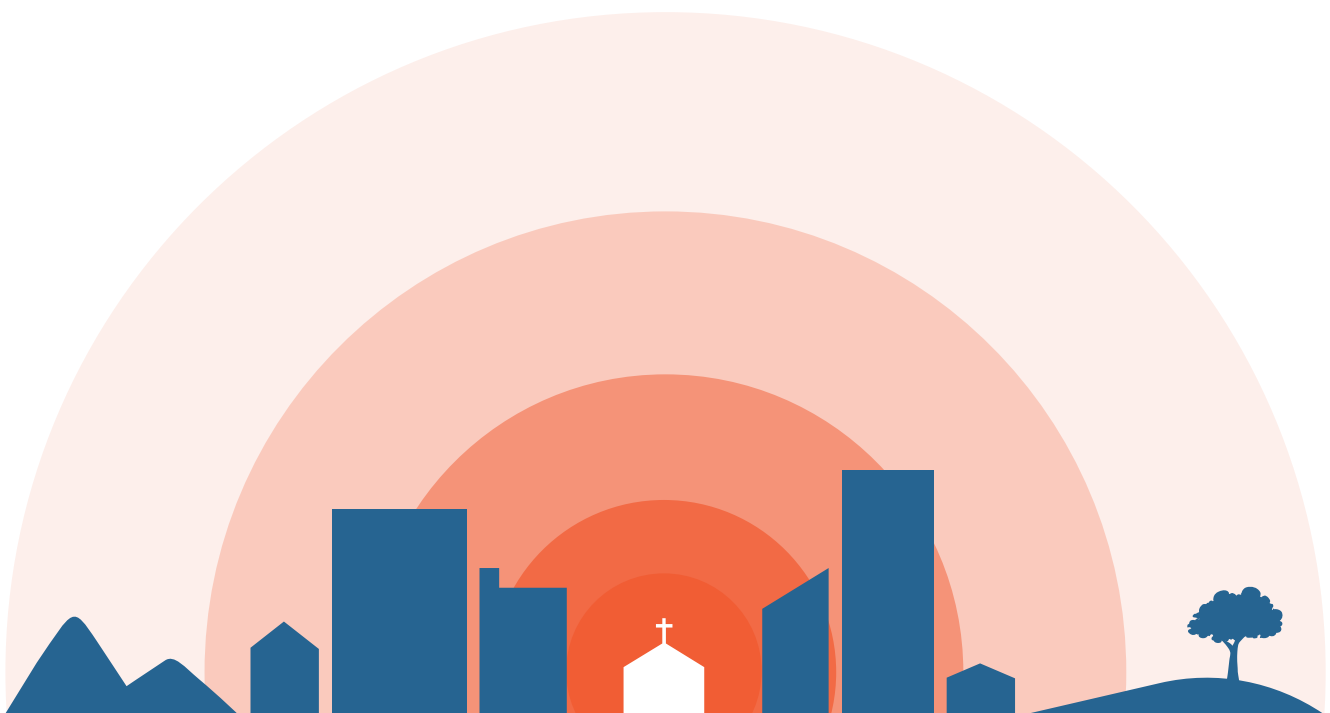


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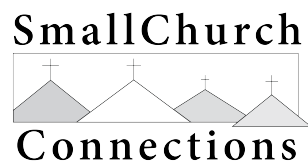


*Understanding the Value
of the Small Evangelical Church
in Canada*

Rick Hiemstra & Lindsay Callaway



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- Canadian Baptists of Ontario & Quebec
- Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
- Canadian Midwest District, Christian & Missionary Alliance
- Evangelical Free Church of Canada
- Pinewoods Chapel & Vision Ministries Canada
- Small Church Connections
- The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
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Rick Hiemstra
Lead Researcher
January 17, 2023

Executive Summary

The idea of small in “small church” is broader and deeper than the number of attendees at a worship service. *Size dynamics* theory posits that a church’s size enables it to succeed in particular kinds of ministry. Small churches excel in creating tight-knit, warm, family-like communities that provide space for broad participation in worship and community life. Their correspondingly small staffing complements mean church programs tend to lack the breadth and polish of larger churches.

This study looks at the needs of Canadian, evangelical small churches through the eyes of their pastors. The study is a ministry partnership between eleven denominations and ministry organizations and received approval from the Tyndale Research Ethics Board. To facilitate communication about the study and to define our research population, “small” was defined as having an average attendance of 150 or less, and “evangelical” defined as those denominations and churches that are affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The research was conducted between October 2019, and December 2022 which significantly overlapped the COVID-19 (COVID) pandemic. The project had four research phases: a literature review, semi-structured interviews with twenty-four ministry experts, semi-structured interviews with thirty-one small church pastors, and a national survey with small church pastors. Each phase built on what was learned in the previous one and interim phase reports were produced for the research partner organizations.

Although the Church Growth Movement’s (CGM) cultural moment has passed, its emphasis on numerical growth seemed to haunt the conversations with pastors and ministry experts as some sought to articulate why success and growth could be understood in non-numerical ways.

CGM and leadership models often assume a pastor has the independent capacity to affect change in a congregation leading to growth. Small churches are family-like and substantially make decisions by consensus. Pastors must become part of their small churches and love who their congregations are before they can call them to change. We found that small churches tend to have *congregational covenants*; unwritten understandings of what the church and its mission are about, which are usually formed early on in their golden age. Pastors who implement change often meet resistance from covenant keepers because they do not understand that *congregational covenant* exists or how they affect the workings of a small church.

The average age of pastors surveyed was fifty-two, and the median fifty-three, meaning half were within twelve years of retirement age. Males made up 490 of our survey respondents and females seventy-nine. Baptists and Holiness evangelical sub-traditions were overrepresented in our survey sample. Two-fifths of survey respondents entered small church pastoral ministry as a second career.

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The largest ethnic group in twenty percent of the churches sampled was non-European, and eleven percent were *New Canadian* congregations, meaning at least half their adult population were born outside Canada. Seven percent of respondents' congregations regularly hold worship services in a language other than the dominant official language in their region.

Pastors interviewed and surveyed, most commonly defined ministry success in terms of their congregants' spiritual growth. Notably, year-over-year numerical growth was least commonly cited as a success measure. Denominations tend to measure congregational ministry using standardized, numerical measures. When these measures are used, it is assumed that ministries in disparate contexts can be meaningfully compared, which was questioned by pastors we interviewed. Small church pastors often told us these measures were designed for larger church contexts and their use failed to recognize good pastoral ministry that does not lend itself to quantification.

Most of the pastors we interviewed and surveyed said their formal theological education did not prepare them adequately for small church pastoral ministry. Respondents told us schools were at their best when preparing students for preaching and teaching, and at their worst preparing students for leading change, doing church administration, leading boards, managing church politics and overseeing building maintenance. Most reported minimal to no specific training for small church ministry.

Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents were part of a staffing complement with at least one full-time pastoral staff. The most common staffing complement was a solo pastor at twenty-six percent. Of survey respondents with spouses, fifty-two percent of males and sixty-five percent of females said their spouses worked in either *paid or volunteer staff positions* at their church. Just six percent of survey respondents worked in multi-point charges.

Thirty-two percent of survey respondents' families had another income stream besides the salary they drew from their congregations. Forty-six percent had spousal income. Fourteen percent of spouses worked in paid positions at the church so, thirty-two percent of respondents' families had spousal income from outside the church. In many cases, a pastor's ability to serve in their positions is tied to their spouse's ability to find employment.

Small church pastors are by necessity generalists who are expected to visit and be involved in the lives of their congregants. Generalist tasks include things like building maintenance, working with technology, working with children, visitation and administration. Pastors most often cited preaching, leading small groups and teaching adults as areas of strength, and working with children and youth, working with technology, and doing administration as areas of weakness. On average, pastors said they spend thirty percent of their time working in areas of weakness.

Sixty-two percent of respondents took less than one day to one day off per week. Those who limited taking calls and emails from their congregants on their days off were more likely to have one or two days off per week.

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Respondents had a variety of understandings of their principal pastoral role. Most commonly, men said their principal role was preaching and administering the sacraments, while women most commonly said it was to discern what God is doing, a Missional Church theological formulation.

Pastors said their congregations expected them to be trustworthy, available and a generalist. In turn, pastors said they expected their congregations to be dependable volunteers, to communicate honestly, and to have reasonable expectations of their spouses and families, where applicable.

On average, respondents had been in pastoral ministry for nineteen years and held 3.6 ministry positions including their current one. On average, male respondents had been in their current ministry position for 8.0 years compared to 4.8 for females. Older respondents tended to stay in each of their ministry positions longer than younger ones.

In the interviews, pastors told us about how they felt they needed to work to counter negative cultural understandings of evangelical Christians. Nevertheless, when we asked survey respondents how they thought their communities perceived their congregations, most thought their communities appreciated their congregations or thought of their congregants as good people. The larger the community a church was situated in, the more likely a pastor was to say she did not know what the surrounding community thought of her church. When churches did engage with their communities it was usually through episodic events like fun fairs, food hampers or vacation Bible schools (VBS).

Solo small church ministry tends to be isolating because of strict requirements for confidences and the absence of colleagues with which to share the burdens of leadership. Accessible networks of pastoral peers were seen as important resources for pastors as they sought to navigate the complex and varied situations that arise in day-to-day ministry. Geography, culture and gender can create *network distance* that impedes access to networks that are otherwise assumed to be accessible resources. The networks pastors participate in are varied, with denominational networks being most common.

Women in ministry talked about their challenges, including having limited access to female mentors, not being accepted by their male colleagues and even, in some cases, being talked over by male colleagues as if they were not there.

The quality of pastors' relationships with denominations was linked to them having a friend in the denominational office. Absent this anchor relationship, no matter the quality of communications received from the denomination, the denomination-congregation relationship was likely to be poor. Denominational loyalty seemed low, and thirty-five percent of survey respondents had switched denominations at some point in their pastoral career.

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The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on in-person worship gatherings created stresses for pastors. They had to manage and master the technological platforms associated with moving worship services online. At the same time, pastors were often the lightning rods for congregants who were unhappy with decisions made in compliance with public health orders. Several pastors we interviewed talked about COVID weariness and how they were considering leaving pastoral ministry. Nevertheless, by the time we surveyed pastors, only eight percent said they were unlikely or very unlikely to be in pastoral ministry a year from now.

Prominent social issues such as the discovery of unmarked graves at a former residential school in Kamloops, BC, or the ongoing expansion of Medical Assistance in Dying were mentioned in the pastor interviews. On the survey, we asked pastors on which of the issues raised in the interviews they planned to preach or teach in the next twelve months. More than half said they would not preach or teach on any of them.

Small churches need to be understood and respected by their denominations and their peers in larger congregations. Small churches' size qualifies them for a necessary and vital ministry characterized by family-like warmth and broad congregational participation. Small church pastors need accessible networks of their peers to meet the complex and dynamic challenges of pastoral ministry. In the coming years there will need to be a renewed focus on calling and preparing pastors for small church ministry – preparing them to understand small church contexts and for the kinds of pastoral ministry they will encounter there.

Introduction

What are the needs of small churches? It seems like a simple enough question, but behind it are a constellation of other questions. What is a small church for? What should small churches be doing? Who decides? What is small? Is it okay to be small?

In May 2019, representatives of close to thirty Canadian denominations and ministry organizations met at the Guelph Bible Conference Centre, in Guelph, Ontario to talk about the needs of small churches. At that consultation, participants spoke about a sense that denominations and ministry organizations prioritize the needs of larger churches over those of smaller ones.

As we have listened to small church pastors and those who minister to and with them, it has become clear to us that, in addition to any operational needs small churches may have, they need to be understood and respected. As we will see, in many cases, small churches do not feel understood or respected by their denominational leaders or their peers in larger churches.

The 2019 consultation led to the creation of a research partnership between eleven denominations and ministry organizations, and one Christian liberal arts university ***to understand the needs of small, Canadian, evangelical churches.***

The partnership commissioned The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's (EFC) Centre for Research on Church and Faith (CRCF) to conduct phased research between May 2019, and November 2022, where each successive phase built on the findings of the previous ones with input and direction provided by the ministry partner organizations. In order, the phases included a literature review, semi-structured interviews with ministry experts, semi-structured interviews with pastors, and finally a national survey with small church pastors (see appendix A for more on the research methodology). Interim phase reports were provided to the partners at the end of each phase.¹

"Small" is a relative term. Smaller than what? Smaller by what measure? We examine this question in section 1.1 of this report, but for the purpose of defining a research population it was decided, in consultation with our research partners, to define *small churches* as those congregations whose average weekly worship service attendance is 150 or less.

¹ Interim phase reports include: Lindsay Callaway and Rick Hiemstra, "CESCS Literature Review" (The CESCS Partnership, February 10, 2020); Rick Hiemstra and Lindsay Callaway, "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Ministry Expert Interviews Report" (The CESCS Partnership, November 27, 2020); Rick Hiemstra and Lindsay Callaway, "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Pastor Interviews Report" (The CESCS Partnership, November 18, 2021).

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There are different ways to define “evangelical.”² For this study we defined “small, Canadian, evangelical churches” (small churches hereafter) as those *small* churches affiliated with one of the EFC’s affiliates.³

Small church pastors were chosen as our primary research population over other possible small church informants, such as lay people, because they were relatively accessible through the EFC’s affiliate networks, and, by virtue of their offices, have the capacity to both speak to the needs of small churches and influence them. We had two small church pastor samples: first, a set of thirty-one semi-structured interviews, and second, a national survey with 569 qualified responses.

Prior to gathering data with pastors, however, we interviewed twenty-four ministry experts about the needs of small churches. These experts included denominational leaders, academics, ministry organization leaders and small church pastors. What we learned from these experts informed the questions we asked pastors.

It is important to understand that our research plan was formulated pre-COVID-19, and that the data was collected when the country was experiencing various kinds of health authority mandated restrictions on mobility, social interaction and in-person worship services. This means that the data do not reflect a pre-COVID “normal.” At the time of writing, however, it was, and still is, not clear what a new post-COVID normal will look like. Because of our iterative, phased approach to research we were able to adapt the research to address the changes brought about by COVID.

Needs are often subjective, and a common complaint that we heard in the 2019 consultation was that small churches are often told they *need* to become large. We wanted to get at what (indirectly) small church pastors saw as *their* needs. We did this by asking how small church pastors *personally* defined ministry success. Knowing their vision of success, we hypothesized that they would articulate needs that would support their success. Although our study is about the needs of small *churches*, we expect that there will be a strong correlation between small church pastors’ success and the success (hence needs) of their congregations.

Technical notes about the samples can be found in appendix A. The reader should be aware, however, that Baptist and Holiness traditions are overrepresented in the survey data (see figure 2.6 and table 2.1). We explored weighting the sample to correct for these overrepresentations but decided against it because the weights distorted the data more than they helped.

The report begins by looking at the small church: what it is, how it works, what constraints it works under and how its mission changes. Next, the report examines small church pastors: who

² John G. Stackhouse Jr, “Defining ‘Evangelical,’” *Church & Faith Trends* 1, no. 1 (October 2007): 1–5; John G. Stackhouse Jr, *Evangelicalism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022); Rick Hiemstra, “Counting Canadian Evangelicals,” *Church & Faith Trends* 1, no. 1 (October 2007): 16.

³ See <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Affiliation/Our-affiliates> for a current list of EFC affiliates.

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they are, how they define ministry success, how their formal education prepares them for small church ministry, how they understand their pastoral role, and how long they stay in a pastorate. We then briefly look at how small churches engage with their communities before an extended look at how networks and denominations support, or can support, small church ministries. The penultimate section discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small church ministry, and the report closes with a glimpse at the social issues pastors plan to preach and teach on in the next year.

Survey data is usually presented at an aggregate level and sometimes broken out by respondent gender. We recognize there will be interest in how these data vary by tradition or denomination. Unfortunately, this report cannot accommodate that analysis. These data will be provided to participating denominations as sets of custom tables and figures after this report is released.

1. Small Church

1.1 What is Small?

A prevailing theme in studying the small church is that the small church is different.⁴ A church of forty congregants is not the same as a church of 4,000. In the same way a Honda Civic differs from a concrete mixer, a small church is distinct in its function, its congregational life and in how it relates to the community. Yet, most resources and literature on church leadership and ministry assume large church contexts that simply do not translate to small church ministry.⁵ This is especially true for the small church in Canada.

The Canadian evangelical small church lacks resourcing not only pertaining to its size, but also to its culture. Most mainstream voices in church and ministry research, that acknowledge unique ministry practices in the small church, are American, like Tim Keller, Thom Rainer and Ed Stetzer. However, Canadian sociologists have long observed that Evangelicalism takes on a different character in Canada than in the United States.

Sam Reimer and Michael Wilkinson, Professors of Sociology at Crandall University and Trinity Western University, respectively, observe distinct cultures in Canadian evangelical congregations; “[C]ongregations create their own ways of doing things, their own identity, rituals and stories that make each congregation unique.”⁶ Reimer and Wilkinson refer to a “family resemblance” that evangelical churches share because “they draw elements of their culture from (Canadian) society, from their (evangelical) tradition, and from their denomination.”⁷ The cultural element to congregational identity will become especially important later in this report as we understand the roles that size dynamics and congregational covenants play in shaping a small church.

This study explores the “family resemblances” and unique identities among small evangelical congregations across Canada with the goal of understanding the concerns and successes of small churches through their pastors and learning how to care for the small church and those that lead it.

⁴ This understanding was widely cited by the literature in reference to Lyle Schaller, and best represented in his work, Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Church Is Different!* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1982).

⁵ This is Karl Vaters’ motivation for writing in Karl Vaters, *Small Church Essentials: Field-Tested Principles for Leading a Healthy Congregation of under 250* (Chicago: Moody Publishing, 2018).

⁶ Sam Reimer and Michael Wilkinson, *A Culture of Faith: Evangelical Congregations in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015), 8.

⁷ Ibid.

1.2 Size Dynamics

“Small” is not limited to the size of a building or the number of people in the pews. Small modifies the practices and expectations in a church.⁸ Late 20th century church consultant Lyle Schaller claimed, “Churches have more in common by size than by denomination, tradition, location, age or any other single isolatable factor.”⁹ Size affects the life and ministry of a small church.

Tim Keller, an American pastor and theologian who planted a church in New York City, refers to size-determined operations as “size dynamics,” which “affect[] how decisions are made, how relationships flow, how effectiveness is evaluated, and what ministers, staff, and lay leaders do.”¹⁰ Small church experts and pastors consulted for this study agreed there is a distinct system of ministry and atmosphere specific to the size of a church. When asked to define these for a small church, respondents often referred to the atmosphere of relationships and resource capacities that characterize a small gathering of people.

In a partnership development meeting, Ron Johnston, Executive Director of Small Church Connections, and a small church pastor himself, shared an insightful observation about the dynamics in a small church: small churches are not so much defined by a number but a “mindset” in which what they do is determined by what they have. The literature agreed in two major areas.

- Simplicity: small churches *do* simpler ministry because they *have* fewer resources.
- Relationships: small churches can *do* relational proximity (i.e., close relationships) well because they *have* relational proximity.

Simple, here, is not a negative term. It means uncomplicated and without complex interacting systems, like how a lever is classified as a simple machine, or a one-celled organism is known as a simple organism. Gary McIntosh, professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Biola University, refers to small churches as single cells in which “values, style, history, memories, and concerns are commonly held together.”¹¹ The small church is unencumbered by multiple programs and activities and their resources expenditure is proportionally simple.

⁸ Karl Vaters, “Forget the 200 Barrier - Small Churches Need to Break the Grasshopper Barrier,” Pivot | A Blog by Karl Vaters, accessed February 9, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2015/june/forget-200-barrier--small-churches-need-to-break.html>.

⁹ Lyle E. Schaller, *Activating the Passive Church: Diagnosis and Treatment* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 25–26.

¹⁰ Tim Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth” (Redeemer City to City, 2010), 1, <https://seniorpastorcentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Tim-Keller-Size-Dynamics.pdf>.

¹¹ Gary L. McIntosh, *One Size Doesn’t Fit All: Bringing Out the Best in Any Size Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Revell, 1999), 40.

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Another characteristic of the small church is that it is relational. Small churches “enjoy a close, face-to-face relationship in which everyone knows everyone else in the church,”¹² says Gary McIntosh. Ron Johnston suggests the relational nature of the small church must be considered in every aspect of it, asserting it to be the “most important characteristic of the small church. Everything – worship, evangelism, discipleship, preaching, and more – needs to revolve around this fact.”¹³

Study participants claimed “small” was more than a number, but it often started there.

1.2.1 Numbers

When asked to define a small church, nineteen of the thirty-one pastors we interviewed referenced average weekly worship service attendance. Outlying responses ranged from thirty to 300, but most referenced around or under 100 people. Several pastors factored context into their numerical descriptions of a small church as well. A New Canadian¹⁴ pastor said in Canada a small church is less than fifty, but in Africa a church of 700 is considered small. Another pastor, referring to 250 people as a popular threshold for a small church,¹⁵ said in Newfoundland a small church would be sixty people or less.

Mainstream small church resources recognize 200 attendees as the transition point where congregational dynamics and leadership strategy shift away from a small church mindset.¹⁶ Studies on size dynamics in churches call this the 200-barrier.¹⁷ The number is approximate and generally refers to the point at which the simplicity and relational nature that is expected of small church ministry grows in complexity. Canadian experts and resources tended to lean toward 150 as the threshold for a small church.¹⁸ One expert consulted for our study mused about what constitutes small, saying, “I was just gonna say 150, but something happens between 150 and 200 where you are no longer a small church.”

The Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study (CESCS) partnership chose to study churches with a weekly attendance of 150 or less, hoping to give more weight to congregations under fifty¹⁹

¹² McIntosh, 39–40.

¹³ Ron Johnston, *Reality Check for the Church: Discovering a Unique Vision for the Small Church* (Word Alive Press, 2013), 69.

¹⁴ We define New Canadian congregations as those where more than half the adult population are first-generation immigrants.

¹⁵ Our literature review suggested attendance less than 200 was the common threshold for a small church.

¹⁶ Vaters, *Small Church Essentials*.; Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth.”; Rainer, “The 200 Growth Barrier in Churches Revisited: 9 Observations” accessed February 9, 2020, <https://thomrainer.com/2014/03/the-200-growth-barrier-in-churches-revisited-9-observations/>.; Ed Stetzer offers a course called “Breaking the 200 Barrier” on his website for \$397 USD, <https://edstetzer.com/breaking-200>

¹⁷ Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth,” 1.

¹⁸ Stephen D. Elliott, *Next Level Church* (Fishers, Indiana: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2021), 35–36, <https://www.parasource.com/next-level-church-9781632574619>.

¹⁹ Brandon O’Brien, “Explainer: The Micro Church Movement,” CT Pastors, accessed February 9, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2009/july-online-only/explainer-micro-church-movement.html>.

and recognizing American small church literature may promote the 200-barrier from a context with a different understanding of small and large. This study also considers small churches apart from church plants.²⁰ Church plants start small and may stay small, but Ron Johnston observed the ethos in church plants is often “large churches in waiting.”²¹ We do not intend to examine churches that are small because they are *new*, rather those that have demonstrated consistently small attendance for at least five years.

We collected data from pastors in two ways: the first phase was through qualitative interviews with small church pastors selected by quota from a group of nominees solicited from Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) affiliate denominational leaders. Aiming to give due attention to different varieties of small churches, church attendance in this study is divided into three categories between zero and 150. A fourth category accounts for slightly larger, outlying responses.

Table 1.1 Small church average weekly attendance, ranges, pastor interviews and pastor survey, counts and percent

Attendance	Qualitative sample		Survey sample ^b	
	Count	Percent ^a	Count	Percent ^a
0 – 50	10	32	382	67
51 – 100	15	48	155	27
101 – 150	6	19	22	4
151 +	0	NA	10	1
Unknown	0	NA	0	NA
Total	31	99	569	99

^a Columns do not add to 100 because of rounding.

^b Average in-person worship service attendance.

Pastors in the survey sample were asked to report three attendance estimates for their local church. First, average weekly service attendance for the 12-month period prior to COVID-19 restrictions. Second, their church’s average in-person attendance in the four weeks prior to taking the survey. Finally, the corresponding previous, four-week online worship service attendance. Survey answers provided a glimpse into churches during a small window of time between February and April 2022, when most jurisdictions were still under COVID-related public health restrictions and others were reopening to full capacity.²²

Over seventy percent of pastors said their churches accommodated up to fifty virtual attendees. Combined virtual and in-person attendance, on average, inflated congregational numbers above the pre-COVID average by about eight percent²³, moving ten percent of survey responses outside of the size criteria for this study. We suspect pastors evaluated the size of their churches using in-person attendance alone since many considered they were eligible to

²⁰ A detailed explanation of the types of small churches represented in this study can be found in appendix A.

²¹ Ron Johnston, said in Zoom partnership meeting on November 27, 2019.

²² Survey responses were collected between February 15 and April 8, 2022.

²³ Average pre-COVID attendance was sixty-eight congregants. Average post-COVID attendance with in-person and virtual numbers combined was seventy-five.

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take the survey and because research shows religious participation has declined among Evangelicals²⁴ and in Canada generally.²⁵ For these reasons, post-COVID, in-person attendance will be used when referring to the size of churches in this report unless stated otherwise.

1.2.2 Staffing and capacity

Church health experts stress small churches cannot operate in the same way as larger churches. This was especially true for the expectations and limitations concerning staff and leadership: “A church’s functional style ... and the roles of its lay and staff leaders will change dramatically as its size changes.”²⁶ The link between the number of congregants and leadership roles suggests weekly worship service attendance is often used as shorthand for ministry capacity.

Small church pastors we interviewed understood how operational ministry needs to shift if numbers increase. One pastor respondent said, “Once you [get] to about 150, you really start[] losing the ability to manage it as a solo pastor.” This point is reiterated by Stephen Elliott, National Superintendent of The Wesleyan Church of Canada and CESCS research partner, who said, “Once a church reaches 150 or more ... it is almost impossible for the lead pastor to provide personalized care and attention to everyone in the church.”²⁷ These observations suggest both pastor and congregation need to adapt with numerical growth.

Another pastor remarked, “Once you start getting to that point [100 attendees] ... you'd have to start rethinking how you do certain things” and identified the size dynamics that would adjust in her church.

- **Worship:** integrating prayer requests into the worship service would be difficult if there are too many people.
- **Atmosphere:** “The intimacy isn't quite the same once you get more people.”
- **Staffing:** more staff (pastoral and support) are needed to support a larger congregation.

Staffing is an important consideration for size dynamics because it addresses job duties, and the number of people one person can reasonably be expected to serve. One pastor shared, “We have a small congregation, and it doesn't have enough to pay staff. I pretty much do most of the administration.” His time spent on administration presumably takes time away from pastoral tasks. In a cycle of cause and effect, the church cannot afford to pay more staff to offset the pastor’s administrative burdens and the pastor’s lack of capacity limits the church from growing to a point where it can support more staff.

²⁴ Rick Hiemstra, “COVID and Church” (Power Point, 2021 EFC Presidents Day, Virtual Meeting, October 28, 2021).

²⁵ Statistics Canada Government of Canada, “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Religiosity of Canadians,” July 18, 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>.

²⁶ Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth,” 1.

²⁷ Elliott, *Next Level Church*, 35–36.

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In a small church, the pastor often oversees other church care duties alongside the base-line responsibilities of a pastor that would be expected in a church of any size. Small church experts frequently observed that small church pastors had to function as generalists, not spending too much time in their office and showing that the pastor “isn’t just a book worm.” In Acts 6:1-7, Jesus’ disciples recognized their responsibilities changed in proportion to the growing body of believers and understood the need to specialize as ministers of the Word. When the body is proportionally small, however, specialization is not always possible.

Initially hired onto a staff with multiple pastors, one pastor quickly became the only remaining minister in her shrinking church. She had to fight her board to keep the administrative assistant on staff, fearing “without her it would be very difficult for me to do a lot of the things as a pastor that I need to do.” This pastor expresses a reluctance to move from a specialist to a generalist. To the board, a smaller church meant fewer people to serve and therefore, fewer staff was needed. To this pastor, fewer staff meant she would have to do more administrative work, and less pastoral work.

Other pastors expressed a reluctance to move into specialization. One pastor acknowledged the kind of leadership required to accommodate growth and said these changes neither suited his strengths nor his desires as a pastor: “I probably take more of the burden upon myself and therefore I can only probably minister to about 100 people ... I want to be with people.” For this pastor, and many like him, his skillset and leadership qualities incline him to small church ministry and the smallness of the church reflects an embrace of these limited capacities to be with people. Univocally, the literature reviewed for this project agreed certain pastors are more suited to small church ministry because a smaller, intimate environment is a better fit for their gifting and calling.²⁸

Hiring dynamics in the small church are especially acute because a solo pastor’s weaknesses typically cannot be offset by more staff. This explains why one of Keller’s strategies for overcoming the 200-barrier requires “a second staff worker ... who complements the gifts of the first minister.”²⁹ A pastor said it was precisely because he had an associate minister that they could effectively serve 140 congregants.

I do have an associate and we happen to have a great gift skill or a great gift mix right now. And he's a very, very good people person, and I'm good at people too, but when you're the primary preacher, I tend to isolate to be able to prepare well for preaching. ... I think to ... you know, to minister in the church with 140 ... We complement each other perfectly.

The power of two people allowed him to not only focus on his primary task as preacher but to interact with people without feeling like he was neglecting duties or members of the

²⁸ Matt Henslee, “3 Myths About the Small Church Pastor,” Lifeway Research, September 20, 2022, <https://research.lifeway.com/2022/09/20/3-myths-about-the-small-church-pastor/>.

²⁹ Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth,” 8.

congregation. Staffing, however, is often affected by budgetary and resource constraints in a small church as “a small church can only pay for so many people.”

One rural pastor defined a small church primarily in relation to staffing: “A small church is a church that is probably staffed by one person or even not having a full-time person at all.” For him, a key quality of a small church is what it can sustain financially. This definition of the church suggests a church's capacity is defined by how many staff it can take care of and not how many congregants, or people from the community, it serves.

In interviews, pastors and ministry experts outlined several models of ministry that helped offset or avoid typical staff and capacity constraints in small churches. There are factors to consider that might make one model more applicable depending on the context.

- **Pastoral Couples:**

“We are extremely unique in that position of having three ordained ministers serving this church while they pay for one.” (In this case, there was a pastoral couple sharing one full-time job as well as an elderly ordained minister who functioned as a volunteer staff member.)

Considerations:

- limited to denominations that affirm women’s ordination
- denominations need to be structurally prepared to view church leadership through the lens of a married unit, i.e., The Salvation Army.

- **Network Model:**

“We share the admin with the larger network. So, we have, like, finance and admin and finance administration, that kind of stuff, [Human Resources] kind of support from the larger network. We also have, like, marketing, communications, media design, that kind of stuff supported by the ... larger networks.”

Considerations:

- tends to be more popular in urban settings, but it could be adapted to address the capacity limitations felt more acutely in rural regions
- aspects of congregational autonomy are forfeited.

- **Lay Elder Leadership³⁰:**

“[The lay pastors] help to preach and to care for people. ... And then, I think, that in the context of small church that just continues to ripple, like, you know, in our small group context we're teaching our small group people to extend pastoral care to each other, to help.”

³⁰ An elder, in this case, refers to non-ordained, generally elected positions of leadership in a church. Usually tasked with guiding the direction of the church as a board or committee.

“So, as the formal vocational pastor of this church, I have to figure out how to care for 100 people, and I have to figure out, from a leadership perspective, how do I do that? So, normally, what I have to do, then, in the smaller church context is figure out who are the elders? Who are the – my fellow elders, fellow shepherds within this congregation? And how can we best work together to shepherd this local church?”

Considerations:

- more suitable in traditions that affirm elder leadership (above quotes were from traditionally brethren and Reformed churches)
- finding, appointing and training qualified elders remained a challenge for some of our respondents, especially those in rural settings.

- **Volunteers:**

“We have a small groups coordinator who is voluntary. Our treasurer is a volunteer. Our organist-choir director is a volunteer. Our sound technician is a volunteer. I mean ... every other position is voluntary, but we have all of those positions filled.”

Considerations:

- volunteers are not as dependable or predictable as paid staff; the standards of a work relationship do not always apply (i.e., it can be harder to fire a volunteer)
- context may affect the availability and quality of volunteers.

Those who did not mention staffing or capacity as a dynamic in the small church tended to have additional staff or a dependable volunteer base. They were more likely to see the defining qualities of small church ministry in other areas, like the atmosphere it cultivates.

