra time I needed to be off somewhere else.

Gregory said he is up front with employers about the times he has to be off. He has found this to be the best approach.

> I make very clear what times are off limits for work, so they don't even go there. I tell them, "You can't have Sunday. You can't have Thursday nights." The second thing I do is I default to the church. If I have to choose between visiting saints and working a little extra hours to get a job done, I visit. If I have to choose between going to the hospital and meeting a deadline, I go to the hospital. I was worried at first that this might cost me my job, but it never has. Somehow it always works out.

Darrell made arrangements with his employer when he was hired. Church members are allowed to call him if they need to. He explains: "I do let them call me if

I'm at work. I have jobs that are flexible enough that I can take a call. When I came here they knew I was a pastor. They knew I spoke out, and it was a condition of my coming here—that I continue all that."

Bickers says, "It is important to maintain your integrity with your employer. Your employer is paying you to work for him not to witness to your fellow employee or to do other ministerial functions during the work day."[202] He warns about attitude in the workplace with this admonition: "Bivocational ministers need to make sure they do not view their ministry as a godly calling and their second job as merely a means of paying bills."[203]

Brings Opportunities

Some of the bivocational pastors view their ministry as an asset in the workplace by providing opportunities for ministry. Larry says,

> Most people in this community know I am a pastor, by osmosis I guess . . . whether or not they attend our church. But there are times when they will ask me, or I will just say to them, "Can I pray for you?" That's an opportunity right there. I may be working from a secular model, but at the same time, the opportunity is there to pray with them. And I pray with them.

Sam says that in spite of his pastoral duties and other administrative responsibilities with his denomination, he has been selected for leadership roles in his secular work. Being a minister brought attention to his abilities to work with people.

> For the past twenty-three years I was a postmaster. And so during those times I was the chaplain for the National Association of Postmasters in the USA (NAPUS). In Mississippi I was a chaplain for about nine years. I also served as vice president and then the next year served as president of NAPUS. . . . Over the years I have been a shop steward.

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[202] Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor*, 38.

[203] Ibid.

Misperceptions

If the employer is a non-believer, they may have unfounded negative ideas about the bivocational pastor. People in the workplace have varied perceptions of pastors. For some, being a pastor brings respect and honor. In other environments, pastors are viewed with suspicion. Gregory, who lives in Colorado, says,

> For some strange reason in my particular profession, if I tell an employer I'm a pastor he looks at me like maybe he should hire someone else because I'm not fully engaged. He fears that I'll not give myself fully to the job. So I find that I get passed up for jobs. Again, there is this tension to keep work separate from church so I can operate, get jobs, and put it on the table. In my particular job situation there are lots of people with different faiths. . . . people are not that accepting. I don't know if it's too many Muslims or whatever else is going on. I don't know if Christianity is starting to get a bad name or it's just this area of the world. Colorado is pretty liberal.

The bivocational pastor should patiently try to change the misperception by not taking advantage of his employer. Many secular jobs require the worker to be on-site forty or more hours a week. A bivocational pastor can take only so many days off work. Bickers says, "It is important to maintain your integrity with your employer. Your employer is paying you to work for him not to witness to your fellow employee or to do other ministerial functions during the work day."[204] He warns about attitude in the workplace with this admonition: "Bivocational ministers need to make sure they do not view their ministry as a godly calling and their second job as merely a means of paying bills."[205] This can happen if the bivocational pastor has no biblical theology of work.

Christians in the workplace will be heavily scrutinized. They will want to know if you are just professing, or you are truly living the Christian life. Bivocational pastors will

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[204] Ibid., 38.

[205] Ibid.

endure even more scrutiny. People want to find a chink in his armor. Having a good work ethic is essential.

Paul brought dignity to the work ethic as something of worth and acceptable as worship to God. Idleness was something to be avoided. Paul said, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."[206] Paul taught that the minister should be paid for his work: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."[207]

Divided Focus

Being a bivocational pastor requires great discipline; not just discipline to work hard, but discipline of the mind. They have to be nimble and quick on their feet, so to speak. They have to move from one line of work to another, because the two normally require different disciplines. They also have the pressure to stay proficient in both professions. Larry, who is a psychologist, expressed his frustration with trying to be current in both professions:

> As a professional, I'm trying to stay current in both fields, to feel as if I'm staying on the cutting edge in both fields . . . I struggle with that. . . . A lot of people think psychology is counseling, and a lot of people do therapy and counseling. . . . I think the greatest challenge is to stay current in all of these different domains.