1.2.3 Family atmosphere

The second most popular description of the small church was the unique atmosphere that characterizes a smaller gathering. There was consensus on the nature of this attribute, chiefly that the small church has the relational qualities and intimacy of a family.

In his essay, *Leadership and Church Size Dynamics*, a resource cited by many church-health authors, Tim Keller writes that “a highly relational church in which everyone knows everyone intimately”³¹ characterizes churches up to the 200-barrier. Some literature suggested churches *choose* not to grow in number to preserve the close-knit community.³² Interviews corroborated the value of relational intimacy in the small church but keeping numbers low as a ministry strategy was not a theme in this study.

³¹ Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth,” 6.

³² Ibid, 7.

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Congregants, on the other hand, were described as more likely to seek out a smaller church setting because it offered the kinds of relationships they were looking for. Karl Vaters, a popular small church ministry author and pastor with Canadian roots says, “People are attracted to large churches because they can be anonymous and passive. The opposite is true for small churches.”³³ Cam Harder, a professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, suggests small churches validate individuals’ efforts to be known and offer an atmosphere of intimacy in return; they offer the value of relational ease rather than breadth.³⁴

One pastor we interviewed correspondingly reported people “came to our church, and they stayed because they liked ... not feel[ing] like they're just one of a number.” Another respondent said the value proposition of intimacy motivated his congregants as well: “I think people come to this church because they feel there is a place that they can belong, that there’s a real sense of openness.”

Most commonly, pastors mentioned congregants were attracted to the family atmosphere of the small church: “[For congregants] it's not just ‘Well, we go to the same church.’ It's that we now become part of the same family.” Stephen Elliott recalled from his own ministry experience a congregant who expressed frustration as the numbers were increasing in his congregation: “I would rather attend a church where I know everyone, and everyone knows me.”³⁵ Elliott observed, “he wanted to be in a family-sized church.”³⁶

Pastors in this sample were more willing to say smallness reflected congregational preference than a ministry vision for their church. However, pastors certainly saw smallness as a strategic advantage for cultivating an atmosphere conducive for a relationally oriented ministry. To measure how pastors perceived the atmosphere in their small church, survey participants chose from a list of positive (dark blue), negative (red) and neutral (light blue) adjectives to describe their congregation. Descriptions were chosen for their frequency of use in qualitative interviews and survey respondents chose as many as were relevant to their context. Pastors chose, on average, three descriptors for their congregations. The results graphed in figure 1.1 below show pastors were overwhelmingly positive when describing their flocks. These findings confirm what pastors stated in interviews about the advantageous ethos small churches cultivate, but starkly contrast the way small churches were described by denominational representatives.

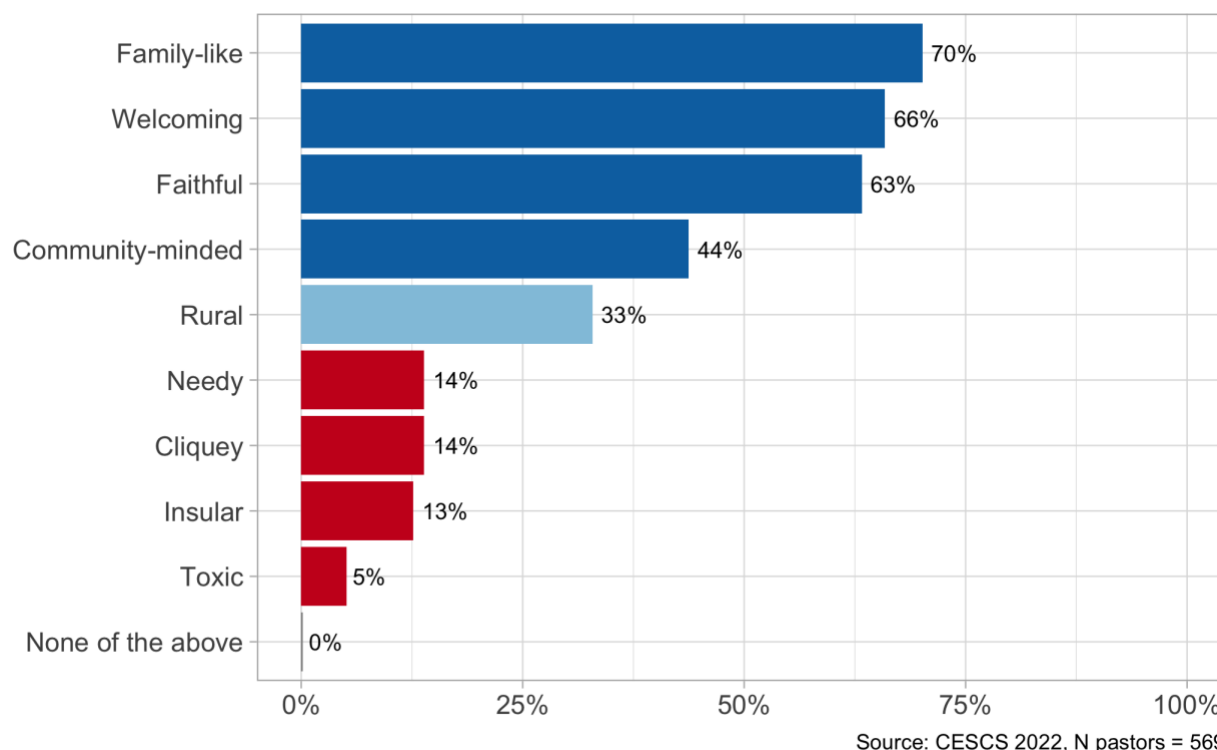
³³ Vaters, *Small Church Essentials*, 111.

³⁴ Cam Harder, “New Shoots from Old Roots: The Challenge and Potential of Mission in Rural Canada,” in *Green Shoots out of Dry Ground: Growing a New Future for the Church in Canada* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 51.

³⁵ Elliott, *Next Level Church*, 92.

³⁶ Elliott, 92.

Figure 1.1 Small church characteristics as reported by pastors, percent



The prevailing narrative in conversations with denominational leaders was small churches are needy, discouraged, insular or broken. One denominational leader believed small churches are often small because they have “very needy” or “difficult” people in the congregation, or that the pastor is exercising poor leadership and discouraged by poor pay. These kinds of perceptions affect denominational strategy and support for small churches.

This particular denominational leader suggested the small church needed numerical growth to dilute the influence of these difficult people and shift the pastor’s heart “away from a sense of defeat or discouragement, or survival thinking.” His denomination consequently emphasizes leadership and vision casting oriented toward numerical growth. A ministry expert, who served as an interim pastor in a struggling small church, said her denominations’ perceptions about the small church meant they prioritized church planting over revitalization because “established churches are too set in their ways.”

Pastors in our survey sample, however, were roughly five times more likely to describe their congregation as “family-like” or “welcoming” rather than “insular” or “needy,” and even less inclined to use the word “toxic.” Denominational perceptions may be driven in part by:

- implicit rewards and explicit recognition associated with numerical growth metrics;
- the need to intervene more frequently with small, unhealthy congregations because of the larger number of small churches.

Toxic, needy and insular churches, however, are neither the norm nor representative, according to pastor interviews and surveys.

The prevalence of positive descriptors does not mean small church pastors are naïve to the weaknesses in their congregations. For example, a pastor with a counselling background commented on the *potentially* insular nature of the small church when the goodness of “the need for fellowship, the need for community and the need for connection” is reduced to a church that is “just about itself.” Talking about the internal connectivity within the congregation, he says the difference between a healthy small church and an unhealthy small church, is the atmosphere: “I’ve done a lot of conflict management, I’ve gone to churches, they might be small in number – fifty or so – but the people are not connected. I would not consider that as a small church feel. I would call that a struggling church with small numbers.” He did not, however, mention the potential weaknesses associated with a lack of external connectivity with the community.

Over sixty-seven percent of pastors surveyed described the connections within their small church as “family-like.” Only sixteen percent of pastors with family-like congregations said their congregation was also insular or toxic, indicating most pastors interpret the family-like nature of their small church as a virtue. This confirms how pastors and ministry experts described the strengths and atmosphere of the small church in qualitative interviews: “[M]any people have come and said, “This feels like family. This feels like home.” ... I know there is a genuine presence of love here.”

Many interviewees compared the family-like connections in the small church against what they described as the aloof, programmatic systems of the large church. If the small church was a homecooked meal at Grandma’s house, the large church was eating at a stuffy restaurant. One ministry leader contrasted the “intimacy of [a small church]” with the “flashy” routine of a large church focused on “mak[ing] sure [the church is] full every Sunday.” The family atmosphere was also mentioned for the kind of ministry a small church could facilitate. Such as:

- informal services that foster congregational participation.
- the ease to which members can detect missing faces.
- the ability to identify and welcome newcomers.

Notably, only forty percent of pastors described their congregation as “community minded” despite nearly twice as many who considered their church “welcoming.” This indicates a large contingent of small churches are open to having newcomers join the homecooked meal at Grandma’s but may not be the kind of family who hosts a neighbourhood BBQ. Rural church experts argue this is more prevalent in larger communities and not in rural contexts where there is more overlap between the small church and the community.³⁷

³⁷ Timothy Beadle, *Turning Over a New Leaf* (Lulu Publishing Services, 2020).

1.2.4 Rural

Rural church pastors suggested the dynamics in the rural small church are different than the urban small church. This came through in their definitions (see bullet list below). Rural, solo ministers, for example, usually included “rural” and “solo” as essential qualities to their understanding of small church, where these descriptors were absent in small church descriptions from pastors who ministered in multi-staff or larger community contexts.

- “I’m not sure how the stats fall into this, but for me a small church would be, like, anything under 100 people, maybe. Kind of rural or – I suppose it could be city – but I think more – when I think small church, I’m thinking more rural.”
- “I don’t have a specific number in mind, but it’s also definitely – it’s a lot to do with the culture, the rural culture. It’s not – a non-urban church, I guess. There could be large churches out of the city, but, yeah, I’d say it’s the rural culture.”
- “I guess I would say a small church is a church that is probably staffed by one person or even not having a full-time person at all. ... I would think that to me a small church would just [be comprised] of basically a sole pastor, a solo pastor. We don’t have any paid staff like a youth pastor or anything like that.”

In our pastor survey, which was a referral sample³⁸, roughly fifty-five percent of respondents ministered in populations less than 30,000. Seventy-two percent of pastors in communities with less than 1,000 people described their congregation as “rural,” suggesting a strong sense of rural identity among those who live in these smaller communities. Only half of respondents from communities ranging from 1,000 to 30,000 described their congregation as “rural,” obscuring the usefulness of urban-rural labels.³⁹ For the purpose of this report, we will refer to communities as rural if they are less than 1,000 but otherwise refer to communities as small (1,000 – 29,999), medium (30,000 – 499,999) and large (500,000 +).

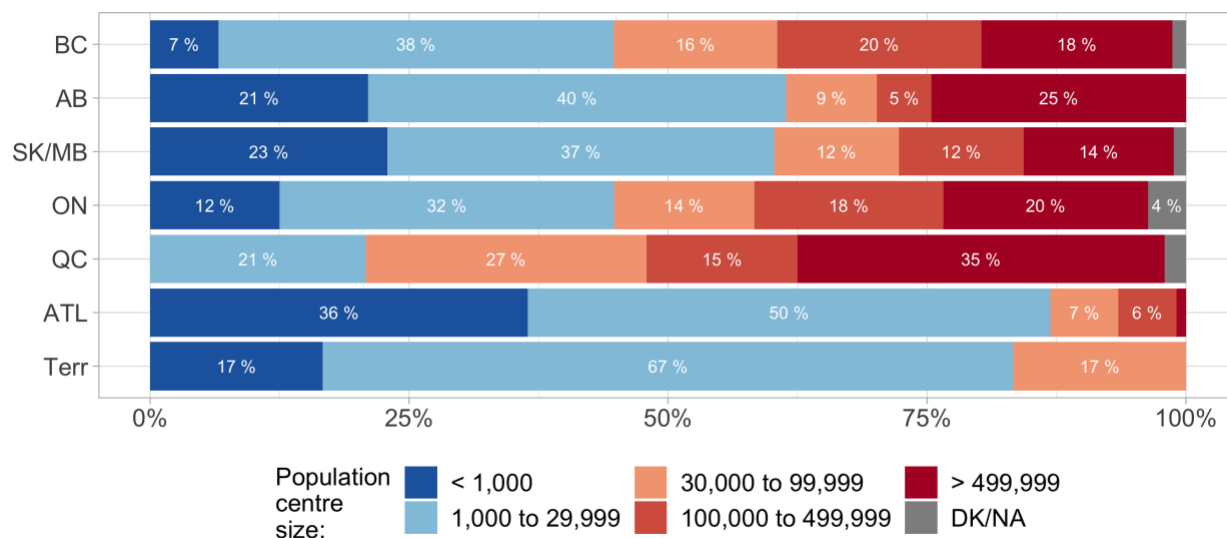
Among pastors who ministered in small communities, seventy-two percent were solo pastors. Only half of pastors in rural communities were solo. This suggests community size is not always a predictor of staff size.

Figure 1.2 shows the population setting for small churches in our sample by region.

³⁸ See appendix A for a description of the sample and the survey methodology.

³⁹ Since such a large portion of our sample under 1,000 self-identified as “rural,” we use it as a descriptor in this report only to describe these communities. See *Rural/Urban Populations* in the Methodology section for more information about the challenges of using urban-rural categorizations by population.

Figure 1.2 Population of the community in which congregations are located, by region, percent



2022 CESCS, N = 569.

Churches in Quebec were more likely to be in larger population centres, whereas those in the prairies, the north or in the Atlantic provinces were more likely to be in smaller communities. In many respects this represents the distribution of community sizes across the country. If a congregation's outlook is determined in part by its setting, then figure 1.2 shows us how the outlook of small churches might vary across the country.

Conclusion

Experts and practitioners agree pastors navigate a variety of operational dynamics unique to small church ministry. And in the same way numbers are used to differentiate an 18-wheeler from a 4-door sedan, not only to communicate the size of the vehicle but the difference in driving approach, interview respondents used numbers as a shorthand to describe the leadership and relational dynamics inherent to the small church.

Budgetary and resource constraints on staffing often lead to a chicken-and-egg conundrum where a pastor can only manage a certain amount of people and that certain amount of people can only support one pastor. The family-like atmosphere also perpetuates itself because pastors are either skilled and desire to minister in relational ways, or congregants want an intimate church environment and leave when that is threatened.

While these dynamics are common across most small churches in Canada, individual small churches are situated in unique contexts, like rural communities, that also impose on their size and operations in different ways. The next sections will discuss context and the impact of external and internal environments on the size and dynamics of a church.

1.3 Environmental Considerations

1.3.1 External

Some small church literature assumes churches will grow in numerical attendance unless something external or internal impedes them. Gary McIntosh, for example, believes [numerical] growth is God's desire for the church, but that a church's community will determine its growth potential.⁴⁰ These impediments are usually referred to as "growth barriers," referring to the forces and obstacles that impede numerical growth. Section 2.2.1 explores more deeply the concept of growth as a measurement for success. This section focuses on external factors that both inhibit growth and shape ministry practice in the small church.

One pastor said, "The ... social realities of a small town are contributing factors to how a small church then exists and functions." She identified transience in her uniquely situated town that made ministry difficult at her small church.

[My location] is a very transient community ... Lots of folks from reserves ... We also have [a] prison in our community ... we'll have family that pass through here or stay here temporarily. So, it's just very transient population. ... We have a lot of people that couch surf when they come to town. We have a significant homelessness population. All of those things make it a complex place to serve.

This pastor also mentioned the presence of gang violence and drugs, and a political system that still largely ran on a who-you-know basis. All these factors affect the church's ability to relate effectively with their community and prevent building relationships because there is very little consistency.

Rural and sparsely populated communities simply have fewer potential congregants. When outreach attracts swathes of people to church in larger communities, the results may look comparatively meagre in smaller, less densely populated communities.⁴¹ Robin Haensel, Director of Church Development of the Canadian Midwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, in his research on ministry in sparsely populated communities in Canada, found that "economic forces put pressure on agriculture, and as industrialization of farming methods increased any ... villages and towns began to slowly wither and die."⁴² This has a direct impact on who is available to attend, let alone maintain, a local church.

In one resource-based town, the transience of the community made it difficult to maintain a full-time pastor: "When the mine shuts down, people leave." The church eventually decided to

⁴⁰ McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*, 115–16.

⁴¹ Robin Haensel, "Exploring Opportunities to Provide Spiritual Care to Inhabitants of Sparsely Populated Regions" (D. Min., Saskatoon, SK, Lutheran Theological Seminary/Saskatoon Theological Union, 2019).

⁴² Ibid, 9.

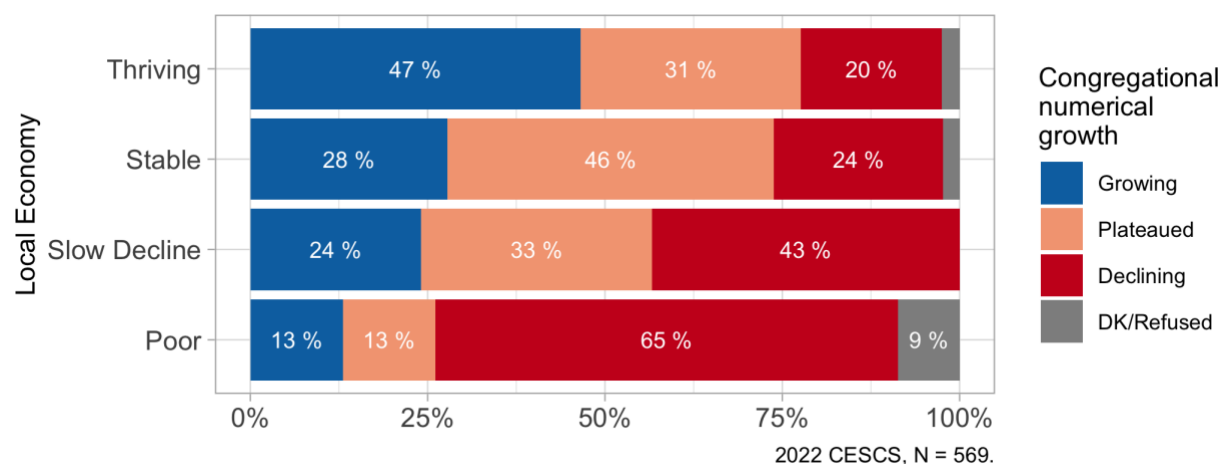
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forego having an ordained pastor and appointed a lay moderator, someone who oversaw the teaching and functioning of the church as an unpaid volunteer.

In another rural region, the pastor said while her church was doing well spiritually and missionally, an aging congregation and a pattern of out migration contributed to shrinking attendance numbers and dying churches in her area.

Rural churches often ride the ups and downs of resource-based economies. Urban areas have diversified economies which tends to smooth out individual industries' market cycles so urban churches tend to not see the same highs and lows in revenue and membership. In figure 1.3 below, churches located in poor economies (as evaluated by pastors) were almost three times more likely to be in decline than those in thriving and stable economies. However, there was an exception among urban New Canadian churches where there seemed to be an immigration cycle.

Figure 1.3 Congregational numerical growth by state of local economy, percent



Several respondents told us that immigrants often go to cities when they first arrive because resources exist there to help them get established. Once they complete their language training and deal with all the government agencies to get their permanent residency papers, go to school and adapt to the culture, they move on, if not to a different area, then to a better neighbourhood. First- and second-generation immigrants often start out in one kind of neighbourhood and aspire to move to another. The most stable New Canadian churches will be in neighbourhoods that immigrants from their ethnic group ultimately target.

Low population density is not the only circumstantial inhibitor of church growth, even dense populations do not guarantee high response levels. Ron Johnston, author of *Reality Check for the Church*, for example, wrote about the struggles of church ministry in an affluent, Jewish neighbourhood.⁴³

⁴³ Johnston, *Reality Check for the Church*.

Barring internal growth strategies, churches often stay small because of the environment and circumstances. For example, Karl Vaters speaks of a friend who pastors a retirement community. Although he has a steady stream of newcomers, the death rate in the community kept his numbers the same.⁴⁴ Similar trends might be seen in other communities like university and college towns, cottage communities or seasonal economies.

1.3.2 Internal

Churches are often a reflection of the communities in which they are located and a product of the internal dynamics that are intentionally and unintentionally cultivated. While few survey respondents described their respective congregations as insular (see figure 1.1), pastors in interviews commonly cited insularity as a barrier to growth. One pastor said the ethos in his small church disenfranchised newcomers and limited the scope of what the church could accomplish: “The church still sees itself to be able only to do certain things.”

A New Canadian pastor said the dominant local church culture, established through attitudes and language, only draws other immigrants from the same origin and “shut[s] itself up” from their Canadian neighbours. But a tendency to insulate from the wider, contemporary culture as a church was also identified by a Caucasian-majority church pastor: “[We are] twenty years behind the rest of Canada ... I think just being comfortable with what you have and being comfortable with the status quo is a huge barrier.”

One of the most cited weaknesses in the small church according to church health literature, is the failure to implement and accept change. In some cases, this kind of resistance to change leads to stagnation or real decline. In his research on declining churches, Thom Rainer observes, “There [is] no such thing as status quo,”⁴⁵ and claims there is always movement for better or for worse. If a church is not growing, spiritually or numerically, then it is inevitably declining.

The Salvation Army in Canada and Bermuda developed a congregational life cycle assessment to help leaders identify signs of stagnation based on practices and patterns in a church. According to the Salvation Army, congregations are planted and formed over time and peak at a stage of stability. Churches begin to decline as they enter maintenance mode, which can eventually lead to crisis and closure. Stability means ministry purpose is well-defined, it involves efficiency, positivity and a general sense of “keep doing what is going well.”⁴⁶ Maintenance ministry happens when programs take more effort, good ministry is referred to in the past tense, and new initiatives and change are seen as disruptive.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Vaters, *Small Church Essentials*, 28.

⁴⁵ Thom S. Rainer, *Scrappy Church*, 1 edition (B&H BOOKS, 2019), 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Although decline itself could be considered change, it is often slow and imperceptible.⁴⁸ Stephen Elliott warns, “Too many [small churches] seem content to continue operating *ad infinitum* with their un-evolving methodologies and mindsets.”⁴⁹ The 200-barrier was identified as a barrier precisely because “more than 200 people in a church takes a significant commitment to ... change[].”⁵⁰ Pastors who are gifted for relational ministry and congregants who desire a family-like church atmosphere, however, may not be open to the kinds of changes necessary to grow beyond that barrier.

Karl Vaters makes a key differentiation between change to overcome the 200-barrier and change to ward off entropy. He believes wise, small church pastors should consistently seek the kind of change in their church that avoids stagnation. For him, change is not about “keeping up with the latest trends”⁵¹ or overcoming barriers to growth, but like variety in diet or exercise, encourages vitality and forward thinking.

Internal dynamics are not easy to change because congregations are not usually motivated to call the status quo into question. However, change is not always a choice. Disruptions to a congregation in slow decline or maintenance mode were often prompted, unexpectedly and externally, outside of the congregation. The next section explores a recurrent theme in this study where change demanded more than a superficial response and probed deep into the foundational identity of the church.

1.3.3 Finances

1.3.3.1 Financial measures

In this section, we consider how local congregations’ finances partially set the context for ministry. In interviews, money was often framed as a concern for staffing or making a livable wage (see also section 2.4.1 on the pastoral role structure).

One pastor’s benchmark for success was not having to resort to bi-vocational ministry like his predecessor, but the threat was always there.

I know my predecessor at one point had to go back – had to go on part-time because the finances weren't there. So, as a small church, I think that's a struggle that small churches have, is they're not able to necessarily pay the pastor what he should be paid – he or she should be paid. So, there's some sacrifices that have to be given there.

⁴⁸ Rainer, *Scrappy Church*, 17.

⁴⁹ Elliott, *Next Level Church*, 42.

⁵⁰ Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth,” 7.

⁵¹ Vaters, *Small Church Essentials*, 150.

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Another pastor mentioned having to restructure his position to accommodate the church budget, saying it was more important for his associate to have full-time pay to support his family than for him who was nearing retirement.

[T]here was [sic] some very thin years where we had a balance in our church finances where we could take the hit for two or three years doing it that way. We don't have that right now. Last year was very, very tight. We had to remove the church administration job to a volunteer position. So, that's the choice that we made was to – I went part-time just because I'm close enough to retirement, or I was back then. I didn't – I don't have the overhead expenses that a young family has.

From the survey, we have two local church finance measures: a qualitative description of the local church's financial health and the dollar amount of the local church's pre-COVID budget.

Figure 1.4 shows the distribution of respondents' assessments of their local church's financial health between February 15, and April 8, 2022, when the survey was conducted. Fifty-three percent considered their local church health to be good or excellent at the time.

Figure 1.4 Local church financial health, counts (percent)

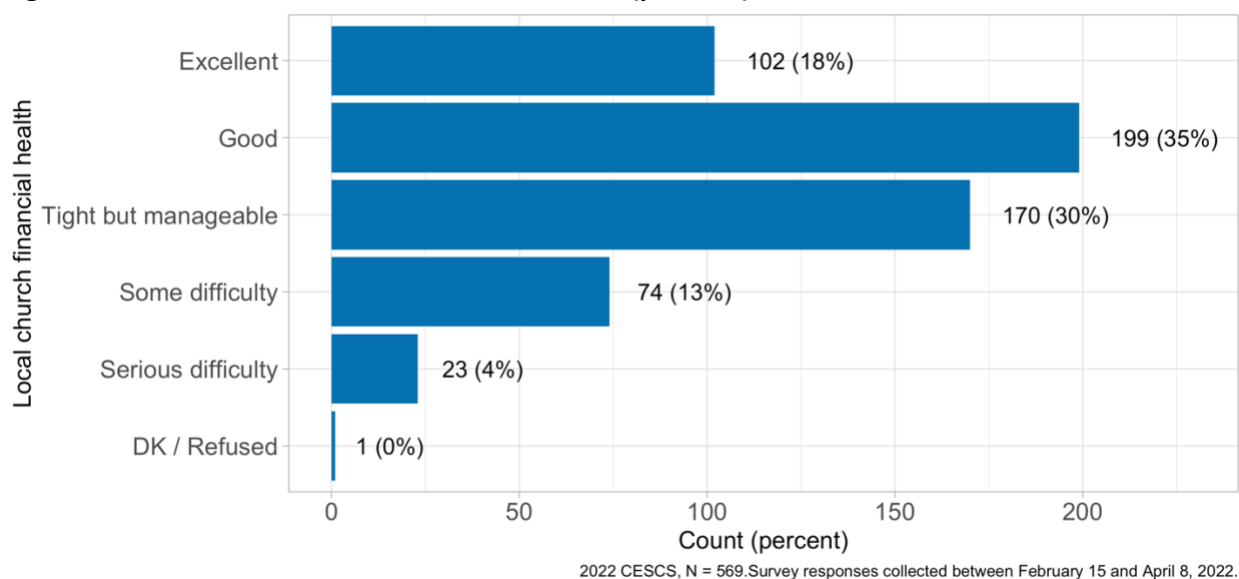
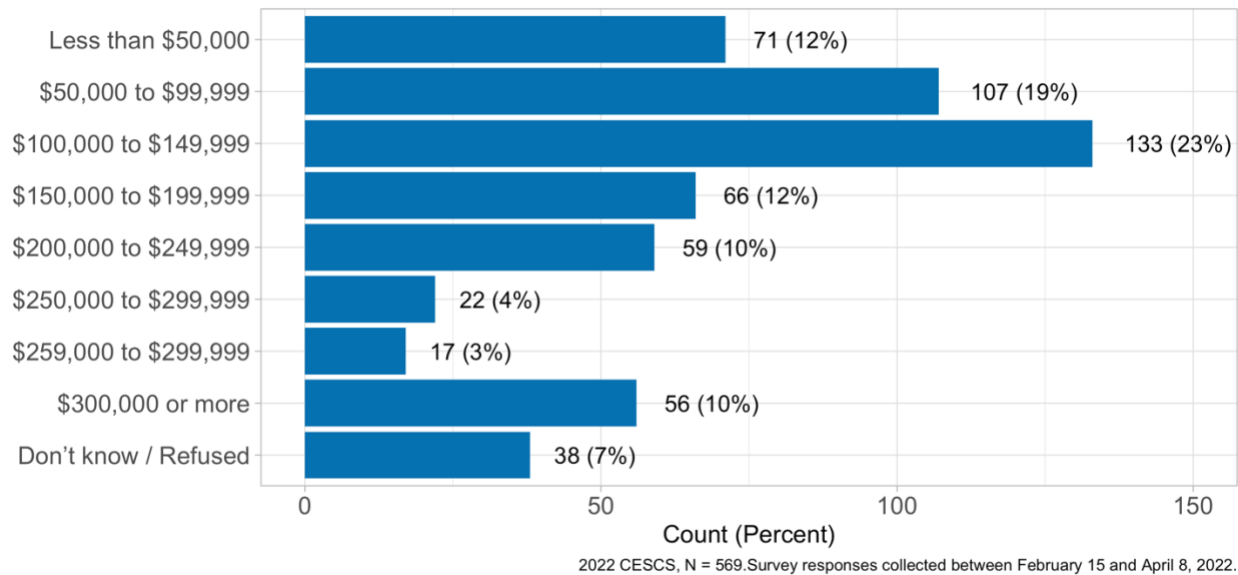


Figure 1.5 below shows distribution of local church's pre-COVID budgets by dollar range. Fifty-four percent of churches had pre-COVID budgets of less than \$150,000.

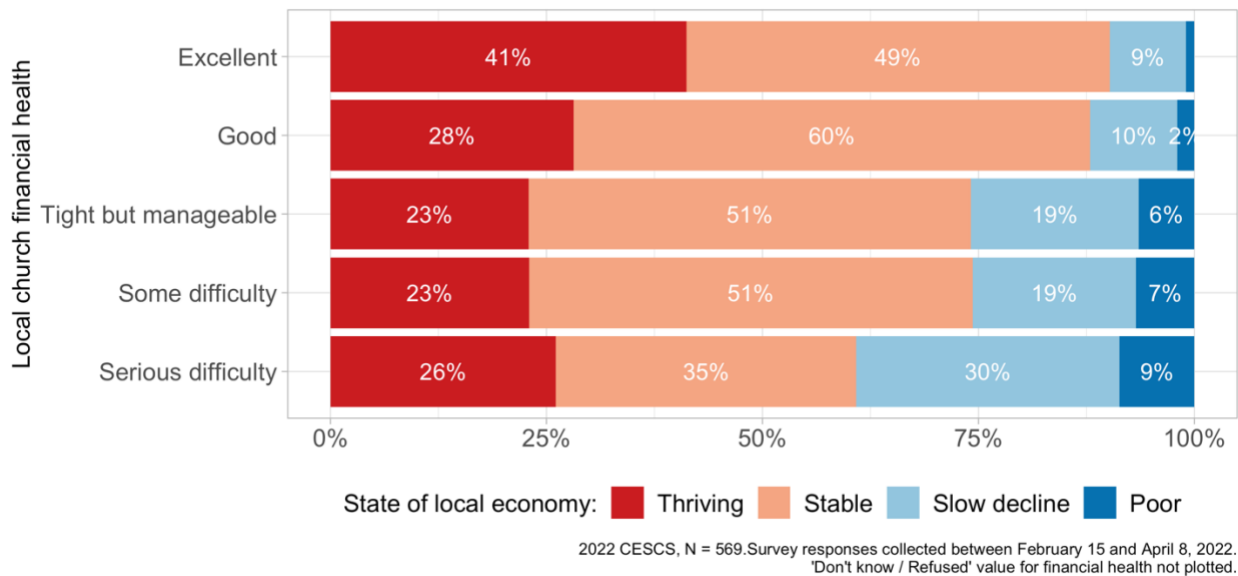
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Figure 1.5 Congregation's pre-COVID budget, counts (percent)



In section 1.2.4 we expressed how congregations' numerical attendance growth is correlated with the state of the local economy, with churches being more likely to grow where the economy is good than where it is bad (see figure 1.3). Similarly, figure 1.6 below shows a church's financial health is more likely to be good if their local economy is good.

Figure 1.6 State of local economy by congregation's financial health, percent



The data on the state of the local economy is correlated with local church measures of growth and does not tell us about causation. A ministry expert, however, suggested that the economy drove the growth of worship service attendance.

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If four families leave the church because the mine shut down, guess what? [The pastor is] not gonna have growth that year, right? He's probably going to go from 110 to eighty. And how does that look, you know?

1.3.3.2 Buildings

Over forty percent of pastors we interviewed mentioned money and finances as a burden in small church ministry. Some pastors mentioned financial strain in areas of facility maintenance and keeping up with technological advances, especially during COVID.

- Parts of [the church] are over 100 years old and it's been added on to like typical small-town churches. Literally – the paint is coming off the side, and if we don't do something about it, it's going to, you know, start costing a lot. But with twelve people in the congregation, the budget as such, how much money do we put in a building like that? So, that's one of the things I would say is part of the rural church context, and small churches affording to maintain proper facilities.
- [There's] just sort of the struggle of, like, you know, the "Oh, it's time. We have to move online. Here's your \$10,000 budget to make this work." And then, for us it's, "Well, can I livestream using my iPhone?" You know, or whatever. ... I don't know if shame is the right word, but, like, sort of ... the insecurity and the struggle that can come along with that. It sometimes, I think, can be a struggle for small church pastors.

In both cases, limited budgets prevented them from making the upgrades they considered necessary for the churches in their care. A pastor who worked bi-vocationally as a carpenter avoided this because he did *"beaucoup de rénovations dans l'église – il y avaient des besoins et financièrement, ça permet ... d'avoir moins de dépenses."* ["A lot of renovations in the church – there were needs and financially, it really helps ... to have less expenses."] This was an effective workaround for his church context, but it's not a skill that small churches can reasonably expect every pastor to have.

On our national survey we asked when the pastor's congregation was founded and when the congregation moved into its current worship space. Canadian winters are cold and having an indoor meeting space is necessary. Because churches have indoor worship space does not necessarily mean they own that space and assume the burdens of maintaining the building.

As we will see in section 1.4, buildings or worship space can act as a repository or sign of a congregation's covenant. Moving worship space is often a transition where the covenant can be changed and the ministry of the church renewed. We asked about when congregations occupied their current worship space to get a sense of when they may have last had a good opportunity for revisiting their congregational covenant. Covenants also tend to be rooted in a

church's founding, so knowing how old a congregation is can also provide an indication of where they will be in their congregational life cycle.⁵²

Figure 1.7 below shows the year the respondents' congregations were founded. We named different time periods to correspond with an era in Canadian evangelical ministry. These categorizations are approximate and reasonable readers may dispute these categorizations or have their own. Ours is an attempt to highlight some condition or ministry philosophy that characterized a time period.

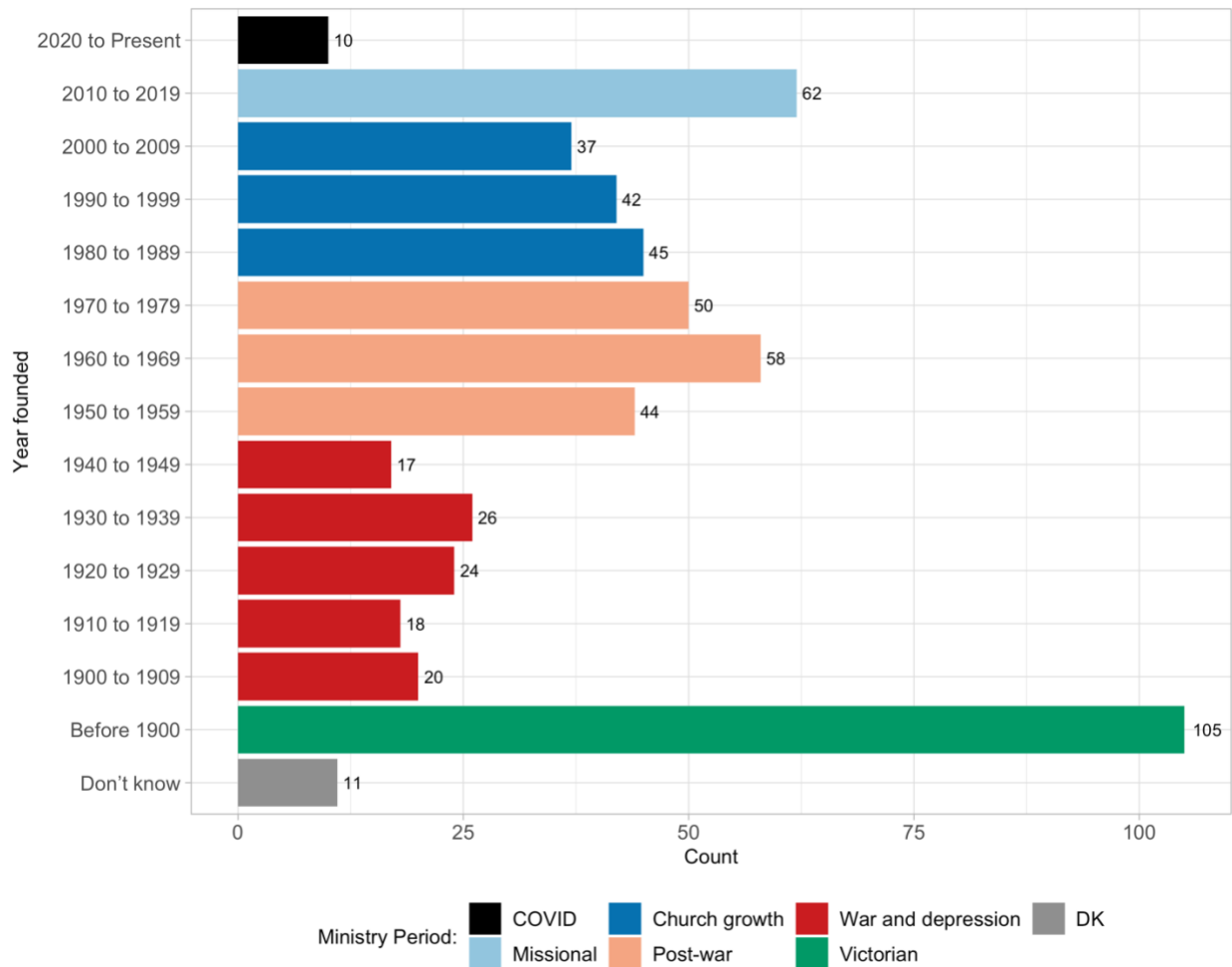
- **COVID:** Ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Missional:** A period of ministry characterized by the influence of Missional Church teaching and theology.
- **Church growth:** A period of ministry characterized by the influence of Church Growth Movement teaching and theology.
- **Post-war:** Post-World War II era of optimism and expansion for churches in Canada which peaked in the 1960s.
- **War and depression:** A somewhat imprecise grouping of the years influenced by the two great wars and the depression.
- **Victorian:** The period sometimes referred to as the Victorian Evangelical period in Canada which pre-dated the Modernist controversies and brought to the fore the growing theological divide between what would come to be known as liberal theology and Evangelicals. Although the Modernist Controversies can be more precisely dated, the fallout among churches was more gradual and arguably the Victorian Evangelical era faded away rather than having a hard stop date.

If these categorizations can be accepted, we can make some of the following observations. First, and unsurprisingly, few churches were founded during the COVID years. It should be pointed out, however, that most of the ranges in figure 1.7 represent decades and the COVID range only two years, so perhaps the annualized rate for church planting was quite vigorous. Second, many more churches seemed to have been planted in the Missional decade than the Church Growth decades that preceded it. These new "Missional" churches may represent the activity of New Canadians instead of those with explicitly missional theologies, nevertheless, the increase in this decade is notable. Third, there was a steady decline in church foundings from the apex of the post-war years to the advent of the Missional decade. It is not surprising there were few church foundings in the turbulent years of war depression. It perhaps is surprising to see how many churches were founded before the twentieth century. This speaks to the longevity of these congregations. Ours is a study of small churches, and these churches of the Victorian founding era may have waxed and waned in size, but it is remarkable they have endured.

⁵² James Watson, "Congregational Life Cycle Assessment" (The Salvation Army, Canada and Bermuda, 2012), <https://salvationist.ca/files/salvationarmy/corps-ministries/Files/congregationallifecycleassessment.pdf>.

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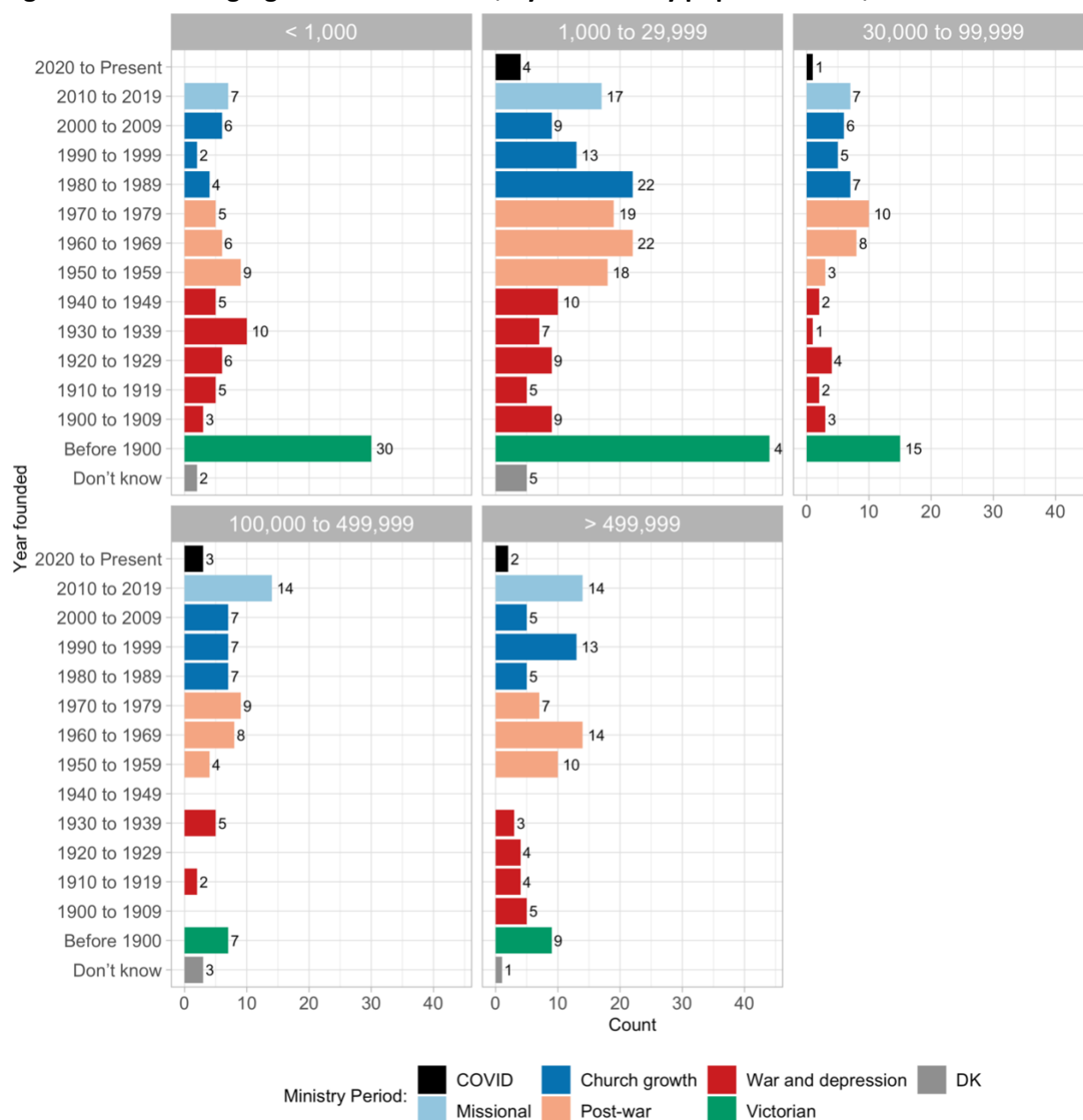
Figure 1.7 Year congregation was founded, counts



Source: 2022 CESCS. N = 569.

Figure 1.8 presents the same data as figure 1.7 broken out by the size of the community the congregation is located in.

Figure 1.8 Year congregation was founded, by community population size, counts

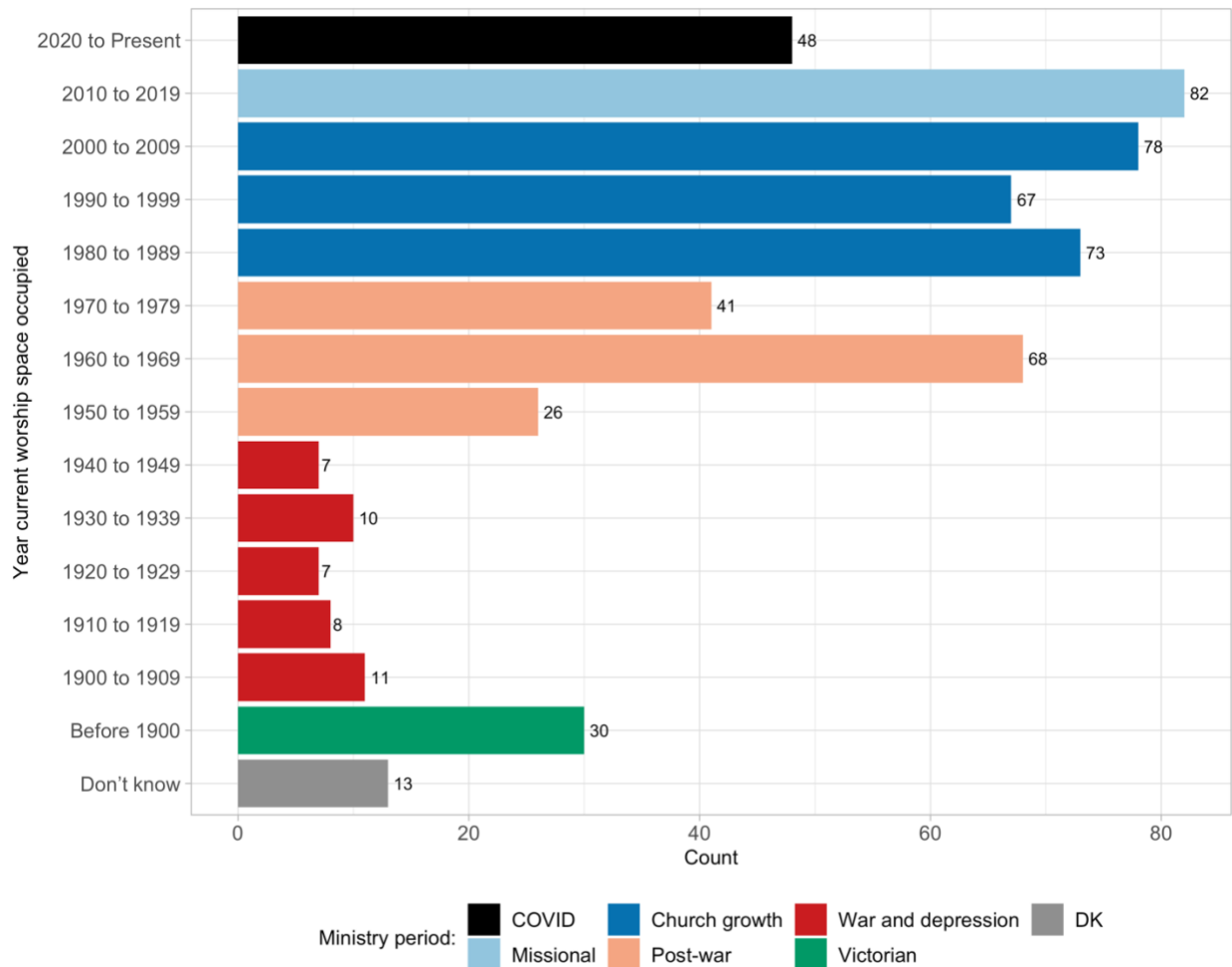


Source: 2022 CESCS. N = 569.

If we were to draw a line that takes the shape of the data presented in the bars of figure 1.7, we would see a wave beginning around 1900, cresting in the 1960s, and falling past the end of the millennium. The crest represents a center of founding activity. Looking at figure 1.8, especially for the sub-plots representing churches in populations with less than 100,000 which had more observations, we can see the centers of the sub-plots become younger as the size of the communities grow. In a general sense, we could say churches in smaller communities tend to be older and churches in larger communities younger. This is not surprising if we read this data through the lens of the urbanization story in Canada.

Figure 1.9 below shows the year congregations moved into their current worship space. We should not assume that every congregation owns their worship space or that the worship space was a new building when they occupied it. Forty-eight percent of respondents said their congregations first occupied their current worship space since 1990, meaning that at the time of the survey they had been in this space for twenty-two years or less. Only fourteen percent occupied their current worship space before 1950.

Figure 1.9 Year congregation moved into their current worship space, counts

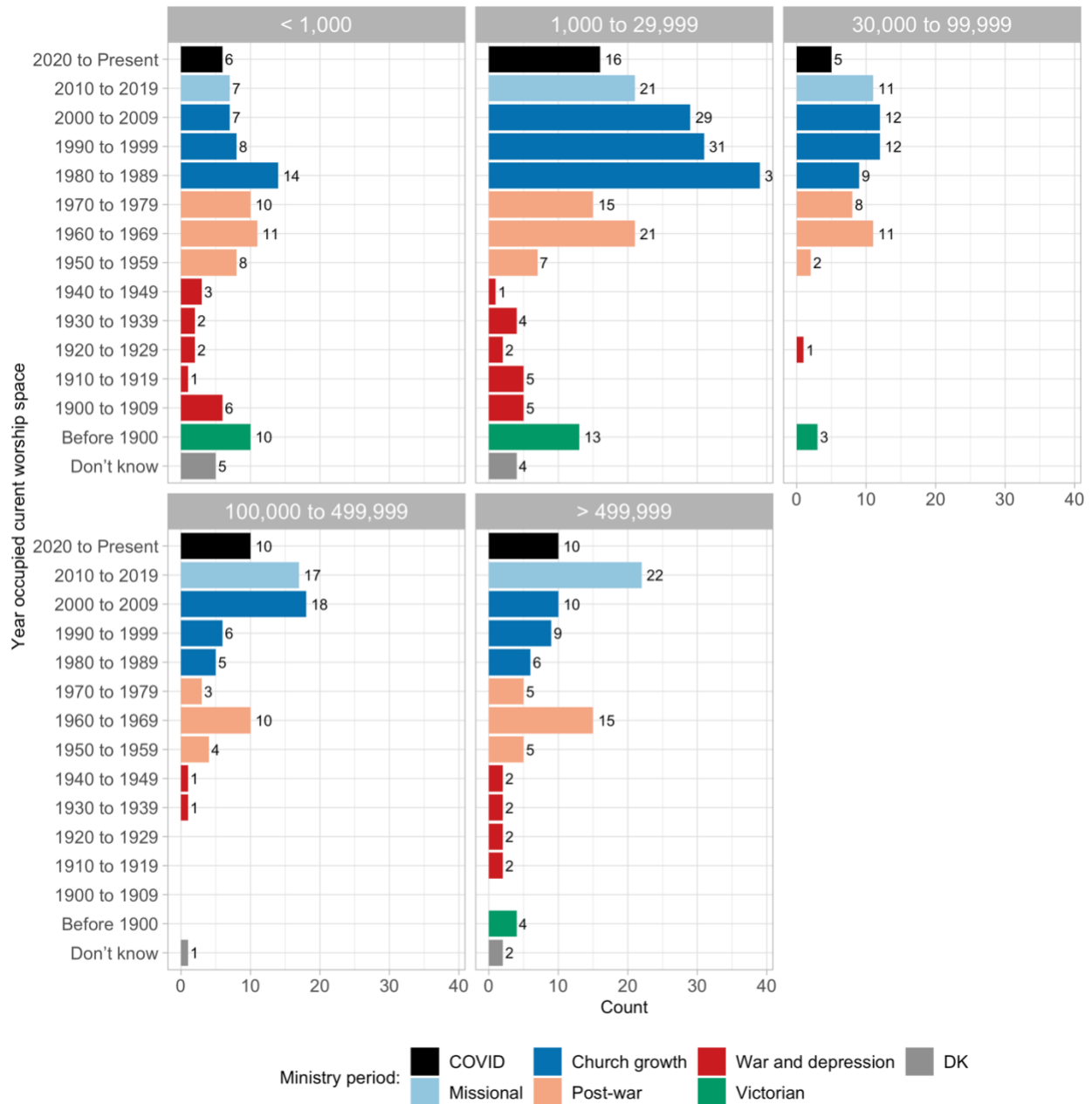


Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569.

Figure 1.10 presents the same data as figure 1.9 broken out by community population size. When looking at the shape of the distributions of sub-plots in figure 1.10, we can see that, generally, the larger the community the more recently they occupied their current worship space. This finding may simply be re-stating the observation that congregations in larger centres tend to be younger.

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Figure 1.10 Year congregation moved into their current worship space, by community population size, counts



Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569.

1.3.3.3 Pastoral housing

Finances not only come into play when considering where a church will meet, but where a pastor (and often family) will live. For some pastors who ministered in wealthy, suburban and urban areas where home market prices were inflated, meant they could not afford a house of their own.

[W]e're rapidly increasing in cost to live here. This year alone, the real estate has – just starting in February ... the average price of a home here went from about \$650,000 dollars to almost \$900,000. ... We were thinking of – I'm in a parsonage right now, and we were thinking of looking at a house to establish an in-law suite for my wife's father, who's aging ... [but] that makes it almost impossible now. (Anabaptist, BC)

Another pastor was concerned about the sustainability of retaining a full-time pastor in booming markets, like Toronto.

I started in [town], which was my previous post. It's a small church. They were in a small town just outside of the city – outside of Toronto. They had a fund that they had worked hard to help provide housing, so they invested in the pastor's home or did an interest-free loan so that the pastor could afford to live in the community. I've heard of other churches in Mississauga and the Toronto area doing that. That is increasingly becoming necessary because real estate is just running away, and so churches can't afford to pay pastors enough to also be able to afford a house. ... The ever-present challenge of full-time ministry, is sustainability.

During the 1990s and into the 2000s there was a push to sell parsonages so that pastors could get into the housing market and have assets when they retired. This was driven by steeper rises in the housing market that made investment in housing an attractive option for pastors. At the same time, selling the parsonage was an attractive option for congregations because it freed up a large sum of money that could offset other financial problems. Selling the parsonage made it look like they were caring for their pastor while offloading other debt and the responsibility of maintaining another property.

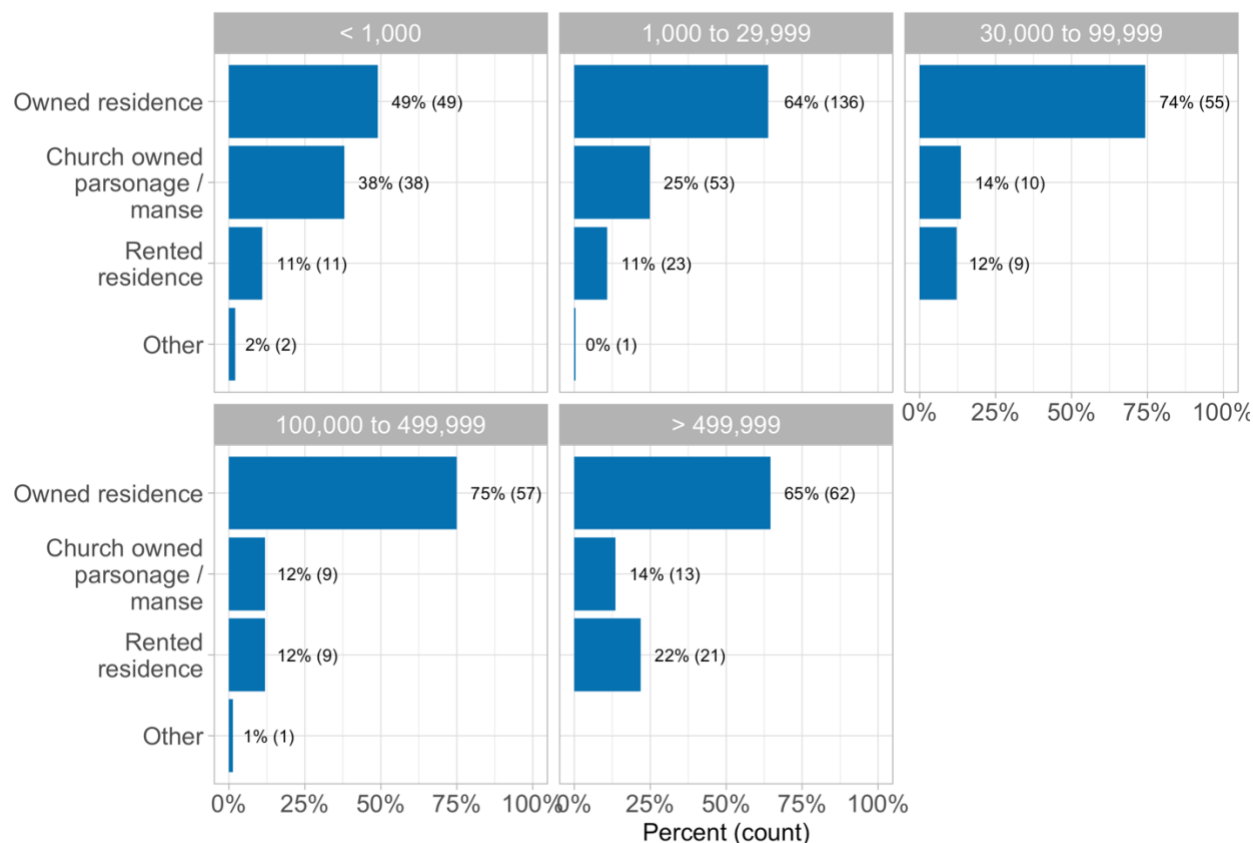
When churches first started selling parsonages, prices were still low enough that pastors could conceivably get into the market and let inflation depreciate their debt. Now the down payment itself is a barrier of entry into the housing market, especially for pastors who are not paid well. Parsonages work differently in small towns. There is little financial advantage for pastors to buy into a small town, so small, rural churches almost need a parsonage to attract a pastor.

Figure 1.11 below shows respondent's residence type by the size of the community their congregation is located in. Smaller communities are more likely to have kept a parsonage or manse. The very smallest communities probably have more need to provide their pastors with housing both because they may not be able to pay a pastor enough to purchase their own home, and because a pastor may be reluctant to buy into a small market where there is a

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correspondingly small number of buyers when it is time to move on. Moving up through the middle community size ranges, home ownership grows until we get to cities of half a million or more where renting starts to become more prevalent. It is likely that many urban churches sold their parsonages several decades ago to give their pastors an opportunity to invest in their own homes. In today's market, however, pastors may not be able to afford real estate in large cities which likely explains why a growing share of pastors rent as the size of their communities increases.

Figure 1.11 Respondent residence type, by community population size, percent (counts)



2022 CESCS. N = 569.

One pastor commented on how real estate prices have affected the nature of the community in which he ministers.

[W]hat we're seeing is the transition of people with money from other higher real estate areas, like Vancouver, because everybody can work from remote, or some people even are willing to commute back into Vancouver.

In his case, only wealthy retirees or wealthy remote workers and commuters can afford to live in his community. That has implications for the people resources at the church, especially concerning the presence of young families, of which he said they have "only a couple of

handfuls.” If this is the case, the church is facing an uncertain future without evangelism to grow the church.

The survey data does not give us enough information to know if historically high home prices are discouraging pastors from entering the ministry or moving to larger centers. The finding that there is little difference in rates of home ownership by community size is at odds with our interview data and may reflect the referral sample we received. After all, the pastors we surveyed were already pastoring, so housing is not a barrier of entry because they are already in. Interestingly, forty-three percent of female respondents own their residence, compared to sixty-eight percent of male respondents.

Conclusion

Often an emphasis on numerical growth assumes a particular kind of economy or financial context. The financial health of a congregation can be linked to environmental factors such as the state of the local economy, the local housing market, the age of a congregation and the size of the population it is situated in. Environmental factors are not the only ones affecting growth, but they must be accounted for when evaluating church ministry. Often, denominational metrics neglect these factors. This can lead to denominations recognizing and rewarding congregations for growth that is, in part, the result of being situated in a community with the right kind of economy.

1.4 Covenants

Small church ministry experts agree implementing change is a critical barrier to overcome for members and leaders to move forward as a church,⁵³ however, there are emotional, even spiritual, hurdles specific to each congregational culture that need to be addressed before conceptual change can be implemented.

In this study, the interviews suggest small churches have implicit or unarticulated *congregational covenants*. These covenants are the core members’ shared understanding about what the congregation is about, its mission, why it exists and whom it serves. They are usually established during the congregation’s golden age, when ministry is new, vibrant and full of promise. Congregational covenants are often discerned in the founding stories that congregations tell themselves, but more often, it is something that can better be felt than explained.

We found, both in the interviews and the survey data, that a primary congregational virtue in most small churches is *faithfulness* – faithfulness to the congregational covenant. In most cases, congregations have the gospel at the core of their covenant, but individual congregations are embodied expressions of Christ’s universal body addressing the needs of people in particular contexts. It is this shared contextual mission that shapes a congregation’s identity, and

⁵³ Karl Vaters discusses this in his chapter, ‘Tackling Chronic Small Church Issues and Changing for the Better’ and it is similarly discussed Ron Johnston’s chapter, ‘The Importance of a Reality Check.’

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congregational covenants function as origin stories, anchoring congregations in the goodness of the events that gave them birth. This could explain why almost two-thirds of pastors described their congregations as faithful in figure 1.1 while denominational perceptions interpreted them as insular.

The literature shared observations that small church pastors “need to earn the right to be heard”⁵⁴ more so than their larger church counterparts, and that “churches are harmed when changes are attempted before the church is ready to receive or implement them.”⁵⁵ Vaters suggests pastors can avoid harm by operating in a way that honours the traditions and values that have shaped the congregational culture and covenant.⁵⁶

This study’s preliminary findings were presented at a series of small church pastor retreats organized by one of the partner organizations, Small Church Connections. At one of these retreats, during a discussion about small church covenants and the problems that can arise when a pastor tries to make changes before becoming part of the community, Rhonda Wassink, one of the participants, made this insightful observation:

Small churches are family. People don’t come into your house where your family lives and just start changing the curtains.

Her point was that the pastor who makes changes before becoming part of the church family behaves like a visitor in your home who tries to redecorate before they have become part of your family and earn that privilege.

Larger congregations also have congregational covenants, however, in larger churches the *congregation-level* covenant is more between the pastoral staff and the congregation rather than between all the congregation members with each other as in a small church. In a larger church, if the leadership provides good preaching, good programs and competent administration, they have a relatively free hand to make changes in the church. As discussed in section 1.2 on size dynamics, larger churches create warmth and community by breaking their congregation into small groups which may in turn have their own sub-covenants that work more along the lines of what you would see in a small church.

In this next section, we look at some of the reasons churches, represented by the pastors we spoke with, change their covenants. Sometimes it was in response to a changing context, other times, in response to an existential crisis. As we hear these stories, we learn about how different pastors navigated processes of covenantal change.

⁵⁴ Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth,” 7.; Vaters, *Small Church Essentials*, 112.

⁵⁵ Vaters, *Small Church Essentials*, 118.

⁵⁶ McIntosh, *One Size Doesn’t Fit All*, 40.

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Case Study #1: From ethnic church to community church

Our first case study is a rural church originally formed by immigrants from a Caucasian ethnic group for mutual support and preservation of culture. The pastor explains:

[B]asically, the [Caucasian ethnic group] came together, started a church that was familiar to them from the [denomination started by that group]. So, the original name of the church was the [original name] – although that was in [the ethnic group's language]. ... It was started by the farmers and the people in the community of [this ethnic group's] descent. Its earliest years were pretty much exclusively [ethnic], but that's completely changed now, so we're pretty much a community church.

The original purpose of the church was to provide these Caucasian immigrants with a worship experience that was familiar. In the earliest years, it was “exclusively [related to their ethnic group].” It is unlikely this was because the church had a formal policy excluding those outside their ethnic group but because its specific culture and practice created cultural distance that would have been difficult for those outside to overcome. The pastor explained how their community viewed their “strict[ly]” [ethnic] church:

And I would say until about maybe, ah, thirty years ago, the church had a bit of a reputation as kind of a very strict – I'll use the phrase “holier than thou” – kind of a reputation ... We've really worked hard in the last twenty years to change that.