José has a large family, works two secular jobs, teaches home Bible studies, and pastors the church. He finds that God helps him make the transition.

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[206] II Thessalonians 3:10 (See also I Timothy 5:13).

[207] I Timothy 5:17-18.

> First, I ask God to give me wisdom to be a father, husband, and pastor. He puts the stages of my life together, giving time in my life. My youngest son is three years old, and my oldest is twenty-one. I also instruct the leaders and disciples in the church. I also spend time teaching home Bible studies on Thursdays and Fridays. I understand it is God who gives us the strength for all of this. Physically, my body feels good. I have not felt stressed. I have always had strength and I know that strength isn't just mine, but it comes from God.

How Bivocational Pastors Describe their Ministry

The bivocational pastors interviewed described their ministry in different ways. They all viewed their secular jobs as an essential part of their ministry. Their education, innate talents, and experience put them in a place of dual opportunity. Even though they all get fulfillment from their secular work, the church work is where they get the most fulfillment. They make pastoral ministry their primary focus. They default to their church responsibilities when decisions and priorities have to be addressed.

I believe this is the only way bivocational pastors should do their dual jobs. If a secular career becomes more important than the church, perhaps they should consider resigning the church and going full time into their career. Pastoring a church is too demanding and involves the destiny of souls. Pastoring is not a job to be cavalier about.

Church Planters

Church planting in America owes much to the bivocational pastor. Dorr says, "A minister supported by the church was frowned upon by many frontier people. . . . Early frontier history in America is a history of bivocational preachers who built churches."[208] Nerger says about those early American frontier days:

> Paid preachers were few and far between, because there was little money during the expansion of America. Denominations, such as Baptist, were desired simply because they had established that a pastor did not have to be over-educated and/or

[208] Dorr, 25.

> paid. Farmers, cattlemen, and businessmen all brought the gospel to the West as they had received it, making a living and faithfully serving as lay or bivocational pastors.[209]

Currently, at least eighty percent of UPCI church planters are bivocational. The percentage is probably higher.[210] Many bivocational pastors have spouses that work in careers. Three of the pastors interviewed are church planters: Darrell, Mike, and Gregory. Also, Aaron, Larry, and José became pastors of small churches and have built them up. Sometimes taking a small church and building it up is just as challenging as planting the church initially.

John Broadus colorfully paraphrases John Chrysostom describing a contemporary bivocational church planter:

> One might see these godly bivocational church planters working daily on a farm, driving a wrecker, working as a lawyer, or lending at a bank. Yet at another time, you would see them fashioning the Word of God so as to clean up the sins of men's souls. These bivocational church planters are not ashamed of hard work but of idleness. They are good and useful men and these godly preachers of the good news have thrived in every period, country, and persuasion in which Christianity was making any real and rapid progress.[211]

This descriptive paragraph portrays the circumstances of many bivocational church planters today.

One common challenge for church planters is finances. There are many expenses and only a few people. There are few denominational programs to support them. Being

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[209] Nerger, 18.

[210] A survey was conducted by the researcher to determine the extent of bivocationalism within the United Pentecostal Church International in September 2013. Sixty-five district North American Missions directors were contacted and asked how many bivocational pastors were serving churches in their districts. The following questions were asked on the survey: What percentage of church planters (churches five years old or less) are bivocational (estimate)? From the twenty-seven responses, the answers range from 33 percent to 100 percent. A rough estimate is 80 percent or more are bivocational.

[211] Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching*, 50–51.

bivocational is a practical way to plant a church. It allows the income from the church to pay the rent and utilities, and eventually purchase property. The bivocational pastor avoids being a financial burden on the church.

Many times a young church has not had time to train people, and much of the responsibility falls on the pastor. The people who attend may not be mature Christians and not be faithful in attendance nor their giving. The pastor must carry the church not only spiritually, but also financially. Bivocationalism has proven to be a great solution to this challenge.

The secular work of the church planter gets them out into the community where he can meet people. Bivocational church planters find opportunities to witness in the workplace. Jerram Barrs says, "The front lines of evangelism in any moment of history will be, first the family then the workplace. For most adult believers (unless our immediate family members are non-Christians), the context in which we are most likely to meet unbelievers is our place of employment."[212] Barrs says the workplace is an excellent place to exercise diligence and practice good work habits.

Paul encourages everyone to give their best: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."[213] Being a good worker fulfills the agreement between employee and employer. It is an honest exchange of work for pay.

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[212] Barrs, 59.

[213] Colossians 3:23-25.

More should be done for bivocational church planters. They need encouragement to be steadfast in their sacrificial service. They need to hear the stories of other bivocational church planters. They need to learn time-saving tips and innovative ways to get things done. They need guidance about how to navigate their transitional roles—choosing jobs, when to go full time, entrepreneurial advice, and so forth.

Gifting and Calling

The work a person engages in may not be just a personal choice. God calls believers into vocations. Sometimes it is more than one. R. Paul Stevens points out that the term "vocation" has an interesting meaning.

> The Christian doctrine of vocation—so central to the theology of the whole people of God—starts with being called to *Someone* before we are called to *something*. And it is not something we choose, like a career. We are chosen. The Latin roots of the word "vocation", *vocatio* and *voco*, mean simply to be called or to have a calling. We might do well to eliminate the word "vocation" for a while and substitute "calling", which invites the question, "*Who* called?"[214]

Stevens explains that the term "call" has embedded in it the need for a "caller." This makes a response to a calling a fulfillment of God's desires for one's life. Stevens emphasizes the strong connection between "call" and "vocation," and how a "career" would be a sequential step in work. According to him, there is a divine propensity toward work which dignifies all work that is a response to a divine "calling."

All of the interviewees believe God calls believers into pastoral ministry. The Scripture makes this clear. Paul said, "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."[215] Paul exhorted further that everyone has a place of calling: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased

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[214] Stevens, *Work Matters,* 72.

[215] I Corinthians 7:24.

him."[216] They also believe He calls people into secular work as well, but the two are somewhat different. Some of the pastors deliberately sought specialized education in order to become a bivocational pastor. It was planned from the beginning. Aaron believes God called him to be bivocational many years ago. He lived to see it happen just as God impressed him it would be. Larry also made a decision to become a bivocational pastor and enrolled in a Ph.D. program to become a psychologist. It was not by happenstance that he became bivocational. He was called to do both. Larry strategized and worked several years going to school and serving internship to get his degree in order to pastor a church in Alaska. A number of these pastors did not meander on their journey waiting for fate to control their destiny. They were deliberate and planned their current positions. Mike already had a master's degree, but went back to school to become a hospice chaplain so that he could support himself as he planted a new church. .

Darrell found that at times in his life he felt a specific calling, but some of his journey has been serendipitous. His present job at the university sought him out. He was not looking for this job. He had his counseling service. He says that he has specific guidelines and established priorities for determining God's will. When opportunities came open to him, he was able to make good decisions based on principles he lives by.

Some pastors were called into ministry after they were established in a career. Gregory was a computer scientist when he was converted. He was able to move his career with him to the city where he is planting a church. José was a vinyl siding contractor before being called into ministry. Sam was a postmaster when he was called into ministry and never resigned his postal position.

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[216] I Corinthian 12:18.

Stevens presents a biblical doctrine of vocation by suggesting that the whole of a person's life includes three vocations: "personal," "Christian," and "human." He states that the alternative to not having a theology of vocation might result in the following:

> Without any theology of vocation we lapse into debilitating alternatives: fatalism (doing what is required by the "forces" and the "powers"); luck (which denies purposefulness in life and reduces our life to a bundle of accidents); karma (which ties performance to future rewards); nihilism (which denies that there is any good end to which the travail of history might lead); and, the most common alternative today, self-actualization (in which we invent the meaning and purpose of our lives, making us magicians). In contrast the biblical doctrine of vocation proposes that the whole of our lives finds meaning in relation to the sweet summons of a good God.[217]

When an individual embraces a vocation they honor the sovereignty of God by answering a divine call. A number of bad theological results can spring out of a poor understanding of vocation. Not recognizing God's role in work can lead to an unhappy career and theological pitfalls.

Sense of Accomplishment

Research indicates many bivocational pastors carry their dual responsibilities gladly and actually enjoy the challenge. They find great fulfillment in both careers and have no plans to change their multiple roles. All of the interviewees said they get more fulfillment from ministry than from their secular jobs. Some have secular jobs that are similar to pastoral work, but most do not.

Larry finds accomplishment in his work as a forensic and clinical psychologist, but his greatest sense of satisfaction is described as follows:

> My greatest sense of achievement is in the work of God. That's my call. As far as the other role is concerned, I'm helping people. Sometimes when I'm doing psychological testing it's kind of investigative. At times I feel like I've helped

[217] Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, 72.