The pastor described the congregation as having a “strict structure where you're not really welcome.” This structure, originally implemented to be “familiar” to their ethnic group, and perhaps unintentionally unfamiliar to their neighbours, functioned as a filter for who came into the congregation. So, the structure reinforced the ethnic character of the church by discouraging those outside their ethnic group from joining their community.

Enoch Wong, Assistant Professor and Director of the Centre for Leadership Studies at the Canadian Chinese School of Theology housed at Tyndale University, identified a similar challenge among second-generation, Chinese Christians who identified more closely with western, Canadian culture.⁵⁷ While they share their parents' ethnicity, they were negatively impacted by the apparent ethnic loyalty displayed in their parents' churches. Wong noted, “The dispute between the two generations regarding the exclusivity created by the ethnic boundary was perhaps most poignantly expressed in the argument about a potential name change at the Chinese immigrant churches.”⁵⁸

Conflating ethnicity with a church covenant, inadvertently or otherwise, preserves the ethnic character of the congregation. Those outside that ethnic group, however, have difficulty

⁵⁷ Enoch Wong, *How Am I Going to Grow Up?: Congregational Transition among Second-Generation Chinese Canadian Evangelicals and Servant-Leadership* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Publishing, 2021), 488–89.

⁵⁸ Wong, 479.

bridging the cultural gap, and, when the congregational emphasis is on preserving the character of their church, they are generally not helping outsiders (whether they share ethnicity or not) mind the gap.

This [Caucasian ethnic group] church began a process of covenantal change when they considered purchasing a building in the community for a new worship space. The pastor led the change, not by presenting a new direction but by leading them to re-examine their purpose (their covenant) as a church. The pastor explained how the church's outlook began to change:

It was about around the time I came here that the decision was made, "We need to do something with the building." That we were – had – we had an old – the original church building. And it had some real big needs. The community had decided to consolidate buildings and we bought the [community building], remodelled it, and did that. And I was a big part of that decision and that change. I said, "You know, folks, if we moved into a building that was so 'community,' but we're not community-minded, we're not going to do it." **So, I think through just a lot of teaching and reminding people and helping people to relax as far as some of the, you know, "What does it mean to be church? What does it mean to love our neighbour?" We really have been very intentional looking at what does it mean to love our neighbour as ourselves. And not just our family, not just those within us, within our tight circle of people we know and like and just like us. But the neighbour that doesn't have family, the neighbour that isn't easy to love. So, I think a lot of it has to do with just a change of the idea of what does it mean to love your neighbour.**

The need to find better church facilities prompted the re-examination of the church covenant. Church buildings are keepers of memories and traditions. They accumulate commemorative plaques, organs, stained glass windows, structural additions, memories of baptisms, weddings and Christmas pageants – all memories for which the building is a physical key that unlocks them. Songs and smells can powerfully take you back to a moment in time, and church buildings have all of these – songs in worship services and the smell of a musty basement church hall. The pastor who treats a building as a mere structure and shelter is likely heading for turbulent waters. A church building becomes a repository for the congregation's collective memory and identity, a cairn housing its covenant.

When a change to a building is contemplated – or forced on a congregation by circumstances – it is a good occasion to prompt a discussion about the meaning and purpose of a church because the two are often intertwined.

The building the congregation considered purchasing did not hold their church's old memories, it came with its own. Just as their old church building would have accumulated a purpose that would need to be honoured, so had this surplus community building. The pastor tapped into his congregation's unconscious understanding of the accumulated meaning of structures to prompt them to consider what it might mean for their church to inhabit the building.

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He then skillfully placed the question of “Who is my neighbour?” at the center of his preaching and at the center of their conversations as they renovated the building. The covenantal change took “a couple of decades.” They moved into the building before the covenantal change was complete, but the reorienting conversations had begun.

The conversation, however, was not merely a steady progression toward change. There were those who wanted to “take care of this until it fizzles and dies.”

[T]here was a bit of a conversation about, you know, “Is that what churches do?” They just kind of take only care of their own? And then, just slowly die out because once you've taken care of everybody inside the building, it doesn't go beyond that? Or do we actually rethink that and see what – the model that we see in Scripture and in Christ to reach out to our neighbour, and see how that transports us?

Interestingly, in the pastor’s account of those resisting the move, he links faithfulness to the old covenant with the old church building: “Taking care of everyone inside the building” — a succinct summary of the old covenant.

Covenantal change begins with an occasion that prompts a congregation to re-examine their identity and mission and is shaped or built-up by layers of conversations that patiently till the same ground, incrementally reshaping it until it looks right to the core members whose consent is needed. Pastors and other local church leaders may raise the question, but they cannot run ahead of these conversations – not without courting schism.

The core keepers of the covenant hold their positions in the congregation because of their fierce faithfulness to the old covenant. Leaders who cannot first demonstrate their faithfulness to the old covenant will not be trusted to lead the congregation into a new one. Therefore new pastors, who sweep in to make change, often fail. In their impatient zeal for change they disqualify themselves from leading it. Their concern is for the future, and they forget that every future also has a past that needs to be properly honoured if it is to give its consent to change.

A more recent example of an immigrant church comes from the pastor of a New Canadian Congolese church. The church was planted for Congolese immigrants who came to Canada in the mid-1990s, fleeing the poor conditions resulting from the First Congo War. The pastor explained:

La mission était en fait – les gens qui viennent de l'Afrique ils se retrouvent un petit peu dépaycé et sont pris en charge par le gouvernement pour différents besoins, matériels etc. Mais ils sont souvent dépaycés et ils savent pas comment faire, comment s'orienter et particulièrement, comme la République démocratique du Congo est un pays essentiellement chrétien – plus de quatre-vingt-cinq pourcent christianisé – quand il y a des immigrants qui arrivent dans un pays comme le Canada, ils sont un peu dépaycés. Ils ne savent pas où aller. C'est comme ça que l'église est née en 1995 pour essayer de les aider, parmi ceux qui étaient déjà là avant – essayer de renforcer les convictions

chrétiennes de ceux qui viennent, et aussi les aider à s'implanter, à vivre leur foi au Canada.

Translation: The mission was in fact – people who come from Africa find themselves a little disoriented and are taken care of by the government for different needs, materials etc. But they are often disoriented, and they do not know what to do, how to find their way and particularly, as the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an essentially Christian country – more than ninety-five percent Christianized – when there are immigrants who arrive in a country like Canada, they are a bit disoriented. They don't know where to go. This is how the church was born in 1995; to try to help them, among those who were already there before – to try to strengthen the Christian convictions of those who come, and also to help them to be established, to live their faith in Canada.

There are two parts to this church's covenant. First, assisting disoriented immigrants as they deal with the shock of coming to a far less "christianisé" ["christianized"] country than the one they came from. Second, to strengthen the Christian faith of its members. The order in which he explains the covenant is important. The needs of the congregants are listed before the strengthening of their Christian faith. This is not to say that helping new Canadians get established is not a Christian endeavour. Rather, it is what is distinctive about a church's mission and vision that forms its covenant and gives it its identity. To lesser or greater extents, all churches strengthen the faith of their members, but *this* church ministers to Congolese immigrants who came to Canada in the wake of the First Congo War.

Covenants are made by specific people addressing a specific context, and this contextualization is usually a significant factor in a congregation's early success. Contexts change, and the very narrative of the founding covenant's success makes it difficult for churches to recognize a contemporary mismatch between their covenant and context.

This pastor's church is young, founded in the mid-1990s, but he recognized that the church has "s'enfermer" ["shut itself up"].

[O]n s'identifie comme une église d'origine africaine – mais le message qu'on a ce n'est pas seulement un message pour les Africains. C'est un message pour tout le monde. ... La difficulté que nous on a, que nous dans cette ouverture là, on a des chansons qui sont dans d'autres langues, dans des langues dites africaines, et c'est toujours avoir à coeur de donc se rappeler que on a d'autres gens qui ne parlent pas ces langues là, et il ne faut pas les rendre mal à l'aise. Il faut toujours expliquer ce qu'on chante et la manière de faire les choses.

Translation: [W]e identify as a church of African origin – but the message we have is not only a message for Africans. It's a message for everyone. ... The difficulty that we have, that we in this opening there, we have songs that are in other languages, in so-called African languages, and it is always having at heart to therefore remember that we have other people who do not speak those

languages, and we must not make them uncomfortable. You always have to explain what you sing and how to do things.

Music, language and practices are tailored to the founding covenant, and this has driven some people away because they do not share that context. In many immigrant churches, divisions arise between different waves of immigrants – from the same ethnic background – because the contexts and circumstances of their arrival in Canada are different, and a church oriented to the needs of one wave of immigrants may be inattentive to the needs of the next.

This pastor said he was led to Canada “*n’est pas seulement pour l’Africain qui est à côté, mais aussi pour le Canadien qui est aussi à côté.*” [“Not only for the African who is nearby but also for the Canadian who is nearby.”] If the church is to share his calling, they will have to revisit their covenant.

Case Study #2: Cultural exegesis and pacing change

The slow pace of congregational covenantal change often runs up against the sense of urgency denominational leaders and pastors feel about the need for change. One of our ministry experts talked about her denomination’s reticence to invest in revitalizing established churches.

[It’s] too hard to change established churches. And they don’t know how to invite their neighbours to church. **It’s better just to start with a new church with a small group of like-minded people who can do innovative things to make sure that they reach out and that growth happens. So, I think that was the prejudice behind it.** Um, thinking that established churches were too set in their ways. And they also were afraid that people who were in established churches were only choosing that option because they were desperate ...

This ministry expert felt “prejudice” from her denomination. Her word choice is revealing because it communicates senses of injustice, dishonour and alienation. The congregation that values faithfulness to their own covenant senses their treasure is considered rubbish by the denomination – which is a recipe for alienation.

Church plants are often preferred to church revitalizations because church plants tend not to have memories to honour and old covenants to be faithful to. The enormous investment church planting represents is a different kind of investment than church revitalization, requiring different leadership skills and a different kind of patience. Church plants are establishing their own covenants as they plant, crafting their mission and vision. If the plant persists, it will, in time, face its own re-evaluation of its covenant.

One of the pastors interviewed said pastors leading change need the skill of *cultural exegesis* which he defined as “hav[ing] a good grasp of the culture of the church” which is discerned “in the light of Scripture.” He expanded on his idea:

[H]ow do you create a culture? A lot of patience, a great deal of cultural exegesis, but then the leadership needs to be able – the person or persons in leadership need to begin to adopt the new culture, and then to be able to create a new culture within the church. What did Peter Drucker say? [indistinct] “Culture eats vision for breakfast.” And so, the whole idea, of course, is that unless we change the culture of the church, nothing happens.

What this pastor calls culture, we call covenant. We believe covenant is a better word for what is happening here because, in our contemporary discourse, culture is often talked about as if it were fashion or personal preference, an ornamentation for one’s life. Covenant is a commitment of one to another. Violation of a covenant necessarily affects the whole community whereas a cultural *faux pas* may not.

This pastor observes that impatient change stemming from a failure to properly exegete the culture can lead congregants to “los[e] the sense of their church.” When congregants lose this sense, then “the system begins to work against [the pastor leading the change].” “The system” is the core keepers of the covenant. These are often people who do not hold a recognized position or office of leadership, but exercise power and influence and see themselves as keepers of the traditions on which the church was built and established.⁵⁹ They protect the church from those who failed in their exegesis to recognize and honour the covenant that gives them their “sense of their church.” Culture rises to eat vision for breakfast.

This pastor came into a congregation that was an unsuccessful merger of two dwindling ones from two different denominational traditions. The merger was technically affected several decades prior, but the new entity had, from the beginning, continued to decline. He succinctly diagnosed the church’s problem saying it had “binocular vision.”

This is a bi-denominational congregation, and his cultural exegesis led him to “tr[y] to make good connections with both denominational leaders” and to attend denominational AGMs and meetings from both denominations. By doing this, the congregation began to recognize “Oh, our pastor’s connected [to our denominations] so much.” This congregational merger failed because they remained two congregations with two covenants. It was important for the pastor to be seen to honour the denominational identities of each congregation so he could be trusted to lead covenantal change.

He began to lead the church into a new covenant by bringing in missionaries from both denominations for the church to support.

And they have all these people coming on in, and the missionaries from our denomination are coming, we really get to know them by name, not just on a piece of paper. We get to talk to them. Then, it becomes more and more of a church feeling

⁵⁹ McIntosh, *One Size Doesn’t Fit All*, 40.

connected to a bigger body of believers. This church has begun to do that. So, we have gotten missionaries from both denominations coming to speak and so on, even on Zoom, the after-sermon discussion I have them come on. And so, we have had some degree of connection, but it's not yet strong ... and I've only had one year of face-to-face [connection with the congregation].

Any new missionaries they support, are missionaries they decide to support together. Supporting new missionaries becomes a new mission, and mission and identity are two sides of a coin. This covenantal change is in process, but it has begun with honouring the merging covenants and introducing a new common mission for a new identity and covenant to form around.

This pastor has a multiplicative mindset, and later in the conversation he was reflecting on how to handle starting a new site and avoiding a “rubber elastic reaction” from the church. A rubber elastic reaction is provoked by fast change.

[The answer is t]o have [the congregation] actually look forward. You can't build that quickly. There's no way to build that quickly. In fact, once you plunge the church into a building project, you have another – you're creating another culture. So, you don't want to do that.

Covenants can be resilient like an elastic pulling aggressive change back to form. This is a protective mechanism. This pastor then prescribed how he would approach the question of growth.

So, what you want to do is to say, "Hey, let's do it progressively." Let's move to two services. And how do we connect to two services? And you have a target. Once you reach 180 people, it gets really uncomfortable in here. ... Everybody comes together every once in two months or three months. And that helps. So, you actually have a deadline, you have a number line. And then, if the leadership is game for that, they will ask you the question, "Why are we having two services?" And the answer is – "Well, actually only for about eight months to a year. Because the second service, we're going to plant another church from it." ... And this particular satellite will be one of us, we can do the same thing in the evenings every three months, and so on. And that helps with the elastic band. Because when people start feeling that their life group is really church, and now the life group can connect to another service that people are really connected to, then they feel as if there are still one church until they are ready to launch out.

This pastor makes several significant observations. First, a building project necessarily creates a new culture both for the reasons we talked about in the first case study but also because it is a significant reorientation of time and resources – a reorientation of the church's mission and identity. Second, by allowing congregants the time to see what you may have had a vision for all along, you allow them to own the vision and mission. Third, small, sustained steps in a new direction can develop into momentum for change. Fourth, notice how he talks about the

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importance of how people feel: “People start *feeling* that their life group is really church,” and “they *feel* as if they are still one church.” Feelings can be the certainty not yet available to our rational faculties, and, in many ways, a covenant can be felt where it cannot be explained.

Case Study #3: New covenants and schism

For various reasons, pastors and denominational leaders may not wait for a covenantal change process to occur by consensus. There are times when a church covenant or culture is deemed to be toxic or simply incompatible with maintaining the church as a going concern.

This congregation, pastored by one of our respondents, faced an existential crisis after having attendance decline from an average of 150 to about fifteen or less, what he saw as, the “contentious” leadership of his predecessor. He explained:

When I took over leadership, we were down to fifteen people. So, a lot of pain and a lot of hurt. And so, the Lord spoke to my heart, you know, and said that your first five years here need to be healing, healing the existing body, healing those that have left the church.

He instituted a thirty-day prayer and fasting initiative for the future of the church directing congregants to ask, “Okay, Lord, what do You want?” At the end of the thirty days, a four-person team gathered what people heard from the Lord over the course of fasting and prayer. They found “everybody – or most of the people – all had the same mindset, the same vision for the church.”

As he started in on this process of renewed vision for the church, a denominational leader told him, “Don’t be surprised that people leave.” Hindsight often tells a different story than the one we might tell when we are living it. Note in his recounting of the story above, he started to say “everybody” had the same mindset before catching himself and qualifying with “most of the people.” He concluded, “And [some] did [leave]. Some people left because they didn’t like the direction the church was going. But the core of people that God had here are still here today. So, obviously the vision has worked for where we are today.”

His church was down to fifteen and did not have the luxury of a prolonged process of covenantal change, so change was discerned and implemented in thirty days. He describes those who stayed as “the core,” and this is likely the core of those who adopted the new church covenant and vision. It is likely that some of those who left would have been considered the core under the old covenant. Also note the way he evaluates the visions: “[It] has worked for where we are today.” “[W]here we are today” is a context and he recognizes the covenant they are working with needs to be matched to the context.

Sometimes small churches will be adopted by a larger church. Usually, a church adoption involves a larger church taking a smaller church into its administrative structure and making the church a *site* or a *campus* of the larger church. As with the adoption of a child, the adopted

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church takes on a new identity and a new covenant – that of its adoptive church. In these cases, those who are unwilling to adopt the new covenant will likely leave the church.

Church adoptions do not always happen in response to an existential crisis in a smaller congregation, but when they do occur, events usually override a consensual change process. The priority of preserving the congregation as an institution supersedes the priority of the covenant, usually leading to a schism in the church. In being adopted, the remaining group is taking on a new covenant that is usually mostly shaped by the adopting larger church.

Case Study #4: Covenants and changing contexts

As we have seen in several of the case studies, covenantal change is often prompted to respond to congregations' changing contexts.

One pastor's congregation, initially founded by middle-class families, had a daycare as one of their core ministries until the gentrification of their surrounding neighbourhood drove families further out to the suburbs in search of affordable housing.

But one of the ministries of the church for years – for forty years – they ran a daycare that was a preschool daycare that was geared at middle class families. But, I guess, ... maybe five, six years ago, they had to close that because the demographics had changed. It was getting increasingly, increasingly more expensive to live in the area where the church is located. And so, a lot of the middle-class families were moving further out to places like [different suburbs]. ... It's very – it's hard for families, unless they're from a family that has been in the city for generations, and they own land. It's very hard for young families to maintain presence in the city.

She also spoke about how the daycare director made the decision to close that ministry. Note that while it was the daycare director's decision, it was experienced as “a significant loss” by “a number of the congregation that had been around for a significant amount of time” – those who remembered and most strongly owned the covenant.

I remember having a chat with the person who was the director of the daycare and, you know, wrestling with the low numbers and what was viable, and then just deciding that it was time to close it. I think, certainly, for a number of the congregation that had been around for a significant amount of time, it did feel like a significant loss.

This pastor arrived after the decision to close the daycare and during a prolonged period of discernment as a church. The pastor described coming on at a time where they were asking:

Who are we? What are we called to? How can we reach out to our neighbours and what does it mean? Interestingly enough, one of the things my – in the job posting that they put was ESL experience in an Asian context would be an asset, and that's part of because of where the church is situated. We're right in front of a bus stop, and it's one

that goes, you know, it's one of the ones that goes to [a university]. And the church has for some time been getting a fairly high number of people who are recently – who have recently arrived from China that are very curious about the Christian faith, but some of them hardly speak English. And so, the question about how do we respond to these people who are dropping in but may not necessarily understand the language? How do we equip them? How do we share the Gospel?

The congregation also identified other groups they could minister to besides recent immigrants from China, but in all cases the bus stop, and the people who flowed through it, was central. The fruit of years of conversation and discernment, prompted by an existential crisis in their core ministry, led them to ministries flowing out of a bus stop – English as a second language ministry being a core ministry.

She concluded, “So, there's – we get a lot of traffic in front and around our church.” Significantly, traffic is no longer primarily middle-class families with children in need of a daycare.

Canada has seen an enormous amount of change over the past few decades. Urbanization, gentrification, globalization and rising levels of education are just some that have had direct and indirect impacts on our communities. Perhaps the most significant drivers of change, however, have been digital communication technologies like smart phones and social media. Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan, coiner of the maxim “the medium is the message,” told us “the ‘message’ of any medium or technology is the change in scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.”⁶⁰

Digital technologies move much of the communication that previously happened in worship services, after worship services, in and around prayer meetings, at church suppers, and the like, online. The change in “scale or pace or pattern that [has been] introduced into [church] affairs” is the disembodiment of the body of Christ, the virtualization for most of church life. This is not just a decentralization of church rather a substitution of a physical medium (our bodies physically present to others) for a virtual medium.

McLuhan also said that cultures are “numb” to the effects of their dominant media, and, if he is right, we will have trouble discerning the effects of our digital modes of communication on our lives together.⁶¹ Globalization will be interpreted as an economic force in its own right rather than one wrought by digital communications that allow for just-in-time supply chains. Busy schedules that purge volunteer ranks will be chalked up to the demands of work rather than the technologies that keep us linked to work and working all the time. Social change and upheaval will be attributed to vague forces of progress (or dark ones of sinister trolls) rather than social media that drives people apart and then herds them together in the pursuit of more perfect audiences for advertisers.

⁶⁰ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man*, 2nd Edition (New York, London, Sydney and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 8.

⁶¹ McLuhan, chap. 2.

Whatever the drivers of contextual change, they increasingly put pressure on congregations, both small and large, to consider covenantal change. The pace of societal and contextual change usually outstrips the capacities of congregational covenantal change processes that might end with the congregation substantially intact. Denominations and turn-around pastors, well-meaning but impatient, risk alienating congregations as they push for a pace of covenantal change that matches what they see in the culture. To be clear: **Those pushing for fast change often see existential crises, whereas those who resist change see their treasure devalued and dishonoured.**

Rural contexts are characterized by land, space and all things physical – these are more likely to resist digitization. In our interviews, we noticed an urban-rural cultural divide within denominations as urban and rural churches diverge in their adaptation to broader cultural change. It may be the extension of high-speed internet into rural areas that will draw the urban and rural cultures together as they consume the same media and take on similar scales, paces and patterns of interaction.

Covenantal change is, at its core, a reconsideration of a congregation's identity and mission. It is ironic that as evangelical churches withdraw from evangelism (because changing who someone really is has become taboo) there is a corresponding urgency for congregations to change who they really are.

Several pastors interviewed provided templates for processes of constructive covenantal change. There is an urgent need for small church leaders, both pastors and lay, as well as denominational leaders to talk about contextual change and what this means for identity and mission, while finding ways to authentically honour the existing and animating church covenants.

Conclusion

Noting the difference between internal and external impact is important for identifying what pastors and churches can and cannot change about the cultures they encounter in their churches. Respect for faithfulness to founding covenants and earned trust over time are key components for implementing change in the small church context. Denominations and training institutions should be aware of the needs and barriers in different small church contexts and the privileges and values they unwittingly give to communities that favour growth.

2. Pastors

2.1 Demographics

In this section, we look at the demographics of pastors who took our survey. We will consider age, gender, marital status, language and ethnicity. Pastoral education is a substantive topic in our study so it will be dealt with on its own in section 2.3. Our study is about small churches with small church pastors as our respondents. In some cases, the demographic information about pastors also correspond to data about their churches. Denominational affiliation is not, strictly speaking, a demographic characteristic of pastors, but we will consider it in this section as if it were. Section 5 will contain a fuller discussion about the relationship between pastors and their congregations and denominations. Where appropriate, we will compare and contrast pastor demographic data with those about the congregations they serve.

2.1.1 Age

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 present the age of respondents by gender, figure 2.1 more granularly and figure 2.2 by age range.

Figure 2.1 Age by gender, counts

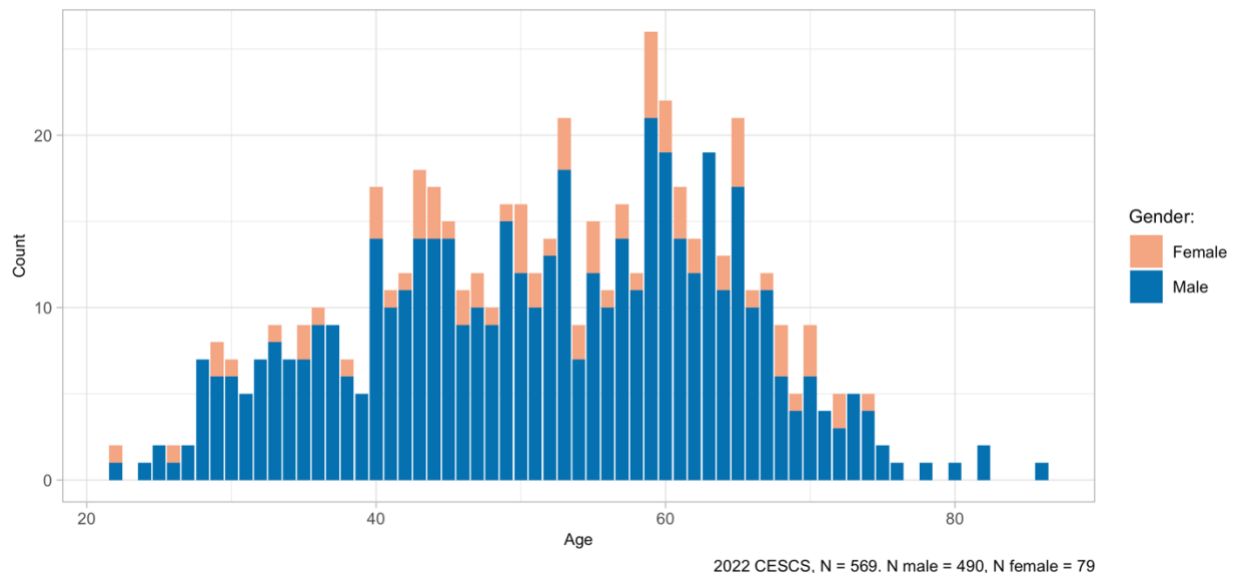
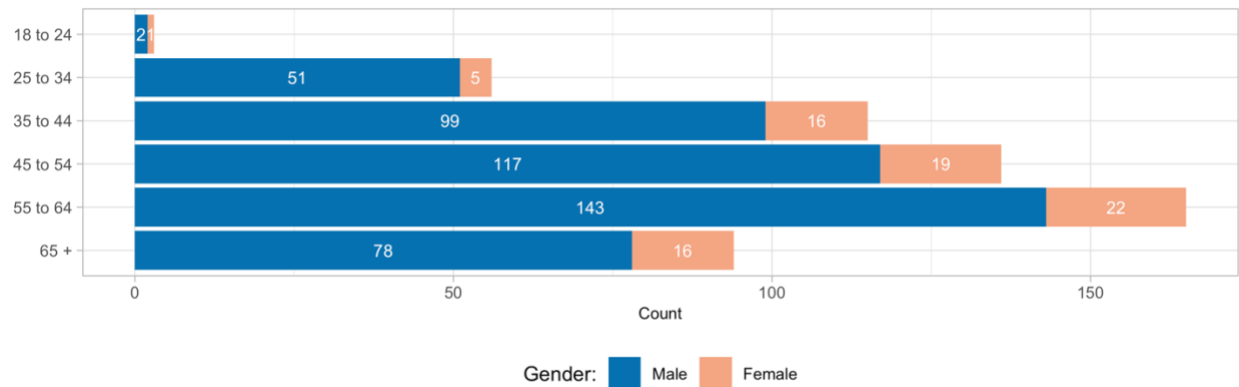


Figure 2.2 Distribution of respondents by age range and gender, counts



Source: 2022 CESCO, N = 569. N male = 490. N female = 79.

Pastors in our sample had an average age of 51.8; with males averaging 51.6 and females 52.6. The median age for all pastors was fifty-three, meaning that half of pastors are within twelve years of attaining the conventional retirement age of six-five. In our sample, however, thirteen percent of pastors were already aged sixty-five or older. This is significant, because it means that to the degree that our sample is representative, denominations may need to replace close to half their small-church pastoral workforce in the next decade.

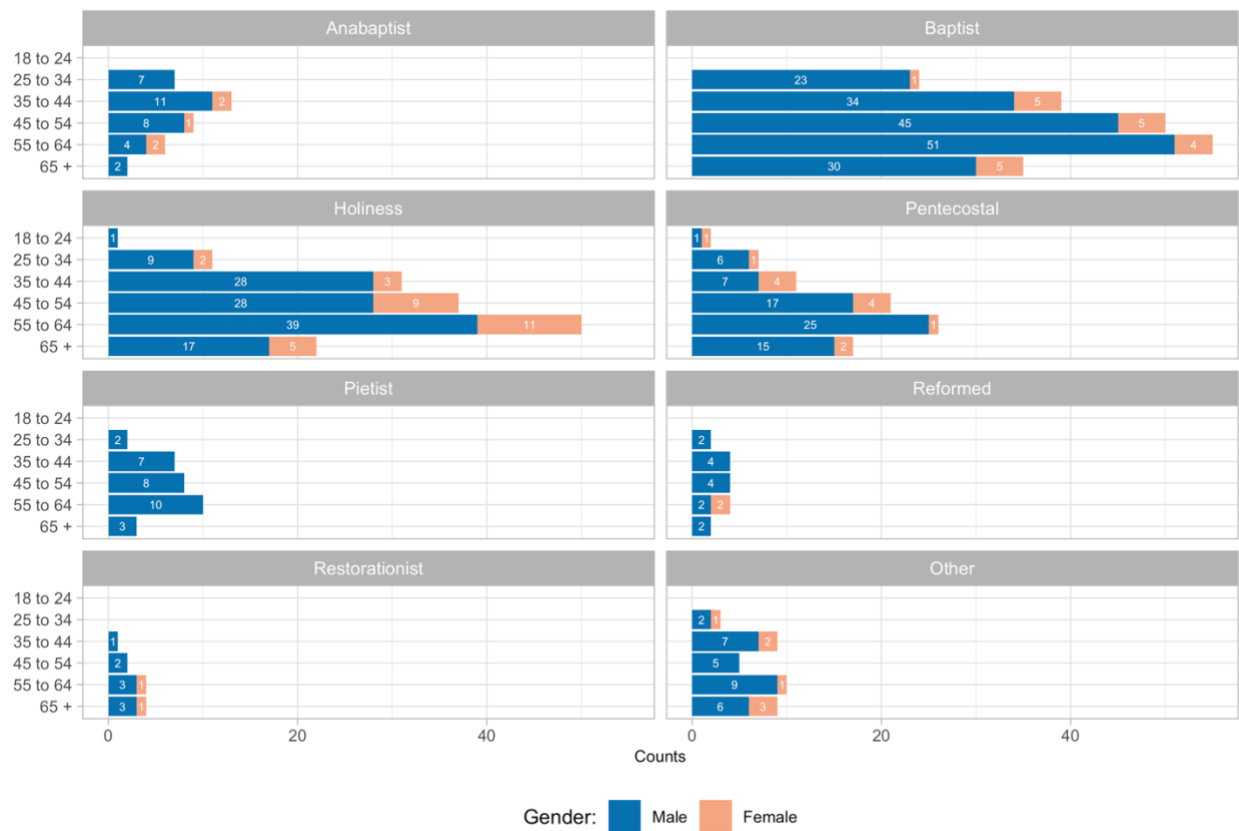
Figure 2.3 shows age-range distribution of respondents by tradition⁶² and gender. The reader should use caution drawing conclusions from traditions where there were few observations. What we can see, however, is a significant share of pastors are nearing retirement in the next decade irrespective of tradition. Sam Reimer and Michael Wilkinson in their 2009 study of Canadian, evangelical congregations (small and large) made a similar observation.

Clergy shortages have much to do with demographics. A high percentage of pastors are baby boomers who are taking early retirement or will be reaching retirement age shortly. ... There are not enough new clergy to replace them.⁶³

⁶² These categorizations are drawn from Bruce Guenther's tables in Bruce L. Guenther and Outreach Canada, "Denominations in Canada" (Unpublished, 2001).

⁶³ Reimer and Wilkinson, *A Culture of Faith*, 136.