> somebody. So in that sense I'm helping people. I guess my greatest satisfaction is just helping people.

Helping people should be where we find the greatest satisfaction. Mike has a job working with people in distress as a hospice chaplain. Darrell not only helps people at the university, but his counseling service is a ministry as well. These jobs are similar to pastoral responsibilities. Not everyone is blessed in this way and have secular jobs that have no relationship with church work. When José was asked, "In your dual roles, where do you find the greatest fulfillment?" he answered, "It is spiritual." Even though he enjoys construction work, it was obvious that his passion was helping people. Gregory enjoys computer programming, but he says this about his first love:

> As far as my preference for what type of work I do, I had rather do ministry work. I believe I enjoy it more. But I enjoy working too. If I were a full-time pastor, I know there'd be times when I wished I could just work my computer stuff. No emotions. No problems. I just need the computer for some quiet time—meditative. So I would probably make a hobby out of what used to be my full-time job.

A bivocational pastor has to guard their passions. Even though a career may be a wonderful outlet for a multitalented pastor, and their income may be lucrative, when their passion for a career exceeds their love for the ministry, they probably should resign the church.

Mentoring and Delegating

One of the greatest ways for a bivocational pastor to relieve himself of a heavy workload is to delegate. Bivocational pastors that have been pastoring for many years confirm this. Aaron, Sam, and Darrell have sired ministers who are now active as pastors. Aaron says,

> I have mentored several young men who are now pastoring all over the United States. I try to mentor them in regard to work. If God calls you and you have to work, here's what you've got to do . . . And if you don't have to work, thank God for it, take advantage of it, and give it the best you've got. So I think a bivocational pastor sees both sides of the fence, so to speak, and certainly can help mentor that young man or whoever . . . in whatever direction God is calling them.

Aaron has now given the church to his son and has taught him the principles of mentoring and delegation. Aaron says,

> He's been pastoring about two and a half years, but he's mentored about four young men, three of whom are laymen in the church. I believe you can train them and should train them to do things that take the load off the pastor. Among the Israelites there were men who were designed to be priests, but there were also the men who pulled up the stakes, carried the Tabernacle, tended the fires, and all that kind of stuff. You know, a pastor doesn't have to do everything. He can train someone else to do it.

Elliott suggests the following workload boundary: "The practical limitation of an individual's stamina does not go beyond sixty-five hours a week. . . . the CODE study revealed that it does take a higher level of energy to be a Dual Role minister."[218] This performance expectation from the congregation can take its toll on the bivocational pastor. Dorr offers this advice to the bivocational pastor:

> Since the flock will need more ministry than even a full-time pastor can possibly give, the pastor can delegate some of this ministry to others. He can help his church become a caring people. He can urge and teach his classes and organizations to minister to their members. The deacons and other church leaders can also be trained to provide ministry to the church family.[219]

James W. Highland offers this advice for getting things done more efficiently: "Ministry Teams are the most effective organizational approach to creating

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[218] Elliott, 9.

[219] Dorr, 92.

congregational involvement in ministry."[220] Highland points out the following advantages of teams: they have a single focus, people make connections with others, action-oriented people can participate, skills and knowledge of others can be brought together, teams become a dynamic force for ministry, and they add new dimensions to the members' personal lives.[221] He recommends that bivocational pastors learn to delegate many of the ministry roles to such teams.

Relationship with Other Ministers

The bivocational pastor may enjoy more income than a neighboring pastor. They may also enjoy more security—having another source of income. Bickers says, "It is not difficult to understand why some pastors may be jealous of a bivocational pastor who is not completely dependent on a church for his family's financial well-being."[222] Most of the pastors interviewed did not find jealousy to be a problem. Gregory was amused at the suggestion that anyone would envy him. Sam was asked if he ever felt resentment from other pastors due to his financial superiority. He believes that he did. He explains it in these terms: "When anybody looks successful, there are people who are jealous. They think you are not preaching the doctrine or that you are lowering the standard if you're blessed financially."

Most bivocational pastors interviewed do not always feel understood but believe they get respect and courtesy they deserve. However, Darrell has gotten some negative feedback, but not due to jealousy. He explains:

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[220] Highland, Kindle location 1551.

[221] Ibid., Kindle location 1550.

[222] Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor*, 41.

> I don't think they always get it. . . . I think probably the most consistent feedback—it's been subtle, and maybe passively aggressively communicated—is that, "You're kind of cheating your church. You're involved in so many things there's no way you can be focused on your people." I don't think that's accurate, but I do think the more things you're involved in the less energy you have. It's kind of common sense. But I'm not doing what they're doing.

Mike describes the Austin, Texas, area as having a number of bivocational pastors. His only negative response was to his lack of attendance at sectional and district functions. Denominational leaders want pastors to attend their meetings, and bivocational pastors cannot attend some events. Larry and Gregory experienced a similar problem. Alaska and Colorado are large states geographically and the churches are small and far apart. Many pastors are bivocational and share many of the same problems.

Denominational leaders need to be thoughtful of the bivocational pastor. They have limited time off and cannot attend every function. When planning the annual calendar, scheduling functions at night might encourage better attendance. Making an effort to communicate with them could be helpful. Sending them videos of meetings would be a great way to keep them connected with what's going on. An encouraging phone call from a denominational leader will go a long way toward bringing a bivocational pastor on board.

Spiritual Renewal

When a bivocational pastor works forty hours a week in a secular career, plus commute time, the remaining hours for doing pastoral duties are quite limited. If the pastor has children at home, spending time with family is critical. Many bivocational pastors' spouses work as well. This can put enormous stress on the family. Pastoral duties include sermon preparation, visitation, administrative work, campus management, and

counseling. In addition, there will be weddings, funerals, and baby dedications. The pastor must also take time for prayer and self-care.

All of the pastors interviewed make a concerted effort to have a daily devotion. This is their survival method. Working forty or more hours in a secular job can be draining physically and spiritually. Time spent praying and Bible reading are imperative. Gregory explains his thoughts about renewal:

> I do certain things for the purpose of trying to stay right with God. I've got to pray every day. I can't show up at the pulpit without having prayed. And I need to have my time in the Word every day. I've got to hear something spiritual—a preaching tape or something God oriented. I have to saturate myself every day. Those things take time. I will be late for work to get my prayer time in.

Mike tries to attend spiritual renewal events each year. Taking time to go to at least one spiritual event is a good thing. It is here that a pastor can get spiritually renewed and find direction for his church. José, being young spiritually and not having any theological training, relies on fasting, prayer, and Bible reading. God has blessed him and he has seen rapid growth and many miracles. In addition, he communicates with several more experienced pastors frequently.

Where Help is Needed

Better Theology

The first and most important need in the UPCI is for ministers and laypeople to gain a more fully developed theology of work. Here are eight points that need more clarity. The first area is basic human need. Work fulfills one of the most basic needs of humanity. Believers need to understand that their jobs are not just a necessary evil to pay the bills and give to the church, but work is just as essential as food and clothing to our well-being. The second area is work as worship. Work can be an expression of worship to

God when we do what we do unto him. The third area is that God is a worker. People need to know that God is a worker. He worked six days and rested only one day. We human beings are made in his image and likeness; we are workers as well. Adam and Eve were workers before and after the Fall. The fourth area is the Fall and work. Work is not part of the curse. The Fall brought about bitter aspects of work, but not work itself. The fifth area is false spiritual hierarchy. Believers need to understand that a spiritual hierarchy of careers is a false idea. The ministry is a special calling, but not higher than any other job that fulfills God's divine plan for a believer's life. A bricklayer's job is just as important to God as a pastor's work. The dignity of work needs to be restored. The sixth area is divine callings. God not only calls ministers, He calls pilots, farmers, plumbers, and engineers. God is intimately involved in our lives. We are his children. The seventh area is the false dichotomy of spirituality and work. Doing church or a private devotion is not the only place we can be spiritual. Embracing our calling acknowledges the "caller" and gives back in return for our personal giftings and callings. The final area is the eternal nature of work. When Jesus rose from the dead, he rolled the stone from the door and retained his scars. These earthly trappings signal something special about the resurrection. Not everything earthly will be lost. This "worldly" system will be trashed, but something will remain of God's creation.

Greater Attention to Bivocationalism

All of the bivocational pastors interviewed felt the UPCI could and should do more for them. Aaron was most enthusiastic about this need. He knows of only one UPCI seminar session addressing the needs of bivocational pastors in the past nine years. The

session was for one hour and the room was packed to overflowing. He was the seminar teacher. He makes the following suggestion:

> We go to conferences and meetings all year long. We are told, "This is what your church can do!" The guy gets hyped and goes home only to work and struggle. He needs some kind of encouragement. Sixty-five percent of our ministers are bivocational. There needs to be something on an annual basis that lets them air their frustrations and ask questions.