Figure 2.3 Distribution of respondents age range, by tradition and gender, counts

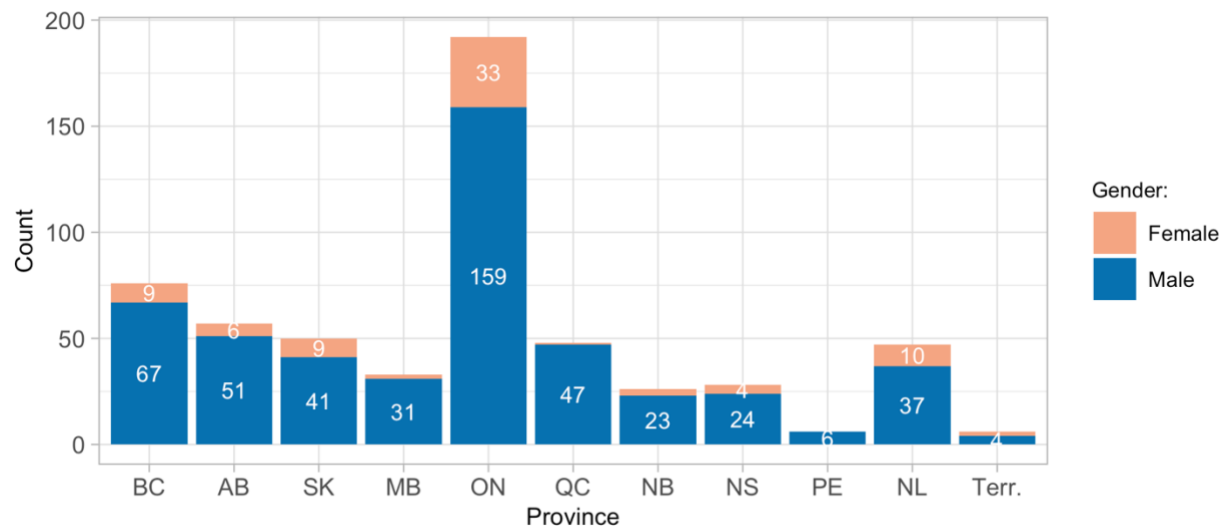


Source: 2022 CESCO, N = 569. N male = 490. N female = 79.

2.1.2 Province and tradition

Figure 2.4 below shows the provincial distribution of respondents (and their congregations) by gender, ordered geographically from west to east.

Figure 2.4 Distribution of respondents by province, counts



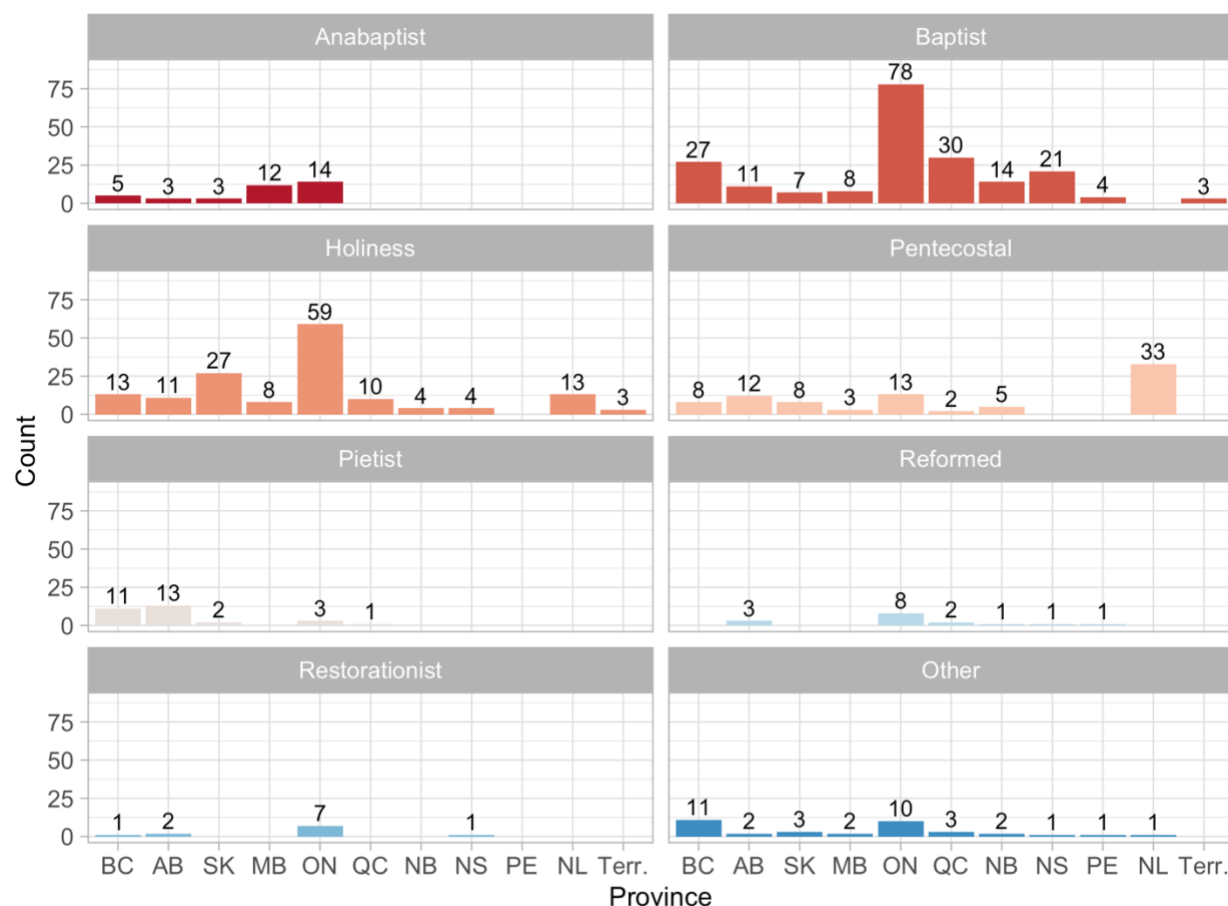
Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569. N male = 490. N female = 79.

See appendix A for a discussion about how well this provincial distribution fits the distribution of evangelical small churches across Canada.

Figure 2.5 below shows the distribution of responses by tradition and province, with the data ordered geographically, as in figure 2.4. In figure 2.5, we see the strong participation of the Baptist and Holiness traditions as well as the relative weakness of Pentecostal participation. Note, also, about two-fifths of Pentecostal responses came from Newfoundland and Labrador which overrepresents the province in that tradition. Some traditions, for example, Anabaptists and Pietist, lack representation in significant parts of the country. Table 2.1 (p. 61) shows responses by denomination along with the tradition categorization for denominations used in this report.

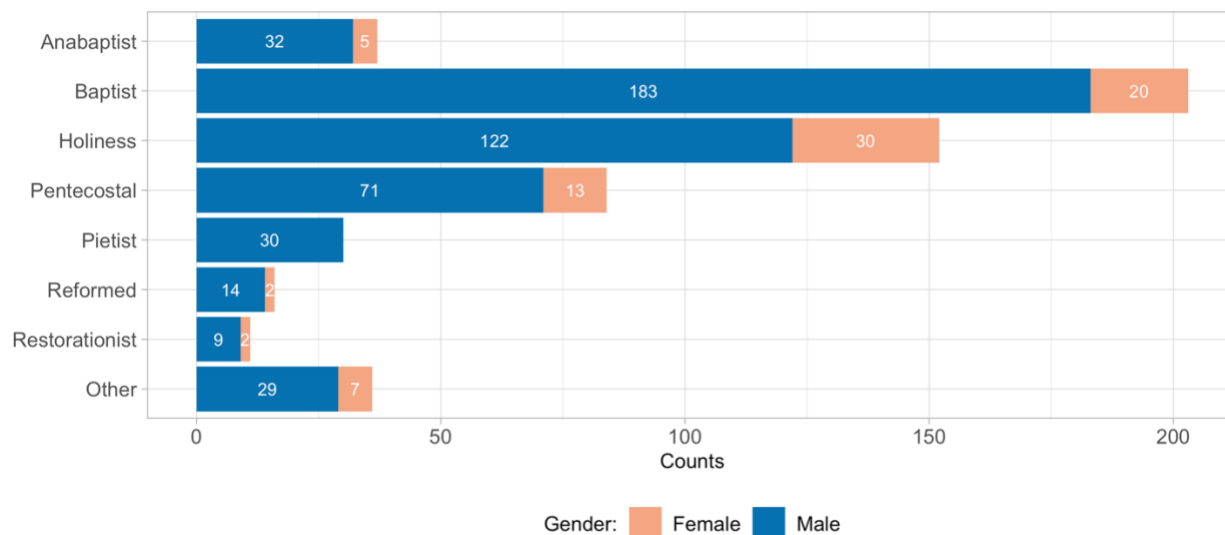
Figure 2.6 below shows the distribution of respondents by tradition and gender. The Holiness tradition had the largest share of female respondents (twenty percent) while the Pietist tradition had none.

Figure 2.5 Distribution of respondents by tradition and province, counts



Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569.

Figure 2.6 Distribution of respondents by tradition and gender, counts



Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569. N male = 490. N female = 79.

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Table 2.1 Qualified responses, by denomination and tradition, counts

Denomination ^a	Qualified responses	Tradition
The Fellowship	64	Baptist
Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada	60	Holiness
Salvation Army	53	Holiness
Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec	45	Baptist
Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador	33	Pentecostal
Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada	32	Baptist
Canadian Baptists of Western Canada	29	Baptist
Evangelical Free Church	29	Pietist
Apostolic Church of Pentecost	21	Pentecostal
Free Methodist Church in Canada	21	Holiness
Non-Denominational	18	Other
Canadian National Baptist Convention	14	Baptist
Evangelical Mennonite Conference	14	Anabaptist
The Wesleyan Church of Canada	14	Holiness
Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada	13	Pentecostal
United Brethren Church in Canada	11	Anabaptist
Union d'Églises Baptistes Francophones du Canada	10	Baptist
Presbyterian Church in Canada	10	Reformed
Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches	8	Anabaptist
Other	7	Other
Grace Communion	6	Other
Vineyard Canada	6	Pentecostal
Associated Gospel Churches	5	Baptist
Canadian Christian Churches in Canada	5	Restorationist
Vision Ministries	5	Restorationist
Anglican Network in Canada	4	Other
Church of God in Western Canada	4	Pentecostal
Evangelical Missionary	3	Holiness
Fellowship of Christian Assemblies	3	Pentecostal
United Church of Canada	3	Other
Prefer not to say	2	Other
North American Baptist	2	Baptist
Église réformée du Québec	2	Reformed
Mennonite Church Canada	2	Anabaptist
Reformed Church in American	2	Reformed
Anglican Church of Canada	1	Other
Be In Christ	1	Anabaptist
Canadian Church of God Ministries	1	Pentecostal
Church of the Nazarene	1	Holiness
Christian Reformed Church in North America	1	Reformed
Evangelical Christian Church in Canada	1	Restorationist
Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada	1	Pietist
Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada	1	Pentecostal
Victory Churches of Canada	1	Pentecostal
Total	569	

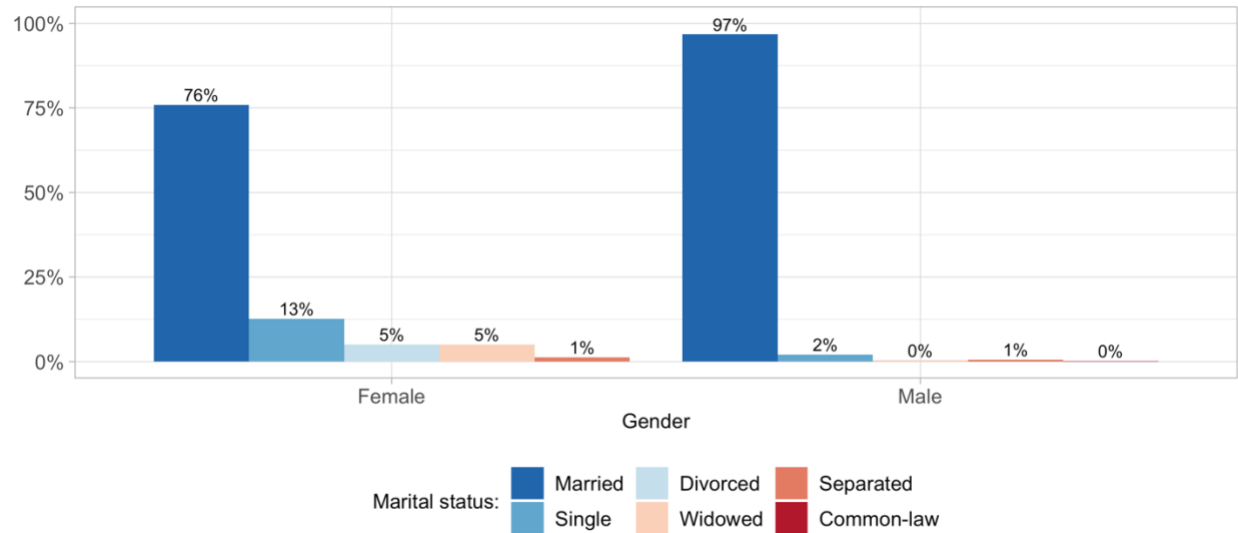
Only denominations with at least one qualified response listed.

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2.1.3 Marital status

Although ninety-four percent of respondents were married, this varied by gender. Just seventy-six percent of female respondents were married compared to ninety-seven percent male respondents (see figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7 Respondent marital status, by gender, percent



Source: 2022 CECSCS, N = 569. N male = 490. N female = 79.

Thirteen percent of female respondents were single, compared to just three percent of male respondents. Marital status has significant implications for denominations as they seek to provide mentors and pastoral care for their pastors. As we will see in section 2.4.4.4, pastoral work is often, paradoxically, lonely work. When a pastor does not have a spouse to walk beside her, the loneliness is likely compounded.

2.1.4 Ethnicity

Canada is an increasingly ethnically diverse nation. The 2021 census recorded over 450 ethnic and cultural origins.⁶⁴ In Canada's early history as a nation state, immigration was primarily from Europe, and its laws and immigration policy sometimes actively worked to discourage immigration from other parts of the world.⁶⁵ The Immigration Act of 1967 changed the objectives of Canada's immigration policy removing barriers for people from other parts of the world to come to Canada. One measure of ethnic diversity has been the share of Canadians

⁶⁴ Statistics Canada Government of Canada, "The Daily — The Canadian Census: A Rich Portrait of the Country's Religious and Ethnocultural Diversity," October 26, 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026b-eng.htm>.

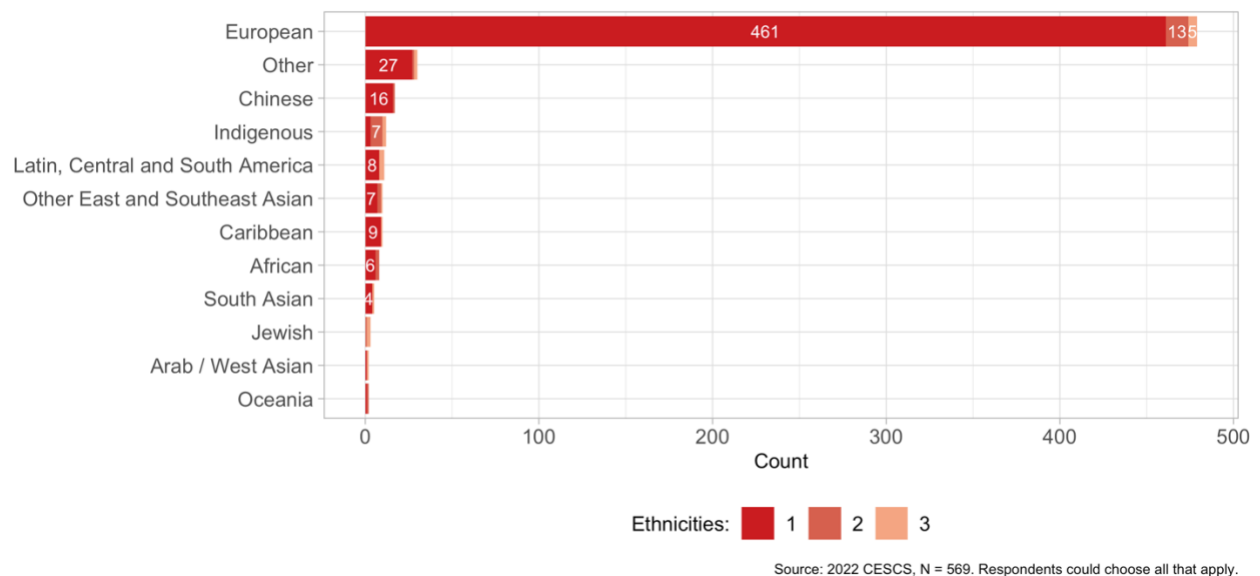
⁶⁵ Enoch Wong et al., *Listening to Their Voices: An Exploration of Faith Journeys of Canadian-Born Chinese Christians*, Revised Edition (Toronto: CCOWE Canada, 2019), <https://www.cccowe.ca/drive/ebook/LTTV-full-re.pdf>.

who are visible minorities, more recently described as racialized groups. In 2022, one in four people in Canada were part of a racialized group.⁶⁶

Survey respondents were asked questions about their ethnicities and the ethnicities represented in their congregations. On the survey, the list of ethnicities that appear on the vertical axis of figure 2.8 were presented in alphabetical order to pastors and they were asked to check all that apply for the ethnicities they identified with personally, and those that were present in their congregations (see figures 2.8 and 2.9, respectively).

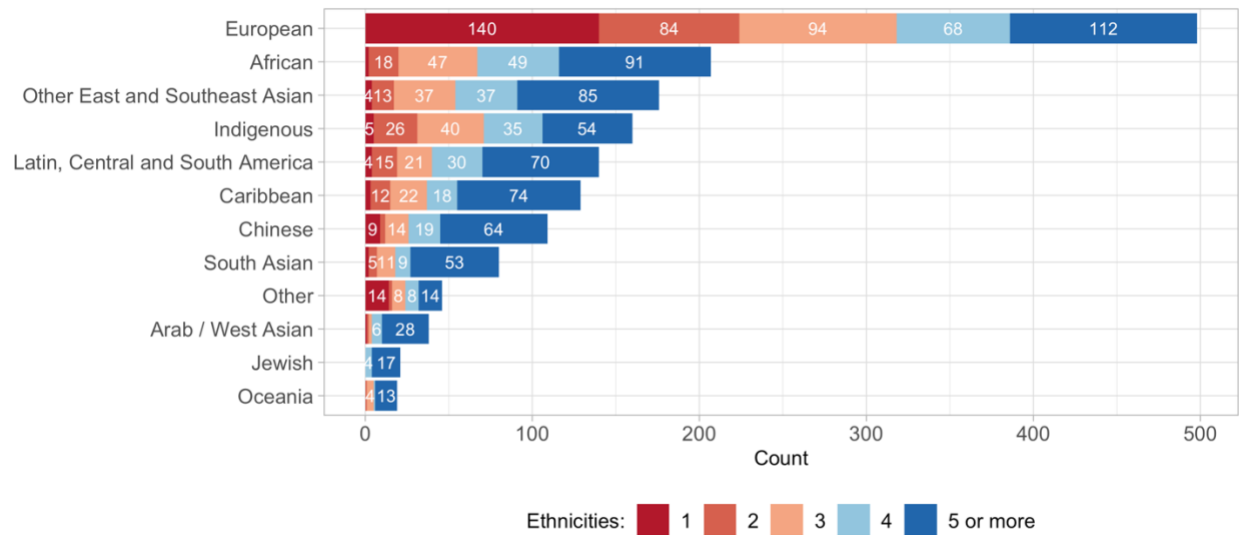
We counted the number of ethnicity responses received and have shaded the bars in figures 2.9 and 2.10 according to the number of responses received. For example, in figure 2.9, 479 respondents identified with a European ethnicity; however, only 461 exclusively identified with a European ethnicity while 13 identified two ethnicities and 5 identified with three. No respondent in our study identified more than three personal ethnicities. Eighty-four percent of respondents identified with a European ethnicity and eighty-one percent uniquely so.

Figure 2.8 Respondent ethnicities by number of ethnicities, counts



⁶⁶ Government of Canada, "The Daily — The Canadian Census."

Figure 2.9 Ethnicities represented in congregations by number of ethnicities, counts

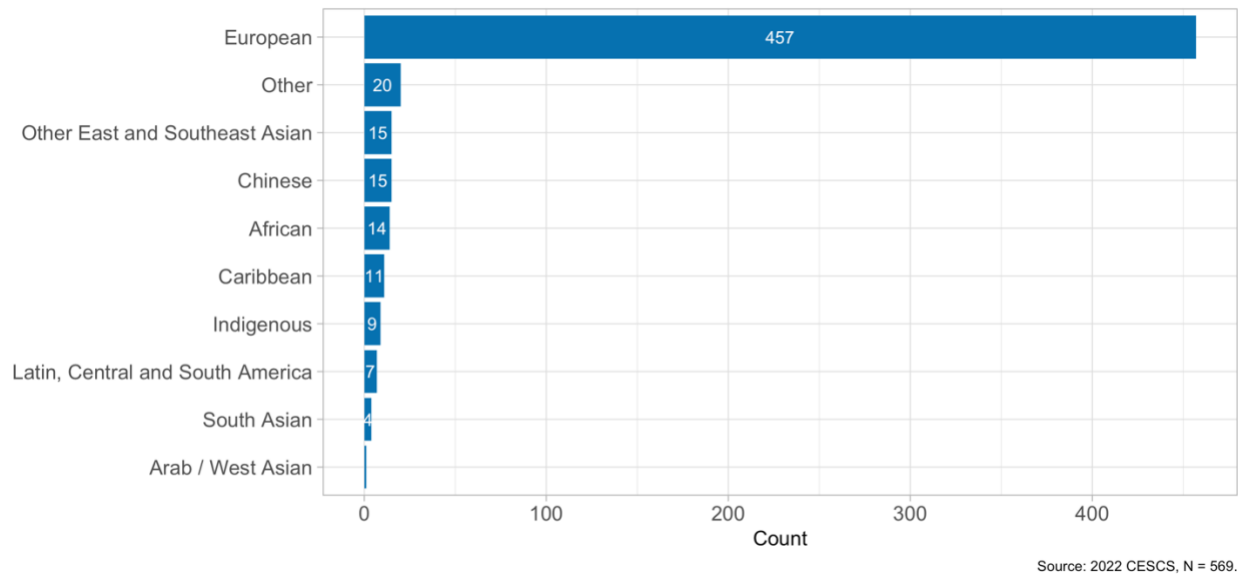


Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569. Respondents could choose all that apply.

The congregations these pastors serve, however, look somewhat more ethnically diverse when we consider the ethnicities present in respondents' congregations (see figure 2.9). As above, in figure 2.8, ethnicity counts have been shaded according to the number of ethnicities reported in congregations. Considering the European bar in figure 2.9, we can see that 498 respondents reported the presence of congregants with a European ethnicity (eighty-eight percent), however, only 140 of these (twenty-eight percent) were exclusively European.

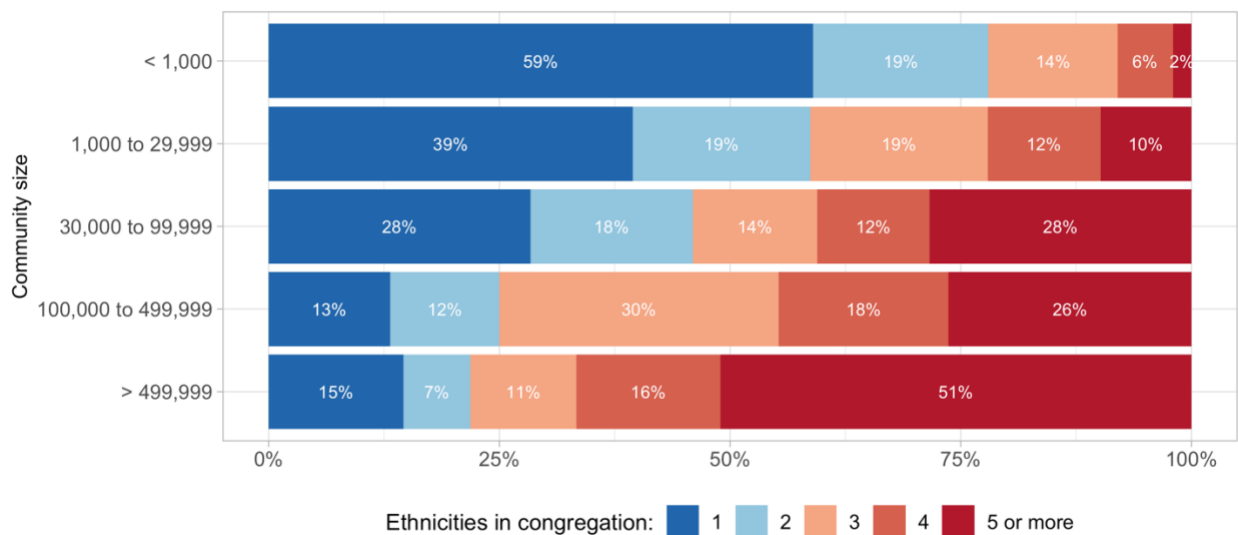
Knowing that several ethnic groups are present in a congregation does not tell you in what proportion. To better understand the ethnic composition of congregations, we asked respondents which ethnic group was largest in their congregation (see figure 2.10 below). In one-fifth of congregations, the largest ethnic group was non-European. However, where ethnic Europeans were present in the congregation, a non-European ethnic group was the largest group in only a quarter of cases. Only one-third of congregations were mono-ethnic, and half had three or more ethnicities represented.

Figure 2.10 Largest ethnic group in congregation, counts



Congregations were more ethnically diverse in larger centres. Figure 2.11 below shows the number of ethnicities present in a congregation by the size of the community the congregation is located in. Three-fifths of congregations located in communities of less than 1,000 were mono-ethnic compared to about one-seventh in communities of more than half a million. This is not surprising in that, as a rule, there is greater ethnic diversity in larger communities across Canada.

Figure 2.11 Ethnicities present in congregation by size of community the congregation is located in, percent



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2.1.5 Immigration status

The percent of Canadians born outside the country has risen steadily from 14.7 percent in 1951 to 21.9 percent in 2016.⁶⁷ Twenty percent of respondents in our sample were born outside of Canada, while just eleven percent of congregations were New Canadian; where half or more of the adult population was born outside the country (see table 2.2).

New Canadian churches often split their congregational life along immigration-generational lines, with first-generation immigrants operating in a language of their country of origin and their second-generation children in one of Canada's two official languages. The first generation pursues stability in a sea of change while encouraging their children to integrate into mainstream society to claim the full promise of life in Canada.

We asked survey respondents if they regularly held worship services in a language other than the dominant official language in their region (other than French in Quebec and other than English elsewhere). Seven percent of respondents said their congregations did regularly hold worship services in a language other than the dominant official language in their region. However, twenty-three percent of congregations where the largest ethnic group was non-European said the same, compared to just three percent of congregations where the largest ethnic group was European. Table 2.2 below shows that congregations with a greater share of adults born outside of Canada are more likely to hold worship services in a non-official language.

Table 2.2 Percent of adult congregation born outside of Canada, count, percent and percent that regularly worship in a language other than the dominant official language in their region

Percent of congregation born outside of Canada	Count	Percent	Percent who worship in a non-official language
Less than 25%	414	73	2
25% to 49%	67	12	7
50% to 74%	33	6	24
75% or more	31	5	55
DK / Refused	24	4	4
All	569	100	7

2.1.6 Language

Our study was conducted in English and French. Our French survey response numbers: three of twenty-four ministry expert interviews, four of thirty-one pastor interviews, and forty-one of 569 survey participants. Our qualified French survey responses fell short of our goal of 100, and

⁶⁷ Statistics Canada Government of Canada, "150 Years of Immigration in Canada," June 29, 2016, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2016006-eng.htm>; "Immigrants and Non-Permanent Residents Statistics," accessed November 14, 2022, https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/immigration_and_ethnocultural_diversity/immigrants_and_nonpermanent_residents.

the small sample size limits our ability to provide statistically responsible French data. See appendix A for more on the study's methodology.

2.2 Success

One of the main research objectives for this study was to determine, through pastors, the needs of small churches. We predicted that learning how pastors understand success would provide insight into the church's needs by identifying barriers to pastors' respective definitions of success. Popular church growth literature and interviews with ministry experts revealed small church pastors navigate different definitions and attitudes toward success, primarily those oriented toward numerical growth.

The church, especially the evangelical church, often creates ministry analogues for philosophies and practices in their contemporary context. In recent decades within the North American, evangelical movement, church success has often been equated with numerical growth largely due to the influence of the Church Growth Movement (CGM).⁶⁸ The CGM was a scientific management system for the local church. Just as inputs and processes in factories could be tweaked to increase outputs, the CGM programs and methods could be tweaked to cause the church to grow.

Donald McGavran, who is considered one of the fathers of the CGM, developed his ideas of church growth as a missionary in India. His insight from the mission field was that people usually came to Christ as communities rather than as individuals. Analogous to the conversion of Cornelius *and his household* recorded in Acts 10, McGavran noticed that when the leader of a village came to Christ the rest of the village often followed. He posited that movements of *people* coming to Christ (the output) could be reliably produced with the proper *causes*, reductions in *barriers*, and the application of proper *principles*. McGavran's insight from the mission field did not survive its contact with North American culture which reinterpreted McGavran's church-growth teaching individualistically and mechanistically.

Gary McIntosh, President of the Church Growth Network and Professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, sees the CGM's greatest legacy in the way "Church Growth principles have been grafted into the thinking of most North American Protestant denominations and church bodies."⁶⁹ Consequently, pastors and other leaders look to "successful" churches like Willow Creek and Saddleback Church as a paradigm to imitate, because growth is still largely understood as numbers and numerical growth is the single goal for every church. While the number of baptisms or newcomers remain necessary and revealing metrics, numbers can provide the illusion of comparability and overlook how congregations are often different in character and circumstances.

⁶⁸ Paul E. Engle and Gary L. McIntosh, eds., *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 315, <https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=5397580>.

⁶⁹ Engle and McIntosh, 315.

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For numbers or counts to be meaningful you must have standardized units. As the adage goes, you can't compare apples and oranges. If you do compare apples and oranges, you must express one in terms of the other. For example, if you said one orange is worth two apples, you could convert oranges to apples and continue with the comparison, now having apples and apples (oranges expressed as apples) to compare.

Numerical measurement is used to facilitate comparison between congregations. Ministry contexts are diverse, making qualitative comparisons difficult. How many lines of prose would be needed, for example, to compare a congregation in the ski country in British Columbia with one in Cobourg, Ontario? To facilitate such comparisons, especially over the congregations of an entire denomination, ministries are reduced to numbers. The administrative benefit of numbers is they can be manipulated arithmetically to produce other numbers giving a sense of growth and a means of comparison.

Suppose we were to use average worship service attendance, a common church metric, to compare the churches in British Columbia and Ontario. The BC church's attendance this year was 100, the same as the previous year, while the church in Ontario had 110, up from 100 last year. The church in Ontario appears to be the one that grew, right? If we were measuring the same thing, this would be true. The BC church, however, was in ski country with a transient population. Every year, forty percent of their population moves away, so to maintain 100 people they need to attract another forty people each year. The Ontario church, by contrast, is a bedroom community for Toronto attracting well-healed retirees to new suburbs. With this extra information, which church grew more?

Numerical comparisons are only as good as the underlying assumption that the same thing is being measured. The example above shows how misleading simple attendance counts can be as a measure of church health and growth. How do you account for ministry in a town where the mine closes? What if all your children move away to go to school? These are important points not just because measurements made with false assumptions can be inaccurate. When these measures are used to reward or celebrate one ministry versus another, we may be devaluing excellent ministry for no other reason than we did not have the capacity to measure it.

In small church pastor and ministry expert interviews, which included denominational and organizational leaders, academics, and a handful of small church pastors, success was most often referred to in terms of "growth" and tended to suit the respondent's ministry role. For most pastors, success meant spiritual growth and growth of influence in the community and for many denominational representatives, numerical growth remained the primary metric for church success. Though often in conflict, one measure is not inherently better than the other, rather they serve different ends and reflect different ministry concerns.

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2.2.1 Numerical growth

About half of denominational leaders interviewed for this study prioritized numerical growth metrics. One leader referenced Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath 1 (Kings 17:7-16) to analogize the reasons for encouraging and expecting growth from small churches: “Sometimes all we have [is] a little oil and a little flour. But when we [are] poured out in a way that God is directing us to find, it's a bottomless reserve and God does miraculous things with it.”

This denominational leader's role was to help pastors gain a new perspective on their situation and “network[] them with other people who have had some measure of kingdom advancement.” This approach nods at contextual impacts on church size (see section 1.3), but the expectations are that cultivating the right perspective and strategy will inevitably result in “kingdom advancement,” an alias for numerical growth.

Another leader saw lack of community connections as a barrier to numerical growth in small churches, believing numbers would increase when insular congregations were competently led to accept change.

If you have any unhealthy or immaturity on the part of ... the pastor ... if ministry is, you know, fear driven ... they're just afraid of considering, you know, other options, they'll be stuck in their way. And they will have a very difficult time, I think connecting with the community around them. They will have a tough time in growing because every new person changes the dynamics, and it's a threat.

This leader expressed frustration with pastors who settled into, what the denomination saw as, complacency, effectively enabling the church in its state of stagnation. Another denominational representative said pastors' short tenures in small churches caused congregations to “develop[] a very small church mentality of being stuck or content.” Despite denominational good intentions, the common denominator in these responses is the pastor. The pastor's perspective, tenure and motivation, denominational leaders mooted, must change for the church to grow. One leader admitted to being “mildly idealistic” that “a competent leader can make [the small church] flourish.” The solution they suggest, in one leader's words, is “leadership, leadership, leadership.” It is significant that the success of the congregation is seen to rest in the competencies of the pastor. This reflects a view that “everything rises or falls on leadership,”⁷⁰ an understanding of ministry that tends to eclipse, minimize or otherwise downplay the role of the congregation and context.

Leadership was usually framed in terms of vision casting, missional entrepreneurship, and organization aptitude with a focus on giftings as a key to successful ministry. Resembling the nature-nurture debate, some experts believed pastors must have a predisposition for effective ministry in a small church (nature), while others said success could come from a deliberate initiative to flourish in a certain context (nurture). The principles of size dynamics (see section

⁷⁰ A saying often attributed to John C. Maxwell.

1.2) confirm leadership strategies need to change to accommodate growth, but they do not guarantee that a change in strategy will cause growth.

Capacity for numerical growth not only requires relational and leadership adjustments but requires a level of operational and resource expenditure that many small churches simply do not have. For instance, there are minimum finance and staff resource thresholds that must be met to allow a congregation to carry out its mission. So, an interest in numerical growth may not be purely for its own sake. One francophone ministry leader talked about how a lack of human resources limited opportunities for growth. Growth and capacity become a chicken-and-egg quandary for the church to solve.

Beaucoup les petites églises francophones, c'est très difficile ... d'arriver à un endroit financier où ils peuvent vraiment entrevoir la croissance. Parce que souvent l'aspect financier bien met un obstacle au fait de pouvoir embaucher une deuxième personne, donc venir faire une équipe à l'église ou même de payer un ouvrier à temps pleins, ou de louer de locaux que serait adéquate pour un groupe grandissant.

[Translation: [For] many small French-speaking churches, it's very difficult ... to get to a financial place where they can really see growth. Because often the financial limitations are an obstacle to being able to hire a second person, so building a ministry team or even paying a full-time worker or renting space that would be adequate for a growing congregation.]

Most small church pastors resisted numbers as indications of success, but some admitted numbers were at least an indication of survival: "I'll say we are concerned about numbers because the numbers represent people, and people represent how we keep the church doors open, right?" Pastors require a degree of organizational awareness because churches need a faithful core to give to its ministries, run its programs and maintain its governing structures. In many cases, the organizational demands of small churches are comparatively small, and they do not get much attention until it is glaringly obvious the church is suffering. One pastor said, "The fact that we're still paying our bills is success," acknowledging small churches face imminent closure more readily with fewer congregants. Budget and attendance are not overly pious metrics for church success, but they are important signs of life.

Some interviews painted denominations as number chasers while pastors were concerned with spiritual growth. One pastor, while talking about the denominational focus on measurement, said it missed the point of success, which is spiritual maturity: "What makes [a pastor] successful is the relationship from the spiritual maturity ... you can't count nickels and noses ... there's [sic] only so many noses in the community anyway, right?" An academic leader and pastor talked about the pressure small church pastors feel from denominations to grow: "There is a lot of pressure in the evangelical world for churches to be bigger ... and if you're not growing, you're obviously doing something wrong so that messaging gets through."

These respondents pointed to how a focus on numerical growth can blind leaders to a lack of spiritual growth. These blind spots do not, however, address the critique that a lack of

numerical growth can be an indication of a problem. They merely point out that problems can exist even in the presence of numerical growth. On the other hand, focusing on the spiritual growth of individuals may make pastors blind to organizational problems or problems in the church's relationship with the community.

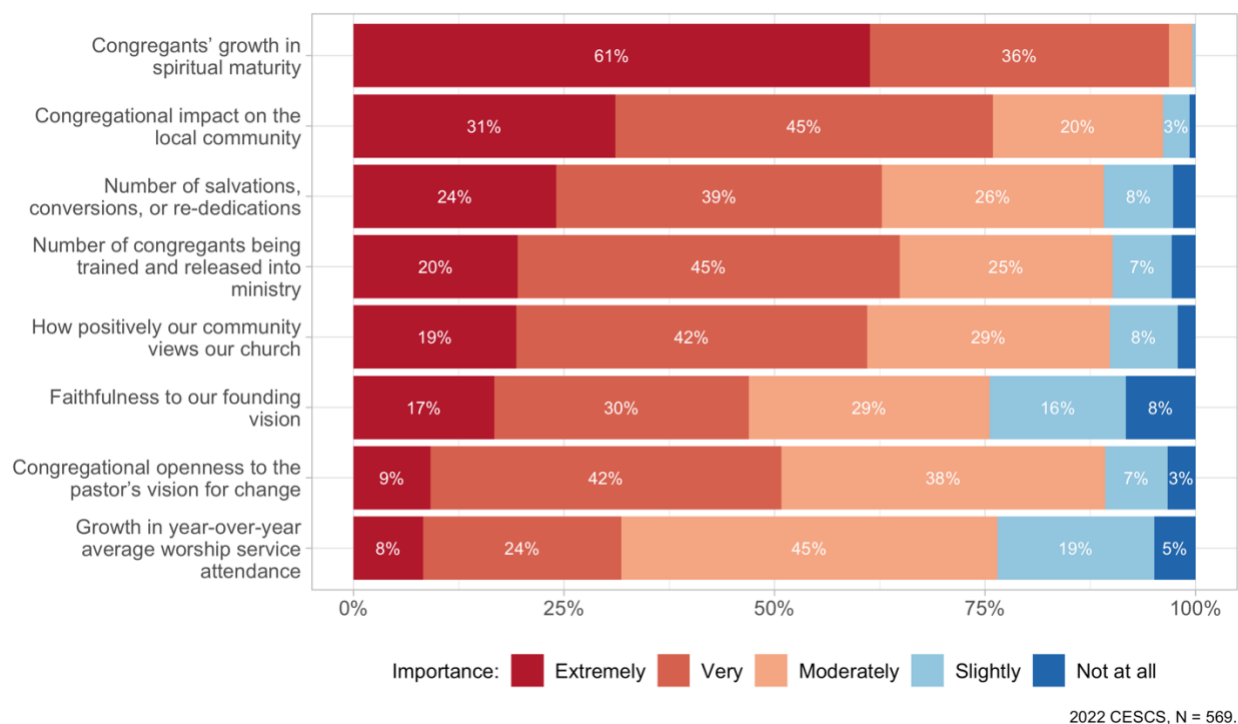
Not all denomination representatives interviewed for this study advocated numerical metrics for success. One leader said, "I press our people to have measures of faithfulness and godliness and holiness and faithfulness to the Scriptures above these other things, like the numerical measures." Another representative prioritized community influence: "I don't think success has to be determined just by the numbers. If you are reaching individuals, if you are having an influence for Christ in your community ... your numbers may never really grow ... but your influence in the community [will]." Influence in the community and faithfulness are held as alternative measures to "the numbers," both of which are relational, resisting quantification.

2.2.2 Spiritual growth

In interviews, small church pastors spoke less about leadership style and vision casting and used the term "growth" to describe the spiritual state of their congregation changing for the better: "[Success] is our people growing and maturing in Christ." Using various success metrics proposed in interviews, pastors were surveyed for how they measured and understood success. An overwhelming ninety-seven percent of survey respondents considered spiritual growth in the congregation extremely, or very, important to their conception of success. Only one-third thought growth in average worship service attendance was of great importance (see figure 2.12 below).

One pastor said success is when the pastor can see that people have grown, describing the goal of the pastor as "help[ing] each [congregant] grow in their faith and to grow in their faith together." The focus is on various kinds of relational growth, not numerical growth. When asked how she knew if the congregation was growing, one pastor replied, "I can [track my congregants' spiritual development] because I know my people and I've been here long enough." A French pastor said success is seeing "*croissance spirituelle, je vois l'impact du travail que je fais dans la vie de l'enfant, d'un jeune, d'un groupe, etc.*" ["... spiritual growth, I see the impact of the work I do in the life of a child, a youth, a group, etc."]

Figure 2.12 Importance of select measures of success for small church pastors, percent



Those that rely on a qualitative understanding of growth end up collecting clues that indicate congregants are growing spiritually but these can be misleading. As the metaphor suggests, pastors usually think of growth as linear and additive, but this metaphor does not account for disease or injury. One pastor said success was “people are growing in their faith, that in troubled times they're turning and in crises turning to God and each other,” but it was precisely in crisis that some pastors reported having misread members of their congregation.

If I can be so bold, I think, [COVID] has ... really fractured some of our expectations. I think the impact has been, for me as a pastor, going, “Boy, those that I've made some presumptions about their spiritual maturity and even emotional maturity. I've been way off base.

In many congregations, the pandemic ironically revealed a confusion between growth and health. An adult is done growing in stature, so when we talk about their growth, we usually mean an improvement in health, resiliency, skill or capacity. All these things were undermined by the deteriorating environment COVID-19 introduced. One pastor said as the pandemic progressed, he felt he needed to be more careful with his words: “[It] has been really isolating. I, at times, don't feel they know even who to trust and I'm just surprised where people are at.”

These stories point to the need for a better way to understand the state of the church’s spiritual health. But like adulthood growth, spiritual things are invisible and resistant to quantification. The pandemic revealed the danger in using spiritual maturity as the sole source

of encouragement and sense of success. It also revealed pastors may not be the best judge of spiritual growth and therefore have a false sense of success.

Most ministry leaders seem to agree on the necessity of growth, just not on what kind of growth. Numerical growth accommodates itself to external measurement, whereas spiritual growth and growth in community influence are most easily measured relationally. It is clear, therefore, why denominational leaders without the deep local relationships enjoyed by small church pastors would prefer numerical measures – measures of growth that are accessible to them and that facilitate a standard for comparison. Spiritual and relational growth do not lend themselves to this kind of comparison and, therefore, it is difficult to communicate spiritual growth success to others as a quantity.

2.2.3 Pastoral success

Interview questions were designed to understand how pastors perceived and measured their success. The annual statistical forms that many pastors fill out for their denominations make it clear what the priorities and measures are for their denomination. There is no similarly codified form or document that spells out pastors' priorities for denominational leaders, however. Interviews with pastors revealed three key takeaways that are important for leaders and organizations to understand:

1. pastors view success in different ways;
2. pastors implement their own standard, periodic measures for success; and
3. those measures are, at times, changeable and unfixed.

Pastors need to know if they're doing a good job. In contexts where numerical growth has shown to be unlikely (be it internally or externally imposed), pastors tended to look for cues in their regular ministry activities as metrics for success in their church. Some pastors looked at their church's impact on the community, others looked for signs of maturity in the congregation, and still others looked at the fulfillment of their duties as success indicators.

We noticed most pastors, in choosing their own success metrics, focus on what they're already doing well and, significantly, what can be counted. We think pastors need to have a sense of accomplishment in what they're doing. Since pastors need to experience success somewhere, they create a measure where they can be successful. Metrics for success like membership, attendance and baptisms are common among denominations because they cannot know the people or the congregations to do otherwise. However, if pastors need to experience success and it is not in the standard successes, then they will look for it elsewhere.

Standard, periodic measures are powerful feedback for pastors and churches only if:

1. these measures do not distort what they profess to measure;

2. pastors have the capacity to make meaningful and measurable changes to their ministry that will affect subsequent measurements.

Where pastors cannot meaningfully impact their statistics, then the measurements lead to discouragement and a sense of impotence in ministry.

Where pastors cannot meaningfully affect denominational or peer ministry measurements, they may focus on other external activities or ministries where they can experience success. For example, a pastor may pour her energies into the activities of a local ministerial if she finds praise there, while finding effecting attendance growth in her congregation difficult. When denominations insist on measurements pastors cannot meaningfully affect, the result may be alienation from the denomination and his/her pastoral peers. It is not that one measure is better or worse than the other, rather the strengths and weaknesses of each measure must be understood and acknowledged.

Finally, pastors described different notions of success depending on how long they had been at a church and where they were in their pastoral career. For example, one Millennial pastor said success was originally “just being able to handle what was going on in the church.” After a few years in ministry, this pastor said success was “finding ways that we can uniquely reach the community” and “empower[ing] people in the church to do what they’re gifted in doing.”

A second-career pastor said her idea of success changed because her goals for the church were different: “[P]art of my goal for [my first] church was to show them my leadership skills to the point where they would put me forward for ordination.” Once that goal was achieved, she shifted to help another church overcome relational strife: “They were going through a difficult time and so ... God was calling me to remove that stronghold ... I feel like I achieved that while I was there.” This suggests, just as there is a church life cycle⁷¹, there is also a pastorate life cycle and success measures will change depending on where pastors are in that cycle.

Pastors and denominational leaders should be aware that ideas of success are at once variable with respect to context and unchanging with respect to the overall mission of the church. There is a tension in the commonality of the broader mission and the diversity of the local context that, itself, is overlain with the cycle of the pastorate, the economic cycles of the community, and the family cycles of marriages, births and deaths. Understanding success as evolving can be an encouragement for young and new pastors who might hold themselves to standards that befit a longer tenure and established rapport at a church. This can affect how success is measured and evaluated and even be a sign of maturity and growth for a pastor.

In learning what pastors view as success, primarily the spiritual growth of their congregants and impact on their communities, we learn that every measure tells you something. The question to put to all sides in this debate is: What does your measure, measure well, and what does your measure, measure poorly? Different measures serve different ends. Quantification as measures

⁷¹ Watson, “Congregational Life Cycle Assessment.”

of growth is an administrative convenience, and it only makes sense if things are first reduced to standardized units. Only then is it meaningful for denominations to make comparisons between churches. The numerical growth numbers preferred by denominational leaders allow the leader to summarize what is going on in his/her churches and to communicate vitality with brevity. Denominational measures of church success are used to suit the purpose of the denominational ministry role. The difference in focus allows for denominational leaders to concentrate on organizational growth and for pastors to focus on the growth of individuals.

2.3 Ministry Preparation

Ministry preparation includes education but also the backgrounds and experiences that pastors bring to their roles. Understanding how the small church works and being prepared for small church ministry is vital if pastors are to experience success in ministry. In this section, we will explore different aspects of small church ministry preparation that emerged in our interviews and from our national survey.

2.3.1 Familiarity of place as ministry preparation

Small church ministry, especially rural small church ministry, is about place, and understanding the place, or context, is essential for pastors.

One pastor talked about his familiarity with rural contexts as a reason he was approached to lead a church.

I am a lifelong member of the [denomination] and was a pastor in a church [in the United States] ... [The denomination] approached me to ask if I'd be interested in pastoring a rural church [in Canada]. I grew up on a farm in [location], and so rural ministry is something that has always been close. Really small church, rural context isn't something that I was unfamiliar with. So, that's – they approached me to candidate.

At another point in the interview, he mentioned “fall[ing] back on my farm-kid roots” as he sought to serve his congregation during busy harvest seasons or performing duties that were outside his portfolio as a pastor. The way he talked about his farm-kid roots suggests a rural sense of place is more important than any cultural differences that came from being American.

Another pastor's history with alcohol and drug addiction shaped the kind of ministry and people that his church embraced. His background influenced his heart to be a community that reached “those that nobody else wants.”

I was an alcoholic, drug addict, I was in jail, and Jesus Christ got a hold of my life in a very powerful way and brought me to where I am today. And so, our church in [town] is really, you know, the role we fit here in [our town] is reaching those that nobody else wants.

One pastor said he was caught off-guard by the needs and values of rural populations because it was a new context for him.

I'm an urban guy and I've been learning a lot. And I've been loving it. I'm glad. But I definitely feel like I've got a lot to learn. **Golly, one thing I wish I had known when I first arrived was: they really want you to meet with them. Just meet with your people. So, urban people don't really want that. Not as much. But, oh my, in the country, do they ever.** So, that was a bit of a mental switch. I would have started off better if I had known that. So, maybe just some advice to pastors from other small-town pastors, maybe even a call from a small-town pastor just giving some of their experience. That would probably be very helpful to someone else that's never pastored a small-town church.

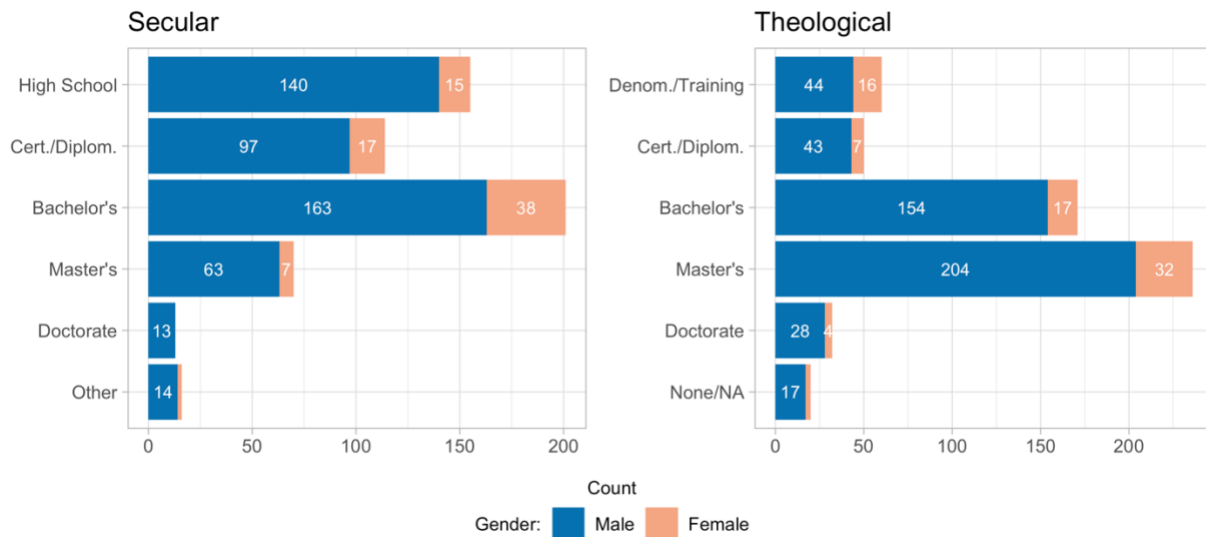
At one point he mentioned, "I came to a church where it became clear that my men don't read" but described going through a twenty-page primer on racism with them. He added, "Some of their heads were spinning" as a result. This pastor is going through the process of contextualization, having to learn and adapt his ministry approach precisely because he is not familiar with the demographic he is ministering to.

Ministering in unfamiliar contexts does not preclude a pastor from flourishing, but there are significant challenges that make a sense of success harder to achieve which can affect their sense of wellbeing and bring their calling into question.

2.3.2 Highest levels of formal education

In this section, we look at highest levels of formal secular and theological education for survey respondents. Figure 2.13 below shows the highest level of formal secular and theological education by gender. Half of survey respondents have a secular university undergraduate or graduate degree, and nearly four-fifths (seventy-seven percent) have an undergraduate or graduate theological degree.

Figure 2.13 Highest level of education, by gender, secular and theological, counts



Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569. N male = 490. N female = 79.

Figure 2.14 below shows the relationship between survey respondents' highest level of secular and theological education. About three-fifths of those with a bachelor's or master's level theological degree had lower levels of formal secular education as did four-fifths of those with theological doctoral degrees. This suggests that formal theological education usually follows formal secular education, and that theological education tends to be a pastor's finishing degree.

Figure 2.14 Highest level of secular education by highest level of theological education and highest level of theological education by highest level of secular education, counts

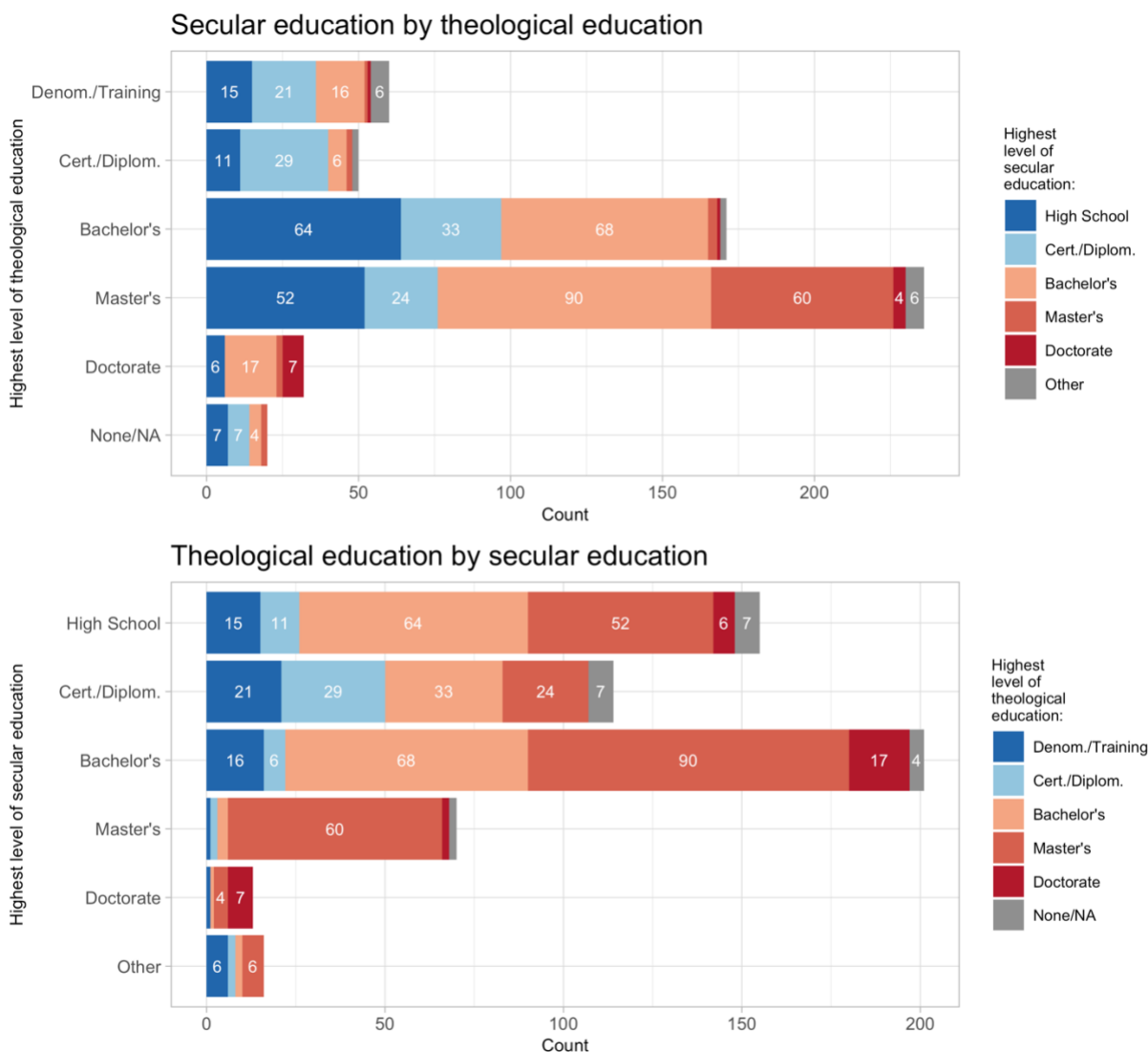
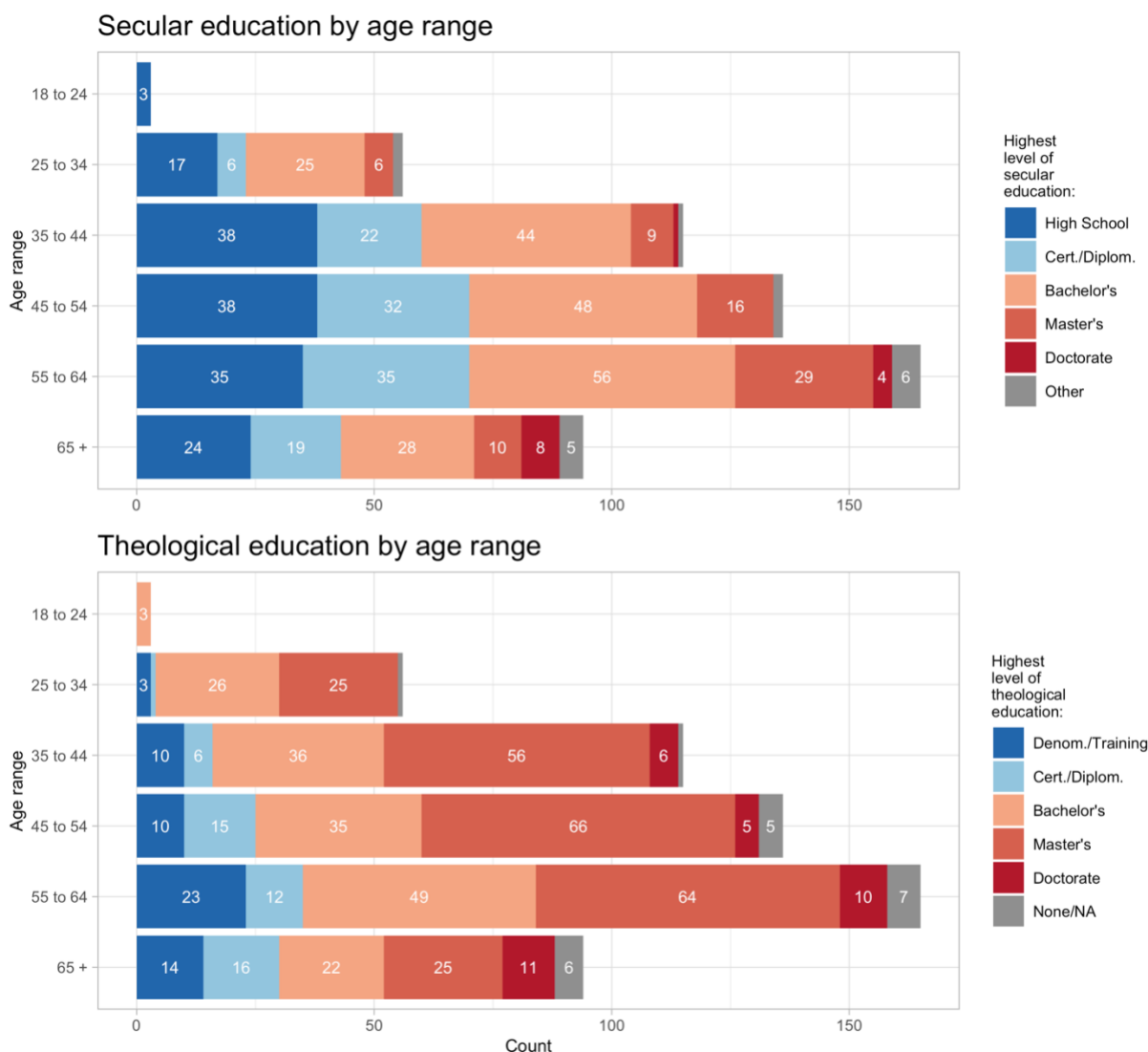


Figure 2.15 below shows respondents' formal secular and theological education by age range. Although a greater share of older pastors has theological doctorates (likely a function of having had more time to earn them), having a master's level theological degree is becoming more common among younger pastors. Forty-seven percent of pastors in Gen-Y or younger had a theological master's degree compared to forty-four percent for Gen-X and thirty-five percent for Boomers or older.⁷²

⁷² The terms Gen-Y, Gen-X and Boomers refer to sociological generations which we have defined as those born from 1982 to 1996, 1965 to 1981, and 1946 to 1964, respectively.

Figure 2.15 Highest level of secular and theological education by age range, counts



Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569.

2.3.3 Education paths for women

Second-career pastorates were more common among women, accounting for two-thirds of women surveyed compared to only about a third of men (see figure 2.16 below). Two-fifths of women who were second-career pastors were older than fifty-five, likely because pastoral ministry was not an option for them when they were younger. Gen-X female clergy we interviewed tended to have ministry aspirations, but their education remained generally religious until receiving a specific call.⁷³

⁷³ Born between 1965 and 1981 and aged forty-one to fifty-seven at the time of the study.

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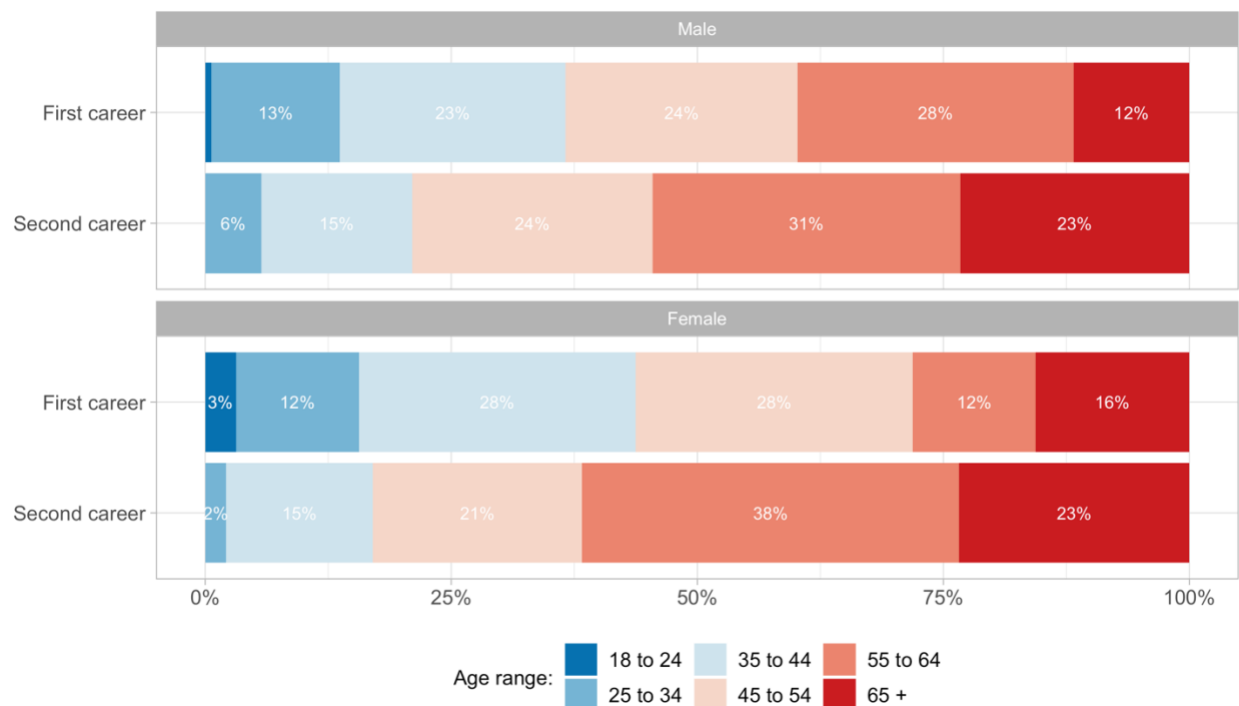
For example, one woman said she sensed a call to pastoral ministry, but “women weren't encouraged and welcomed to be in ministry in any official capacity.” She shared that she had always been interested in hearing from the women missionaries and wondered “if maybe that interest or that desire was part of me sensing a call.”

It was not until she had interned at a church and was given ministry responsibilities that she realized, “I needed to learn so much more. I didn't have all the biblical languages. I had done Greek right at the end of my [undergraduate] degree. And so ... I came to [theological institution].”

Another Gen-X followed a similar pattern of pursuing qualifications after confirming a pastoral call: “I wasn't, like, taking a theology degree. ... So, when I got the job at the church, I ... finished with a degree in religious studies and then afterwards took courses to become ordained through [theological institution].”

The two millennial, female pastors we interviewed had a more direct path to their ministry roles than their predecessors and their degrees reflected a focused course of study: a master of theology and master of divinity, respectively.

Figure 2.16 Age range of pastors by gender and career type, percent



2.3.4 Other non-theological education

Several pastors we interviewed had training outside of theological disciplines. Three pastors spoke of how their non-pastoral training helped them become better pastors. One pastor pursued an intercultural degree before pursuing a theology degree at a graduate level.