Larry said we should give the subject more attention over all. Darrell pointed out that our bivocational pastors are involved in many different things and have many connections. These resources could be tapped into if there was some system in place. Systems like LinkedIn could be used more effectively. Having a place to vent frustrations, share information, and ask questions could be of enormous help.

Offering seminars at the annual general conference is a start. This would send the message of the importance of bivocationalism to the ministry across North America.

Recommendations for Practice

The pastors interviewed seemed to have a shallow understanding of the significance of work from God's perspective and how work is an expression of God's image in all of us. The message coming from many pulpits, although implicit, is that church members' careers are in competition with the church for time and focus. Although this subject is not the most important area of biblical pedagogy, it is significant. Due to a lack of preaching and teaching about work, I believe that many church members are being robbed of one of the great joys of the Christian life—the spiritual satisfaction of fulfilling personal callings, giftings, and careers. I believe that many church members do not achieve their full potential because of an ambivalent view of their daily work. They fail to understand that their daily work is weaved monolithically with their spiritual lives.

Many think work is just a necessary evil to provide money for their families and the church. Some may be made to believe that going to church is the zenith of their spiritual endeavors and that church activities are the only places of true worship.

The UPCI should be advised to expend more effort to teach and train young ministers a theology of work. Bible colleges, Christian colleges, and the seminary could include the theology of work in their degree programs. Magazine articles about work need to be written and published in the flagship magazine and the minister's magazine. The Sunday school curriculum should publish lessons about the theology of work in the children's materials as well as the adults'.

Building a better theology of work among ministers and laypeople will not only help the church members in their vocations, but it will provide a foundation for helping the bivocational pastors find more acceptance and support. Building a biblical educational groundwork will restore the dignity of work and the spiritual nature of callings and careers.

In addition, the bivocational pastors I interviewed felt that their dual work roles are basically overlooked by their denomination. Although approximately sixty percent of pastors in the UPCI are bivocational (and an even higher percentage of church planters are bivocational), it is a subject that is basically ignored. Bivocational pastors do not talk about their jobs at ministers' meetings. Becoming a full-time pastor is the assumed goal of every pastor, and discussing secular work may even be something to be ashamed of in some settings. There are no seminars, published materials, or training offered by the denomination to educate, encourage, and support bivocational pastors.

The UPCI should launch a number of support endeavors to help the bivocational pastors. Church planters need encouragement and counsel from ministers who are experienced in this area. Consideration should be given to bivocational pastors when planning the annual calendar of denominational, pastoral events. Congregations working with a bivocational pastor need support and instruction. This could be accomplished by publishing articles in the flagship magazine, minister's magazine, and in the Sunday school curriculum. The bivocational pastor should be considered when planning the annual general conference seminars.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to discover how bivocational pastors understand the theology of work and to gain understanding about how bivocational pastors experience their dual-role responsibilities. As with any study, there are limitations as to how extensive the focus can be within it. Therefore, the following areas of future study are recommended.

It would be beneficial to discover why the bivocational pastors interviewed have an undeveloped theology of work. Is it because other doctrines taught in the church have suppressed growth in this area? Is it an oversight or neglect among pastors and leaders? Is it a lack of balance in the application of major doctrines of the church?

Another area of research that could bring helpful insight is a study of the career choice guidance offered by UPCI churches and institutions to high school and college-age believers. Do churches participate in helping young adults find their calling, or do they leave such things to the secular educational system.

Another interesting study would be to determine how bivocational pastors with larger churches manage their workload and remain effective in ministry.

Summary and Conclusion

One of the primary discoveries of this research has been to disclose that among bivocational pastors within the UPCI, there is a lack of a well-developed theology of work. The pastors interviewed view work as a means to an end. They see work in two dimensions—what Dodsen calls "instrumental" and "relational."[223] They appreciate the practical benefits they gain from bivocationalism, but fail to acknowledge, what Cosden calls, the "ontological" aspects. Work is a thing in itself with its own intrinsic value apart from the practical. The essential nature of work is built into the fabric of Creation by God. We are workers created in the image and likeness of God. I believe that grasping this truth can be of enormous encouragement to bivocational pastors and all believers working in the marketplace.

If the church would just drawing attention to the challenges and joys of pastoral bivocationalism it could be spiritually therapeutic. By helping laypeople gain a better understand of work and our callings we can become more effective in the work of the kingdom and find greater joy in their Christian life.

[223] Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 17.

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