I did an intercultural studies degree, so that's a missions degree. I feel like [that] prepared me to be willing to take risks with the community, step out, kind of not remain in a box, and trying to actually move the church forward. ... **The benefits that I received from [that program] have made me a much better pastor.**

An Indigenous pastor said a minister advised him to pursue a business degree with the intention of becoming a pastor.

I felt like I wanted to continue [to] educate myself. **So, I first went to get my degrees in business administration and accounting because I knew one day – that was the advice I got from an elderly minister who passed away – that in order to pastor a church you should have administration and accounting because a lot of pastors don't have that when they graduate Bible college or Bible seminary.** So, I took that advice. I went to get my degree. It took me five years. And thereafter, I pursued ... seminary.

For this pastor, preparing for the administrative side of pastoral ministry helped him establish himself as both a trusted spiritual and business leader in his community. He mentioned using his expertise as a form of outreach, helping other businessowners and entrepreneurs. His status and experience in the community also led to him serving as a political leader as well.

Another pastor used his psychology background to help churches through conflict management, which eventually led to full-time pastoral ministry.

After I received my PhD ... I was ministering part-time in various churches, doing a lot of conflict management, moving towards that direction. **And then when the conflict management moved into more of interim pastor and became pastoral work ... then [I] sought out full-time pastoral work after that.**

His work in conflict management in churches seemed to qualify him over the years to be a pastor, despite not having additional theological education beyond a bachelor's degree. Churches saw the value in his expertise beyond advanced theological education and the license to marry and bury, suggesting that churches might need leaders who are trained more widely or possess skills to manage people and change – things pastors say their formal theological education does a poor job preparing them for.

2.3.5 Quality of formal theological education

The majority of our ministry expert respondents felt that Christian higher education, seminaries in particular, were failing to adequately prepare pastors for small church ministry. Several experts critiqued seminary programs for placing, what they saw, as too much emphasis on academic subjects and not enough emphasis on pastoral ministry skills.

We asked pastors if they felt their education adequately prepared them for small church ministry and many responded ambivalently.

- ***Je dirai, « oui et non. » Oui, dans le sens que théologiquement parlant, étudier la Bible, comprendre le sens du texte ... de prêcher, oui. Mais le côté pastoral, « non. » Et honnêtement, dans ma compréhension, la façon qu'on forme les pasteurs dans les facultés traditionnelles est beaucoup axée sur la connaissance des données bibliques qui est qui est essentielle – biblique, exégétique, historique, etc. théologique. Et beaucoup moins axée sur comment marcher avec les gens, comment prier avec les gens, comment eh diriger eh un culte. C'est pas quelque chose sur laquelle on travaille beaucoup. Donc dans ce sens-là, je pourrais dire écoute il y a beaucoup de choses qui m'ont arrivé ici qu'il y a rien qui m'aurait pu préparer pour cela.***

Translation: I would say, “yes and no.” Yes, in the sense that theologically speaking, to study the Bible, to understand the meaning of the text [and] ... preaching, yes. But the pastoral side, no. And honestly, in my understanding, the way that pastors are trained in traditional faculties is very much focused on knowing biblical information which is essential – biblical, exegetical, historical, etc. theological. And much less focused on how to walk with people, how to pray with people, how to lead worship. It's not something we work on a lot. So, in that sense, I could say that, listen, there are a lot of things that happened to me here that there is nothing that could have prepared me for this.

- **Yes. Yeah, I mean, the logistical stuff, board meetings, and that stuff, not really.** But by and large, I think it really did ... in the theological side.
- **Hmm. No. Yes and no. When I first started – I remember in the first year we had some huge problems with our furnace, and I remember thinking "seminary did not prepare me for this." And then, now, I also think seminary did not prepare me for this. All the technical and technological aspects of ministry, I feel quite ill-prepared for and feel like I wish that I had more of that kind of training because I think it's important.**

Among the ambivalent responses, most pastors thought seminaries had prepared them well in terms of biblical and theological preparedness. However, they agreed that formal theological education was insufficient to prepare them for the totality of small church ministry, especially lacking training in areas of pastoral care, practical leadership and technology.

Two pastors felt their education had failed to prepare them for small church ministry. When asked if they felt adequately trained for their role, one responded:

That's a tricky one because in lots of ways I would say [I was not prepared] very well ... especially in a small church context, you're woefully undereducated or prepared for so many of the things that you have to face as a small church pastor. **I think that typical Bible college education sets you up really well to be, like, the preaching pastor at a very large church, but doesn't necessarily set you up to know how to navigate all of the information and all the things you need to know in order to be a small church pastor, where your job consists of lots [of] administration.**

Later in the interview, this pastor said he learned the particularities of small church ministry by “jumping in the pool, ... [and by] also having a handful of people that you can ask some questions to so that you don't have to learn everything through experience,” (see section 4 Networks). He added, if he could take a different education path to ministry, he would have studied business and administration. Another pastor's response to the ministry preparedness question was:

Well, no. [laughs]. No, just because, you know, like it's a theological education as opposed to an organizational education. And so, you have to learn all of those [organizational] things by doing it ... you just can't learn those things in the classroom.

This pastor suggests that non-theological training, like administration or organizational behaviour, cannot be acquired in a seminary setting, nor did he expect that kind of training to be offered. He filled the deficit with informal supplemental training. “You have to learn by reading books, by going to conferences, by asking more mature mentors, etcetera. And by making lots of mistakes.” Notice how both pastors whose seminary training left them wanting, mentioned the importance of mentorship and networks of support to guide them in ministry. This is explored further below and in section 2.3.7. Notice, also, he suggests pastors learn mostly through “making lots of mistakes.” If this is the case, then both pastors and their congregations are being hurt simply because pastors come into ministry inadequately prepared.

In answer to the question about the adequacy of pastoral preparation, only one pastor replied with an unqualified positive response.

Yeah, I definitely think, you know, [my university] focuses very much on preparing workers for the harvest ... it very much helped prepare me. ... There was ... two full days of classes ... where they just talked about small church. You know, you're going to have to be the plumber, ... that we need to have the mindset of understanding that, especially in a rural community, a lot of times that's blue collar, which means that being hands-on is one of the best ways to earn respect and to build relations. ... And so, there was a whole discussion on that and what it takes kind of to be a jack-of-all-trades or to have a willingness to have a different pace. You know, you have to be rubbing shoulders in the country, you can't just show up and preach a good sermon or have all these

intellectual ideas and not be able to contextualize and not be able to really put it into their terms. And so, it definitely prepared [me]. ... I took some extra courses that weren't required.

The unique element of his training was the dedicated class time spent discussing the distinctives of small church ministry, the rural mindset and size dynamics. However, it is noteworthy that he took some of these classes as elective courses and only two days of instruction were devoted to small church topics. Theological institutions might offer classes that cover ministry in the small church, but students may not be taking them.

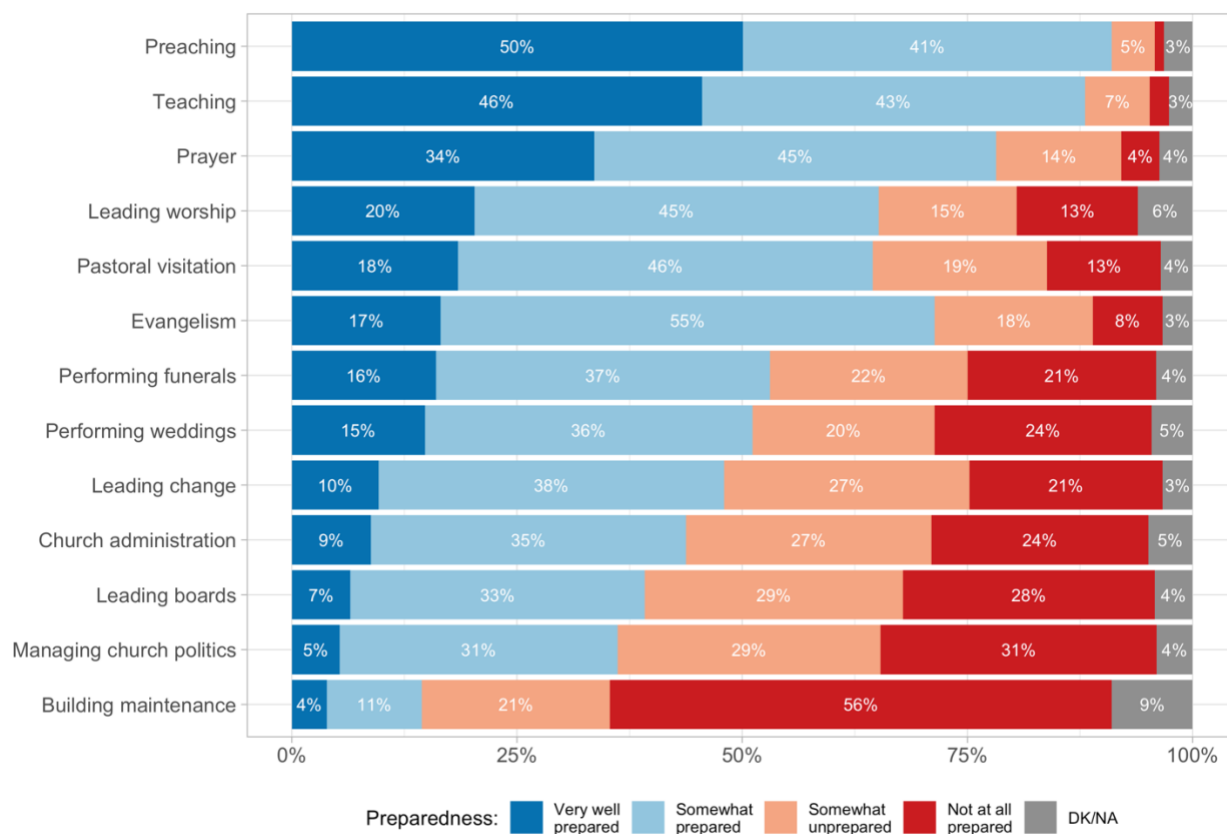
Figure 2.17 below shows how well survey respondents said they were prepared for small church ministry by their formal theological education. The figure has been sorted from the most prepared on top to the least prepared at the bottom. Generally speaking, pastors felt best prepared for tasks requiring literate or academic competencies such as preaching and teaching. These are followed in terms of preparedness by a group of tasks commonly performed outside regular worship services such as pastoral visitation, evangelism, funerals and weddings. Pastors said they were least-well prepared for building maintenance, managing church politics, leading boards and church administration.

Our question was about how well *formal theological education* prepared pastors for these tasks, and reasonable people could hold different opinions as to whether Bible colleges and seminaries are the proper place to teach these competencies. What is clear, however, is that small church pastors need these competencies, so if they are not going to be taught as part of formal theological education, where should they be taught?

The responses in figure 2.17 use a preparedness Likert scale.⁷⁴ The blues indicate more prepared, and the reds indicate less prepared. Canadians are a polite people who are often reticent to be seen as judgmental or harsh. Interpretively speaking, it is likely that respondents said they were “very well prepared” if they truly believed they received a good education and “somewhat prepared” if their education touched on the topic but was otherwise unremarkable or unhelpful. If figure 2.17 was to be interpreted with this lens, then the dark blue would represent the percent who truly felt they were given a good grounding by their theological education.

⁷⁴ A Likert scale is a rating system used on surveys to measure people opinion. Usually, respondents are presented with five to seven responses they can choose from to answer a question.

Figure 2.17 How well theological education prepared respondents for select tasks, percent



Source: CESCS 2022, N pastors = 569.

2.3.6 Experiential and integrated learning

A few pastors were in ministry for several years before pursuing formal theological education. All these cases were found among New Canadian and Indigenous pastors who ministered in Quebec. Considering this, we observed:

- Economic and social barriers may have prevented these pastors from pursuing theological education from the outset.
- Knowing the language and culture of their communities likely qualified them to minister before they received formal academic qualifications.
- Like the trends with women, many did not start with the intentions to become a pastor but serving in a church setting developed into a pastoral position.

These minority pastors tended to have a different perspective on learning and education because they either had an established ministry context to apply their studies, or enough ministry experience to supplement what other pastors found lacking in their pastoral education. Most of them conveyed a preparedness for ministry that exceeded their established, anglophone counterparts. One pastor described it like this:

Quand t'arrives sur le terrain c'est une réalité qui est assez différente des études. C'est pas parce que t'as fait des études que ... nécessairement que toi t'es un bon pasteur, puis je pense que tu peux être un bon pasteur sans avoir nécessairement fait de grandes études ... c'est l'expérience qui m'a formé, les douze ans de comme pasteur jeunesse à voir le fonctionnement d'une église. (New Canadian)

Translation: When you arrive on the ground it is a reality which is quite different from studies. It's not because you have studied that ... necessarily you are a good pastor, I think you can be a good pastor without necessarily having had a great education ... it's the experience that formed me, the twelve years as a youth pastor seeing the functioning of a church.

During the rest of his interview, this pastor made a distinction between theological and pastoral education. Theological institutions seemed to have failed him on the pastoral side but not the theological side. Because he had twelve years of experience prior to his education, however, he felt the deficiency less acutely.

An Indigenous pastor described a similar path to ministry: "I worked as a youth pastor for seventeen years. And thereafter, I went back to school – to seminary to get my degree and then help pastor a church in Ontario." This was the same pastor who was advised to get a business and accounting degree before going into pastoral ministry. His secular education, as well as his experience, likely contributed to his sense of preparedness for ministry.

Another New Canadian pastor said you can never be fully formed or prepared for ministry because the world and ministry are always changing. This influenced his approach to pursue formal training.

J'ai pas fait une école théologique pendant deux ans ou trois ans à temps plein ... ça m'a pris presque je pense huit à dix ans avant de finir ma formation, mais j'ai pu le mettre en pratique aussi directement aussi sur mon travail dans le ministère, donc ça a été vraiment quelque chose de très bénéfique. ... [L]es pasteurs ont besoin ... de continuer à s'ouvrir par rapport à des nouvelles façons de vivre, de faire l'église, de vivre l'église, de changements aussi par rapport à la communauté, à la population, aux croyances qui se passent ici même au Canada ou dans le monde séculier. (New Canadian)

Translation: I didn't go to theological school for two years or three years full-time ... it took me almost, I think, eight to ten years before I finished my training, but I was able to put it into practice right away, also on my work in the ministry, so that was really a very beneficial thing. ... [P]astors need ... to continue to open up to new ways of living, of doing church, of living the church, to changes also in relation to the community, the population, beliefs that take place right here in Canada or in the secular world.

For him, formal theological education was most beneficial as something that happened alongside experiential pastoral education. But his observation about continued education also touched on the depreciation of the value of education over time. In North America, we tend to

think in terms of credentials, but the rapid change in technology and society in general degrades the value of credentials faster than in the past. We quoted a pastor earlier who said, “Seminary did not prepare me for ... all the technical and technological aspects of ministry,” however, technological training from a decade ago would likely be obsolete for her ministry now.

We agree that there are core competencies in theological education, but we see a need for a better model for pastoral training. The overall tone from our interviews, and the data from our survey, suggest three or four years of training is insufficient for pastors to keep up with the nature of ministry in a rapidly changing world and to give them adequate experiential application. Institutions are likely impeded by the requirements of operating within an accredited framework and there are limits to self-taught, supplementary education.

Students are further impeded by the financial cost of attending residential, accredited programs. A New Canadian pastor shared that he wanted to see theological training promoted more locally and affordably. We think denominations can step into the void by securing practical ministry education for pastors before they enter solo pastorates. This could be accomplished through opportunities for continued education and micro-credentialing⁷⁵, and by providing mentoring.

2.3.7 Mentorship

A few of our respondents said they would value a facilitated apprenticeship or mentorship model for preparing them and walking them through pastoral ministry.

I'm still struggling with ... how to lead people and guide people effectively. ... I still feel like somehow, we're missing the boat ... **I almost think more of an apprenticeship approach would be better. ... I can read a book, but I'm finding as I get older that I've read a lot of books and they don't help you as much as you wish they would ... But to have someone that's, like, been there and done that ... if somebody learned how to do things, man, you know, to have, you know, be able to spend a few months with someone and to learn from them, gosh, that would be worth its weight in gold.**

This pastor was trained as an electrician and wanted to see a trades apprenticeship translated to the ministry context. He said he was at a disadvantage because “it's not like I could leave my church, really ... all churches need ... something where pastors didn't have to leave their congregations but could still get access to something like [apprenticeship].” He speaks to the issue of geography and highlights, again, the isolated nature of rural ministry. Not only do rural,

⁷⁵ Sean Elliot, from CEWIL Canada is a credentialed PAOC pastor working with colleges and universities on implementing co-operative education and work-integrated learning strategies. He says there is major shift underway in higher education in Canada away from time-based education (i.e., credit hours) to competency-based education. This is manifesting itself in the inclusion of “micro-credentials” as part of degree programs. Sean explains the shift in this video <https://youtu.be/tXT4Uh0BPPE> at the sixteen-minute mark.

solo pastorates miss out on collegial ministry but also access to resources and support because colleges and seminaries tend to be situated near a populous base (see section 4 Networks):

I've tried really hard to ... identify a few other pastors at churches that I'm in relationship with that are just a little further down the road than we are. ... [N]ot to look to the pastor of a church of 5,000 people or 10,000 people because what they do and what I do, while it's the same job title, the job description is wildly different. **[B]ut if I can find somebody who has a church of 250 or 300 or, you know, somebody who's not that much further down the road that I can go to and ask questions and just sort of say, "Hey, how do you handle this?" or "What do you do with that?" as we grow, or as we develop, or as new challenges are posed and those kinds of things. To be able to look for somebody to be able to ask questions of.**

The two pastors quoted above said they entered pastoral ministry without knowing how to perform a wedding or a funeral. There is a need for pastoral education and pastors want it mediated through another person who has experience in ministry. One pastor described how working alongside a mentor gave him confidence to take on his own pastorate.

The person I worked with was sort of like a mentor to me. Older, and he had more experience in the church and also as an evangelist. So, I worked with him and he kind of taught me how I should pastor. And, you know, I felt very comfortable. So, when I came home, I had full confidence in myself. I would be able to carry on if the day came, which it did about 3.5 years ago.

Another pastor said the risks of being in a pastoral role without accountability and support are too great. She believes there is value in having someone in your life who listens and asks good questions.

Being in a pastoral role – it seems, just from stories and stuff [it] can be quite a precarious situation. And so, I think it's deeply valuable [to] be in some kind of a relationship with some kind of mentor or somebody where you're sharing the story of your life or whatever that you're struggling with, and someone is asking good questions, so you pay attention to how God is at work in your life and helping you see when you're not seeing.

Considering the breadth of those who felt inadequately prepared for ministry and the successes of those who came to ministry with previous experience and mentored guidance, the benefit of a mentor and experiential learning is invaluable to small church pastors. We think theological training institutions can restructure their programs to offer more experiential and pastoral learning, but denominations are also uniquely positioned to provide supplemental pastoral education for their pastors.

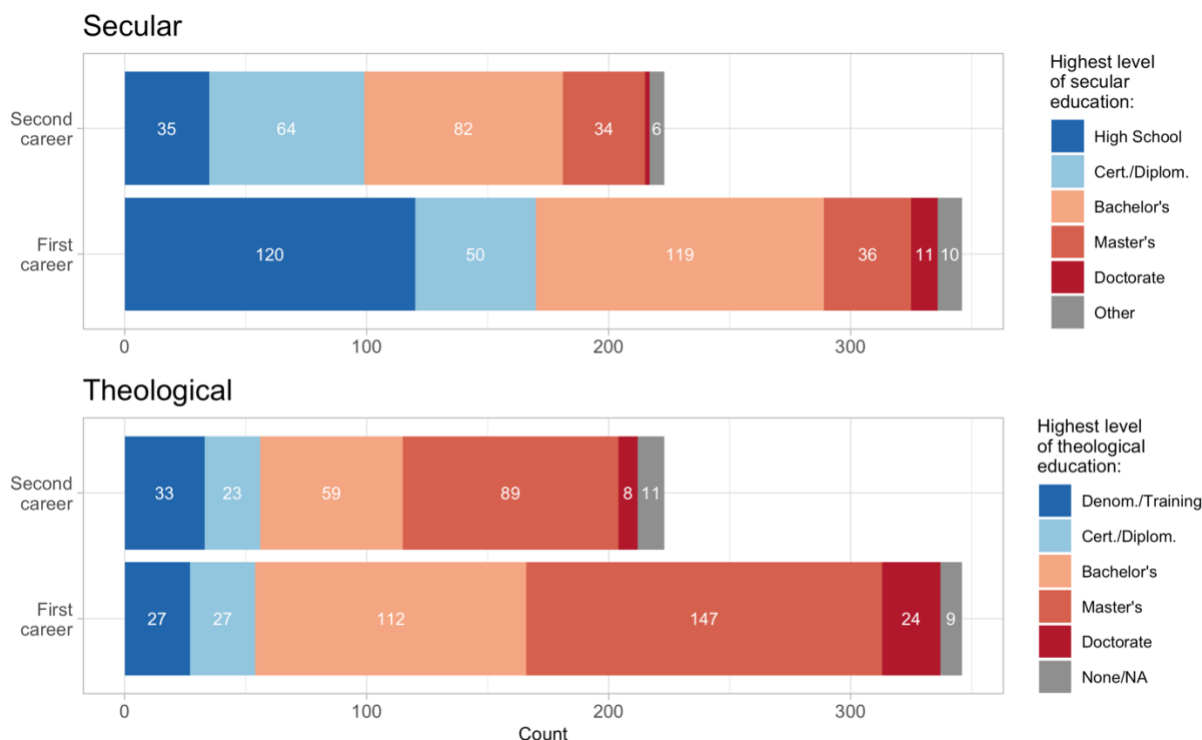
2.3.8 Second career and non-degree tracks

For two-fifths of survey respondents, pastoral ministry was a second career. Figure 2.18 below shows the highest level of formal secular and theological education for those entering pastoral ministry as a first or second career. Those entering pastoral ministry as a first career were more likely to end their secular education after high school and slightly more likely to attain advanced-level theological degrees.

Non-degree tracks overlapped with those who trained online and were common among those who did not have pastoral aspirations as a young adult or for those who pursued ministry as a second career.

- I was never anticipating being a pastor, so my pathway to pastoral ministry wasn't through the traditional seminary ... my seminary training has been more in part, ... so, I don't have a MDiv, a traditional pastoral pathway, but picked up most of my classes without getting a degree.
- I was [in] a cohort of the business learning program [at my seminary]. And yeah, we only had to attend [for] a couple of weeks, a couple of times a year and, like, in-person to meet ordination requirements. ... And so, that took five years because it was distance learning, and I did my hours of work within this congregation at the time. So, I think we made it something like 800 or 900 hours over the course of five years.
- [I] never, ever thought I would ever become a pastor. Was in banking all my life ... but we had a pastor at the church ... and she had obviously recognized something in me ... she set me on the track of "Hey, we have this second career option, and I think you should explore it" So, I actually started to explore [and the denomination] has a local license, which turns into a district license. And while you're studying, then you can become fully ordained as long as you meet the criteria. They have online classes that you can take.

Figure 2.18 Highest level of secular and theological education by whether ministry was entered as a first or second career, counts



Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569. N first career = 346. N second career = 223.

Conclusion

Clearly the small church pastors we interviewed and surveyed felt their ministry preparation was inadequate, especially their formal theological education. Theological institutions tend to prepare pastors to be specialists, concentrating on specific areas of ministry (i.e., preaching, youth, evangelism, etc.) which, in reality, is preparing pastors for specialized roles in large church ministry. Too often pastors told us they were learning by trial and error, a situation considered unacceptable in other professions such as medicine or law. Bible colleges and seminaries need to develop small church ministry tracks that include training for the competencies small church pastors need. If Bible colleges and seminaries cannot or will not teach these, then other means of ministry preparation need to be developed by denominations and other ministries that support small churches and small church pastors.

2.4 Role

The uniqueness of the small church pastorate is the range of descriptions and duties that fall under the job title. Often, the role of a pastor is considered one that is dedicated to preaching and visitation. Most small church pastors would tell you this is a specialist, large church conception of the pastoral role. Small church pastors describe their roles as generalists because

a large portion of their portfolio includes a wide range of non-pastoral duties, managing a second job or pastoring multiple congregations.

Pastoring as a generalist is not a compromise on quality or care. Most patients are treated competently by their family doctor, a general practitioner, even though that doctor also oversees hiring decisions and inventory. In fact, patients benefit from having a practitioner who is familiar with their medical history and who they have a longstanding relationship with. In the same way, congregants receive meaningful and personal care from their generalist pastor. This next section explores the structures and duties of small church pastor roles and how a proper fit between a pastor and her role can promote pastoral and congregational wellbeing.

2.4.1 Structure

Approximately three-quarters of pastors we interviewed were in full-time, fully-funded pastoral roles, with a mix of solo- and multi-staff appointments. Two pastors were part-time: one shared a full-time role with a spouse, and the other willingly restructured to accommodate budget cuts knowing retirement was imminent. Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents were senior, lead or solo pastors, nine percent another kind of pastor, and two percent were lay leaders.

To evaluate the structure of small church staffing complements, we asked survey respondents to indicate, by ranges, the number of their congregation's pastoral and non-pastoral staff, according to whether those positions were paid or volunteer. Table 2.3 below presents the results. The most common staffing structure in our survey sample, indicated in red, was the full-time, solo pastor, accounting for just over one-quarter of the pastors surveyed. The rarer the staffing complement, the "cooler" the cells appear in colour to reflect fewer aggregated responses. Eleven percent of pastors, the next most common staffing structure, had one part-time, non-pastoral staff member, likely someone overseeing administrative or custodial duties. The next most common complement, at eight percent, was an additional, non-pastoral staff person. This suggests, in small churches, non-pastoral tasks tend to be offset by additional staff before pastoral tasks. This means pastors still work as generalists but, as will be discussed in more detail later in this section, these additional non-pastoral staff allow pastors to spend more time working within their competencies and strengths, an important part of ensuring pastoral wellbeing and a sense of success.

Table 2.3 Paid staffing complements, pastoral and non-pastoral staff, full- and part-time, counts and percent

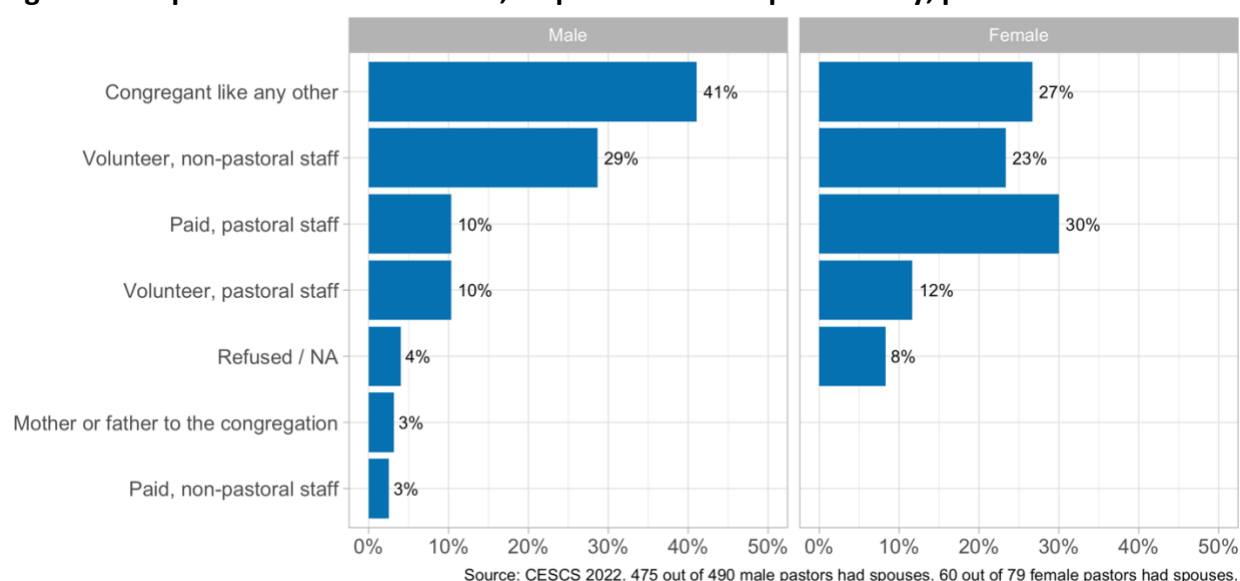
Pastoral staff		Non-pastoral staff		Count	Percent
Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time		
0 FT	0 PT	0 FT	0 PT	36	6
			1 PT	3	1
			2+ PT	1	0
	1 PT	0 FT	0 PT	38	7
			1 PT	11	2
			2+ PT	5	1
		1 FT	0 PT	1	0
		2+ FT	0 PT	1	0
	2+ PT	0 FT	0 PT	14	2
1 FT	0 PT	0 FT	1 PT	5	1
			2+ PT	3	1
			0 PT	3	1
		1 FT	0 PT	10	2
			1 PT	3	1
			2+ PT	2	0
	1 PT	0 FT	0 PT	2	0
			2+ PT	1	0
			0 PT	18	3
		1 FT	1 PT	16	3
			2+ PT	13	2
			0 PT	3	1
	2+ PT	0 FT	0 PT	1	0
			2+ PT	2	0
			1 PT	8	1
2+ FT	0 PT	0 FT	2+ PT	3	1
			0 PT	1	0
			2+ PT	2	0
		1 FT	0 PT	25	4
			1 PT	17	3
			2+ PT	18	3
	1 PT	0 FT	0 PT	5	1
			1 PT	2	0
			2+ PT	2	0
		1 FT	0 PT	6	1
			1 PT	10	2
			2+ PT	4	1
	2+ PT	0 FT	0 PT	5	1
			1 PT	6	1
			2+ PT	4	1
	2+ PT	0 FT	0 PT	2	0
			1 PT	2	0
			2+ PT	1	0
		1 FT	0 PT	1	0
			1 PT	1	0
			2+ PT	1	0
	2+ PT	0 FT	0 PT	1	0
			2+ PT	1	0
			1 FT	1	0
	2+ PT	0 FT	2+ PT	2	0
			1 FT	1	0
			2+ FT	2	0

2.4.1.1 Spousal Role

Ninety-seven percent and seventy-six percent of male and female survey respondents, respectively, had spouses (see figure 2.7). In our interviews with pastors, we heard about different roles their spouses played in their congregations. In some cases, the spouse served as an active, but voluntary, ministry partner. Other times, the spouse was also an ordained minister and served as a paid, co-pastor. Expectations and roles for pastors' spouses are described in greater detail in section 2.5.3.

We asked survey respondents to tell us what role their spouses played in their local church. Figure 2.19 below shows the responses for those with spouses by respondent gender.

Figure 2.19 Spousal role in the church, respondents with spouses only, percent



Considering just those survey respondents with spouses, we can see the following:

- Twenty percent of males and forty-two percent of females were part of a pastoral couple having their spouse on staff in either a paid or volunteer *pastoral* position.
- Thirty-two percent of males and twenty-three percent of females said their spouses worked at the church in either paid or volunteer *non-pastoral* roles.
- Thirteen percent of males and thirty percent of females said their spouses worked at the church in *paid roles*.
- Thirty-nine percent males and twenty-three percent of females said their spouses worked at their church, on-staff in *volunteer roles*.
- Fifty-two percent of males and sixty-five percent of females said their spouses worked in *either paid or volunteer staff positions* at their church.

Clearly many of the additional staffing roles at small churches outlined in table 2.3 above are being filled by the pastor's spouse. Where this is the case, despite there being additional staff persons, the pastoral burden is still being carried by the pastoral family, if not solely by the pastor respondent.

The need to maintain confidentiality is one of the burdens of pastoral ministry that is particularly hard on solo pastors who do not have other staff to discuss ministry issues with. When the pastor's spouse is on staff, this may provide the pastor with the freedom to process ministry issues with his or her spouse that they would not otherwise be able to.

2.4.1.2 Bivocational

Five pastors we interviewed were in bivocational⁷⁶ roles, of which, three were New Canadians in Quebec. One of these pastors said he was constrained to bivocational ministry because of the nature of the immigrant, and often student, population he served.

[I]l est toujours difficile d'avoir une église qui peut prendre en charge un pasteur à 100 pourcent ... parce qu'on fait affaire à des immigrants qui viennent et qui n'ont pas des moyens – et le temps qu'ils s'établissent souvent aussi c'est des étudiants.

Translation: It is always difficult to have a church that can support a pastor 100 percent ... because we are dealing with immigrants who come and who do not have the [financial] means – and the times that they are established they are often students.

Because he had a strong sense of calling to a community that could not support a full-time pastor, he preferred to see himself primarily as a pastor, and not equally called to both roles he occupied. He considered his second job merely a provision to subsidize finances. But while he viewed his main call and priority to the church, the structure of his role worked out to be thirty-five hours per week in secular work with twenty hours dedicated to pastoring.

Another bivocational, New Canadian pastor said he often felt overwhelmed balancing his two roles. Nevertheless, he expressed thankfulness that he was not at the church full-time.

[J]e pourrais pas en tout cas, pas en ce moment, être à 100 pourcent à l'église et je veux pas être à 100 pourcent, c'est pour ça que j'ai toujours – des fois limité le développement, parce que je voulais pas prendre toute la responsabilité de tout faire, alors j'ai besoin un peu de cet équilibre.

⁷⁶ The research team who released The Canadian Multivocational Ministry Project Research Report opted to use the term “multivocational” as a better reflection of what they learned from their sample. We are using “bivocational” for the purposes of this report simply because it was the term pastors in our sample used. We recommend and defer to the Canadian Multivocational Ministry Project Research Report for more perspectives on clergy in tentmaking ministry. James W. Watson et al., “Canadian Multivocational Ministry Project: Research Report,” 2020, <https://www.canadianmultivocationalministry.ca/master-report>.

Translation: I could not in any way, not at the moment, be 100 percent at church and I don't want to be at 100 percent, that's why I always – sometimes limited the development because I didn't want to take all the responsibility of doing everything, so I need a bit of that balance.

This pastor communicated a reticence, even an intentional delay, in entering full-time pastoring because he did not want the responsibility of “doing everything.” Remaining part-time likely kept the congregation active and engaged in the work of ministry they might have otherwise expected him to shoulder alone if he were full-time. But he worried that straddling the two worlds might not bode well for the church long-term as they were “*pas dans une habitude ... de payer le pasteur.*” [“not in the habit ... of paying a pastor.”] If the church comes to a place where a full-time pastor is needed, they might not be able to support one financially.

Both pastors compensated for different weaknesses in their congregation through bivocational work. For the first pastor, bivocational ministry was a long-term answer for a low-income, transient community and took the financial pressure off the pastor and congregation. But for the second pastor, bivocational work was a double-edged sword that kept a congregation involved but absolved them of the responsibility to provide for their pastor.

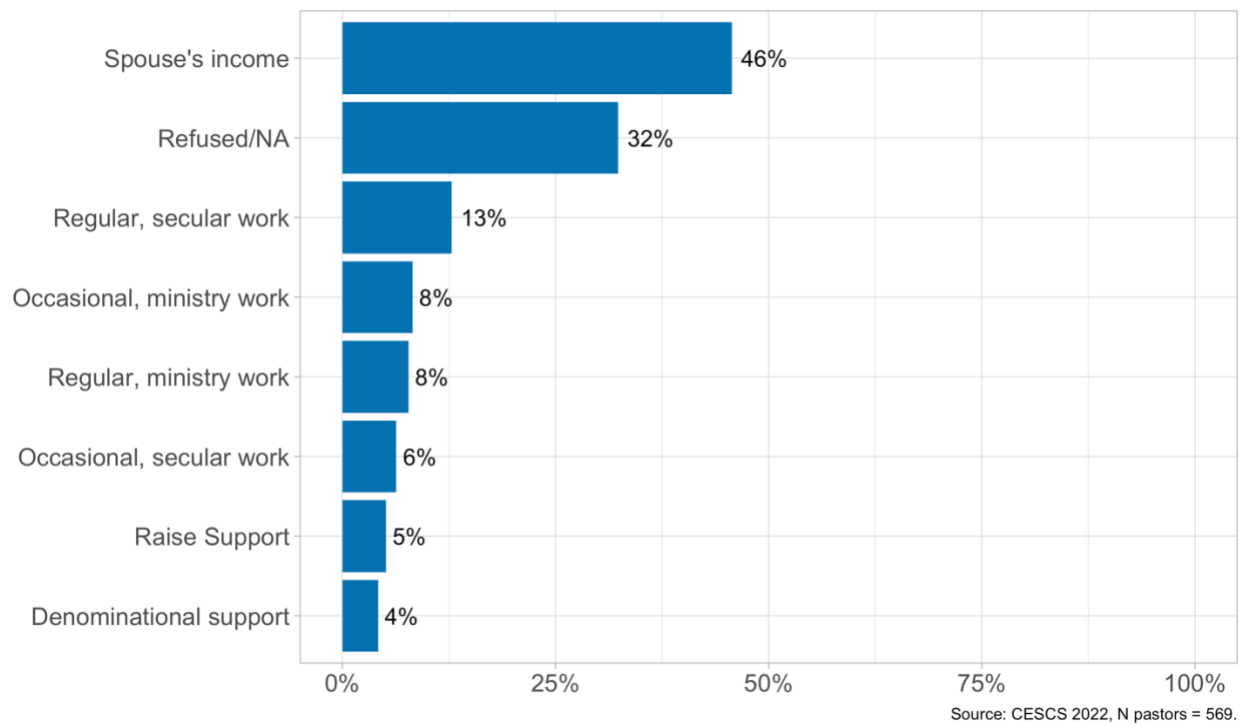
Other pastors said they had been bivocational at one time because they were slowly making a career change or because they were church planting. One pastor said he had longstanding pastoral aspirations but worked bivocationally or in lay leadership in many churches before landing a full-time role in his present church. He said he still maintains his certification as a tradesman.

Given the prominence of bivocational pastors in the interviews, we asked survey respondents about the sources of income *for their families* outside of what they earned from their principal pastoral role. Respondents were provided with additional income options that appear on the vertical axis of figure 2.20 below.

Only some of these options represented additional work for the pastor. We were particularly interested in the frequency (occasional or regular) of additional work and its type (ministry or secular).

Only thirty-two percent of pastors did not indicate some source of additional income. Forty-six percent said their spouse's income supplemented their family's income. Although fifteen percent of respondents, with spouses, said their spouses worked in paid positions at their church, this would still leave at least a third of respondents with household incomes that are supplemented by spouses who derive that income from somewhere other than the church. This is important because in many cases pastors and their family would not be able to afford to stay in their pastoral position and provide for their family if the spouse was not able to supplement their income. In this sense, pastoral families are often indirectly and disproportionately contributing to the financial viability of the congregations they are a part of and serve.

Figure 2.20 Pastoral families' sources of income besides the pastoral salary, percent



2.4.1.2 Multi-point charge

Three pastors we interviewed and six percent of pastors surveyed, were responsible for more than one congregation. These arrangements worked out in different ways.

[M]y current congregation ... it's a two-point church. Years before I got here, they took over a more small church ... which is forty-one kilometres away. Before COVID, I did two services every Sunday morning, forty-one kilometres apart.

On paper, they were the same church in two locations who shared pastoral staff, but both churches had different names, different congregations and different communities. The two-point church partnership came out of an agreement with an established, 120-year-old church (church A) and a “kind of an orphan church that’s been passed around” (church B), a reference to its connection with two different denominations before joining the Baptist denomination of church A. While the longstanding church A functioned as a home-base, the senior pastor, or his associate, would go to the town where church B was located, once every two weeks, to walk around and conduct some ministry activities so that they had a recognized presence in the other community.

Campuses are different in that they share more identity features, but usually have a dedicated staff for each location. One pastor was part of a more formal multi-campus model, but the pandemic prompted the campuses to pursue independence from one another.

We're a two-campus – we were a two-campus church ... that has now decided to become two independent churches ... we were two campuses in two different cities about twenty-five minutes apart, and as the churches and the campuses grew, they grew more independent.

Despite having identity and administration in common as campus churches, it was agreeable for both parties to pursue independence (especially during the pandemic) because of the staff and community dynamics that were established as separate entities. In the previous case, many identity features were different, but the churches were forced to share the load of one pastor to ensure survival in their respective communities.

If the church is growing and has an increase in localized interest, small congregations are referred to as “sites” or “campuses.” This evokes language used in the academy, perhaps analogous to the way a university aspires to universal knowledge, a campus church is aspiring to universal or self-sufficiency in ministry. We noticed that when a congregation is in decline, and the pastor is accumulating congregations, it’s described as a “multi-point charge.”

A rural pastor described a unique multi-point charge situation in which the pastor served five communities in three towns with two church buildings, under the identity of one congregation. The emphasis on being one congregation was the unique aspect of this church. Rather than the pastor commuting between locations, the entire service takes place in one town or another, and the congregation is expected to travel to the different locations to participate in the worship services. The pastor wondered how long the arrangement would continue, but added, “it’s been going on for about twenty years.”

It’s likely the community identities of these three churches are very similar, and, having sustained this pattern for twenty years, it is now a piece of their *congregational covenant* to continue meeting in different towns and using the second building.

2.4.2 Duties

We asked pastors to describe a typical week of ministry. The answers usually involved the following five areas:

- sermon preparation
- administration
- visitation
- discipleship
- non-pastoral duties (cleaning, lawncare, accounting, etc.)

2.4.2.1 Sermon preparation

Every pastor dedicated some portion of time to sermon preparation, but the amount of time varied between pastors. In our interviews with small church ministry experts, they frequently observed that small church pastors should not spend too much time in the office and show the congregation that “he isn’t just a book worm.” We noticed pastors who dedicated two or more days to sermon preparation were either part of multi-staff teams, from a Reformed tradition, or saved the actual writing time for the weekend.

Most solo pastors sprinkled preparation time and writing throughout their week, sometimes dedicating a day or half-day to the task. Many pastors approached sermon preparation as a best-laid plan, acknowledging that the time was prone to disruption or that other pressing things had to be done.

- I would hope that I would be able to study and prepare for any kind of teaching situations, and I'd like to do that until at least noon hour. Unfortunately, that doesn't always work out that way.
- Thursdays now is my sermon prep day because Fridays I have to get the PowerPoint all put together and stuff like that.
- So, most of the week, like, I kind of take an approach with my sermon prep. I try to start early in the week, but I will say I generally find things don't come together for me totally until Friday. So, it's a bit more heavy-ended with the sermon prep on Friday, probably, and making sure everybody – everything's ready for our service on Sunday.

The last two quotes suggest that small church pastors are often responsible for more than just the sermon on Sunday mornings, so their Sunday preparation encapsulates a wider range of tasks than merely completing the sermon.

2.4.2.2 Administration

Administration consumed a large part of pastors’ descriptions of their weekly duties. These included:

- setting agendas for meetings – committees, boards, staff, etc.
- communication with denomination/congregation/community/partnering organizations
- planning hospital visits or scheduling meetings with individuals
- creating church newsletters and making PowerPoint presentations
- making website updates, social media posts, uploading sermons
- phoning internet and service providers
- managing payroll and other staff.

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Administrative duties were common to all pastors, and there was a sense across the board that a good portion of time was spent on emails: *“Il y a toujours des courriels à envoyer”* [“There are always emails to send.”]

Pastors in multi-staff contexts generally spent more time preparing for, and participating in, meetings than those in solo contexts. A pastor who had moved into a small, multi-staff context from a solo context resented all the meetings he had to attend. Preferring relational and organic ministry, the structure of committees in his new church felt stifling.

I'm in right now is a very highly structured church. **So, there's lots of meetings. So, I, yeah, as a pastor, I sit on six committees, and it drives me crazy** ... I will not miss it when it's over. Anyhow, so, probably two nights a week we're in some kind of a meeting.

A rural, solo pastor commented on having to “call Telus or ... to call the security company,” as if running the church was like running another home. Another pastor mentioned the management of her relationship with her denomination and the responsibility for the groundskeeping of the local cemetery: “Making calls to head office about something or about the [cemetery] – like, you know, there's all that little stuff.”

Most administrative duties looked similar across denominations and theological traditions, but Salvation Army officers tended to do more administration work than typical pastors. The pastor we interviewed oversaw not only the church but the Salvation Army Thrift Store and other social services they provide. They also oversaw several employees.

[We] have a thrift store which is across the road, so that's a separate building. We're kind of – we oversee all of that, but we do have a manager there and some staff: a janitor, an admin assistant, a community family services coordinator, and we also have a [social services] coordinator. ... **It's like a CEO some days.**

Based on the size of the church alone, the administrative burden is disproportionate compared to pastors of churches with similar attendance, but many Salvations Army postings are more complex organizations. The managerial burden included “payroll ... staffing issues ... lots of meetings [and] community relations partnerships.” What is often missed is that these different kinds of ministries also have different legal, tax and other reporting needs.

2.4.2.3 Visitation & discipleship

Visitation, discipleship and counselling were the main people-oriented activities that pastors mentioned as part of their weekly schedule. Many viewed visitation and discipleship as the bread and butter of being a small church pastor, where relationships and intimacy are established and trust is forged.

Respondent: [P]eople are very cautious to give trust. You have to earn that.

Interviewer: Mhmm. And how is that done?

Respondent: Very slowly. One cup of coffee at a time.

Visitation and counselling were less regular, needing to be scheduled in advance, so they required more administrative effort on the part of pastors as well as transportation time. The transportation burden was felt acutely by one Toronto pastor who said:

I would always perceive a visitation as having taken place when I actually meet the person face-to-face, which sometimes takes quite a bit of effort to set up and organize and try to time when it's suitable for the person ... [and] because we live in Toronto, there's – to get, you know, from one place to the other place in the city is often quite cumbersome.

The unique aspect about visitation is that it happens away from the office and could happen in a wide range of locations. Some pastors mentioned visiting a congregant's home, the hospital or even the police station. An Indigenous pastor said visitation was a large part of their vision as church leadership, and this involved visiting congregants all over the community. A rural pastor said that visitation in farm country sometimes looked like joining congregants in the fields.

[P]re-COVID, probably involved ... **at least two or three visits a week to various different families around the church just, especially during harvest time or seeding, just trying to get into their tractors while they're driving around or other farm equipment. Doing little visits to them, to the properties.**

One pastor communicated a sense of privilege in having a personal relationship with each member of the congregation.

I can present to the congregation a pastor who knows them and knows their family and knows about them. And so, that to me is the opportunity that I'm afforded as a smaller church pastor, is that I can know my congregation in a way that is maybe a little bit uncommon the larger your church gets.

Another pastor demonstrated this kind of familiarity of her congregation by sharing the method of communication she used to reach out to her congregants during the pandemic.

So, some people like a text message, some people like an email, some people like a phone call. So, I try and work my way through our list of attendees each – I say six weeks. **It takes me through the month, you know. So, but, in every six weeks, I would have touched everybody that's on our list.**

Visitation was an activity that pastors pursued with the entire congregation. Pastors described developing relationships, building trust and ministering on a personal level, as the purpose of visitation. Discipleship was usually more regular and intentionally spiritual in nature and often extended to a smaller group of individuals in the church.

- Some days, I'll be meeting one-on-one with different men to disciple them in the word, to pray with them, to work through different counselling issues.
- I will disciple people and I will encourage others to disciple people as well ... what I do is I make sure that it is twice the size of my own ministry, and I will set aside a day or two days to disciple individuals ... there will be two or three people I'm discipling at the same time ... Sometimes I disciple them once every two weeks, or sometimes once a week.
- I would have – usually, one Bible study a week and probably a discipleship one-on-one training thing with at least one individual.

The training nature of discipleship suggests that pastors set spiritual or leadership goals for a few congregants and try to invest deeply in people, so that they will invest deeply into the church. A few pastors offered this invested spiritual development to leaders and elders with the goal of raising them up to share their pastoral burden. Many pastors who pursued discipleship relationships with leaders in their church described an initial reluctance and slow progress in implementing the changes. Pastors persevered in offering these directed trainings believing they would be worth the invested time.

2.4.2.4 Non-pastoral duties

As mentioned earlier, small church pastors are often referred to as generalists, meaning their duties not only include what their specialized training prepares them for but duties for which their training did not. One pastor described pastoral success in terms of being able to function well as a generalist.

You really need to be a generalist rather than a specialist. There really needs to be an ability to kind of have a bit of a handle on a lot of different things. You may, you know, the old adage, you know, "Good at a lot of things, but not an expert at anything." Or a similar saying like that, "Jack-of-all-trades, but master of none." You know, you have to – you really need to preach well, but you also need to be a good counsellor. You need [to] feed people. You may need to clean the toilet from time to time. ... I think that generalist-versus-specialist thing has served me well in being successful and not become, um, discouraged or drawn down by the multitude of demands on my day.

A few other pastors mentioned the same kinds of non-pastoral responsibilities. These weren't always described as regular duties, but pastors expressed the need to be willing to take them on.

- I'm not a plumber or a maintenance person, but I can manage to clean the church.
- The pastor's role has to be many different roles. **You know, not only the senior pastor but sometimes he has to be the janitor or the maintenance or, you know, because again, you've got a small church, you've got a core of people that do all the work.**
- [T]he pastor has to be involved in all the aspects of the ministry and all the nitty gritty stuff, even cleaning toilets or whatever ... kind of things have to be done.

2.4.3 Fit

Matt Bloom, an Associate Professor at the University of Notre Dame, studies wellbeing in the workplace, and researched clergy members in particular. Bloom discovered that a good “fit” between pastor and ministry context produces a better sense of personal and professional satisfaction.⁷⁷ Wanda Malcolm and the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe studied clergy wellbeing in the Canadian context. She also found ministry stressors and satisfiers have respective negative and positive effects on a pastor’s sense of accomplishment and wellbeing.⁷⁸ That means when pastors have a sense of ministry success and do what they feel good at, they are less stressed and less at risk for burnout.

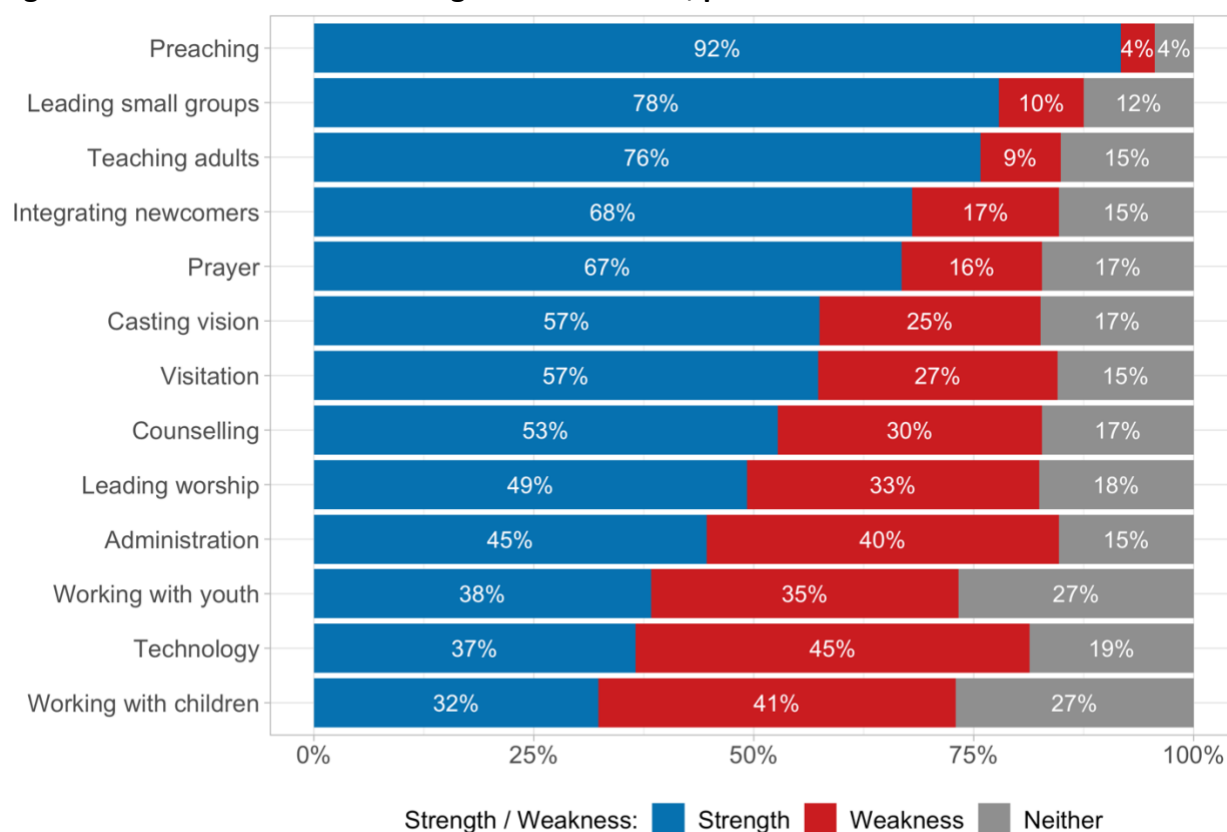
One area in which Bloom says pastors can flourish is when they find alignment between their pastoral duties and personal competencies. According to the duties listed in the previous section, this means pastors must be willing and able to function as generalists and approach ministry in a highly relational way.

In the survey, we gave pastors a list of tasks and asked them if each was an area of strength or weakness for them. Responses are graphed in figure 2.21 below.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 8-9.

⁷⁸ Wanda M. Malcolm, Karen L. Coetzee, and Elizabeth A. Fisher, “Measuring Ministry-Specific Stress and Satisfaction: The Psychometric Properties of the Positive and Negative Aspects Inventories,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 47, no. 4 (December 2019): 313–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091647119837018>.

Figure 2.21 Pastors' areas of strength and weakness, percent



Source: CESCS 2022, N pastors = 569.

Pastors' top four strengths were preaching, leading small groups, teaching adults and integrating newcomers. The weaknesses they cited were working with children, technology, working with youth and administration. Interestingly, aside from technology, the bottom categories they listed as weaknesses are areas that pastors would likely specialize in at a larger church.

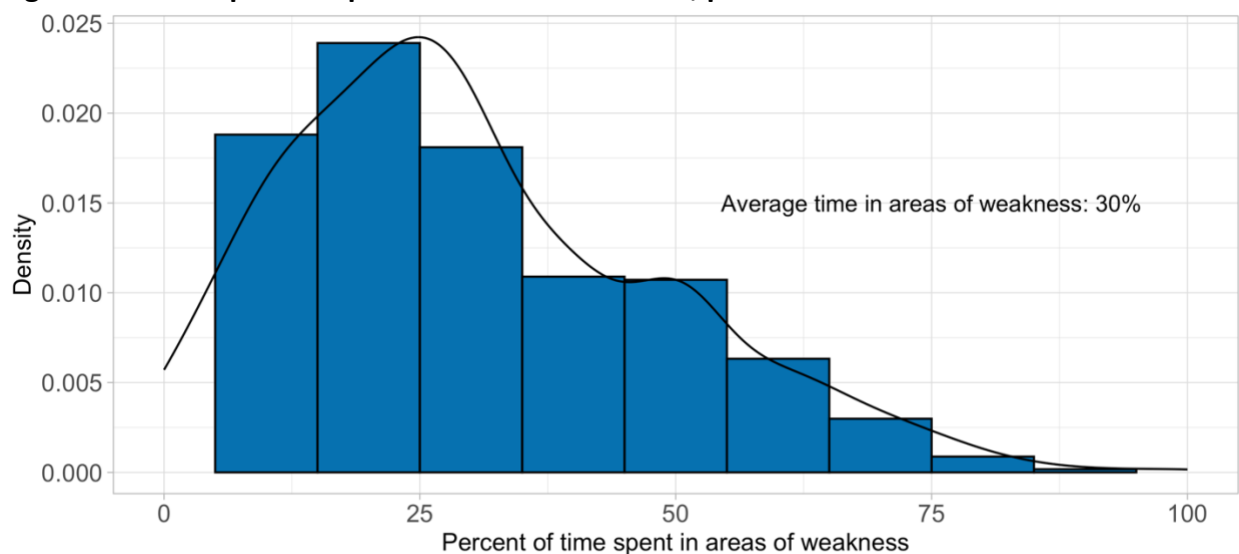
Strengths and weaknesses are not just a reflection of abilities but can indicate level of training or preference. Ninety-two percent of pastors may not be above average preachers; however, ninety-one percent of surveyed pastors said they felt prepared for this duty in their ministry training (figure 2.17 in section 2.3). The high percentage of pastors who said preaching was a strength might also indicate that pastors get strength and energy from preparing and delivering sermons. Often, in larger churches, the main preaching role is designated to one pastor. If pastors enjoy preaching, they have more opportunity to do so in a smaller church.

Leading small groups, teaching adults and integrating newcomers, reflect highly relational forms of ministry with adult congregants. In our interviews with ministry experts, participants frequently stressed the importance of small church pastors who are oriented toward relational ministry. One expert commented, "You can't be arm's length with your congregation in a small

church.” This was especially important for those in rural churches. Another respondent said the pastor must be someone “who doesn’t mind getting [their] hands dirty.” Compared with large church pastoral ministry, small church pastors are expected to have frequent contact with the congregation, both on and off duty. The prevalence of relational duties listed as strengths shows many small church pastors, in our survey, found a good fit between their competencies and the duties required of them in a small church.

We asked pastors to estimate the amount of time they spend on areas of weakness. The density plot below (figure 2.22) shows pastors spend an average of thirty percent of their time in areas of weakness.

Figure 2.22 Time pastors spent in areas of weakness, percent



Source: 2022 CESCS, N = 569.

With any job, there are times where employees are expected to work outside their realm of preferences. It is important, however, for those who oversee and care for pastors, to recognize that sustained, or too much, time operating in areas of weakness could have detrimental effects on pastoral wellbeing. This also means that pastors who are pushed to pursue ministry strategies outside their strengths and competencies, even if it would promote numerical growth, will likely present as more stressed and dissatisfied in their job.

2.4.4 Work-life balance

An important part of pastoral wellbeing is the patterns of rest and work pastors adopt. In interviews, pastors described the personal practices that contributed to their wellbeing as:

- taking regular time away from ministry duties
- keeping up with personal devotional practices
- enjoying hobbies.

Along with exploring some deficiencies that pastors mentioned in connection to their wellness, we will explore the above topics in the following sections.

2.4.4.1 Regular Sabbath

Many pastors described at least one intentional day off that they considered a Sabbath or where they took a clean break from ministry duties. Interestingly, women used more well-intentioned language when it came to their day off. They tended to be less strict with cutting their ministry ties for the day.

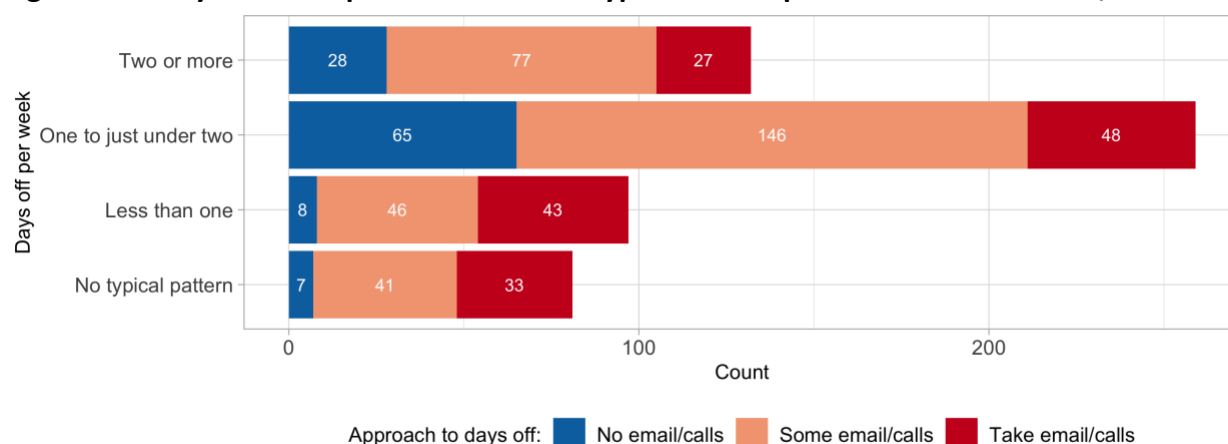
- Monday is my day off ... And then, Saturday is my second day off. (Male)
- I should say Monday is my, like, day off. I don't answer my phone on Mondays. I don't answer emails on Mondays. Everything on Mondays is – that is my day off. ... Mondays are, like, my sacred – that's my Sabbath. (Male)
- Okay. So, let's see. I **try** to take Mondays off of work. (Female)
- [I] generally am into the church four days throughout the workweek and will **try** to take one day as a Sabbath day and then a Saturday off as well. So, that's my general **trying**. It **doesn't always happen**. (Female)
- I definitely **work toward** a good day off on Mondays. (Female)

Only one respondent, a New Canadian, talked about taking a spontaneous day off, saying, “If people are not calling, if it's a slow day, then that's the time that I use, you know, just to – for – as a free day for myself.” In our interviews, we encountered a trend in New Canadian churches that placed a high value on pastoral availability (see section 2.5.1). So, rather than advising the congregation that he was unavailable on a certain day, he took his cue from the congregation, and coincided his days off with days that were slow.

We asked survey respondents to tell us how many days they take off in a typical month, apart from vacation time. We also asked them what approach they took to responding to phone calls and emails on their days off. Figures 2.23 and 2.24 below present days off by respondent's approach to days off as counts and percents, respectively. In each case, days off per month have been represented as days off per week assuming a four-week month.

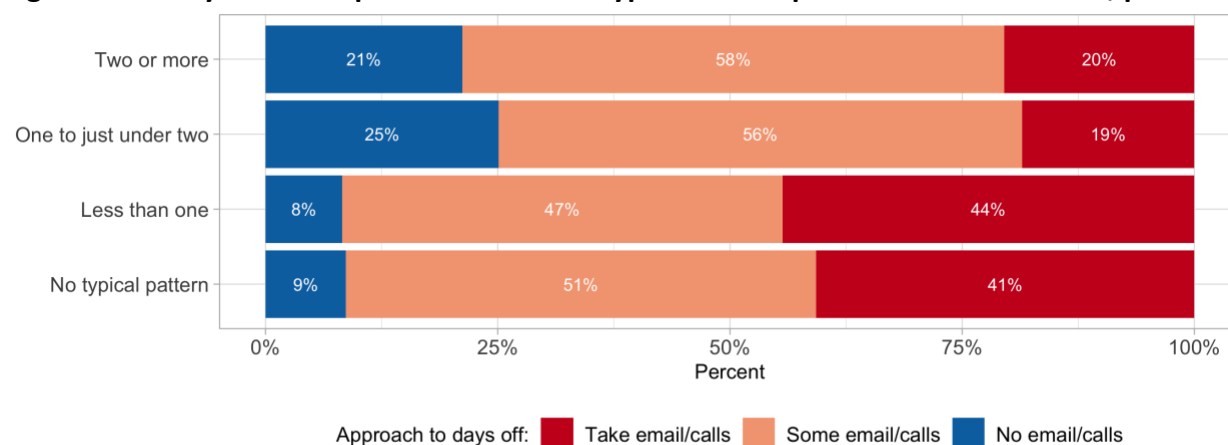
Twenty-three percent of respondents said they took off two or more days per week, forty-five percent took off one to just under two days per week, seventeen percent took off less than a day per week, and fourteen percent said there was no typical pattern to their time off (see figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23 Days off from pastoral work in a typical week apart from vacation time, counts



Source: CESSCS 2022. N = 569. Question asked for days off per month. These responses have been converted to days off per week assuming four weeks to a month.

Figure 2.24. Days off from pastoral work in a typical week apart from vacation time, percent



Source: CESSCS 2022. N = 569. Question asked for days off per month. These responses have been converted to days off per week assuming four weeks to a month.

Those who take at least one day off per week were more likely to not respond to emails or take phone calls on those days compared to those who took off less than a day a week or who had no set pattern for time off (see figure 2.24 above). This suggests that pastors are more likely to have regular time off if they have firmer boundaries for how their congregations can interrupt that time.

2.4.4.2 Devotional practices

Pastors also mentioned personal devotional practices as an important part of their personal self-care. It varied whether pastors used work or personal time to complete their personal devotions, but the pattern of devotion-keeping was common across denominational traditions.

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- I usually kick my day off with prayer and in the Word.
- I do have a lot of morning prayer ... I usually wake up about 5:00, 6:00 at the latest, for my prayer time and devotionals.
- Tuesday, my first day in the office, I would be mainly focused on starting my workweek with personal devotions. And personal devotion would be reading the word of God for an hour or two and praying for my own, you know, through my own issues [chuckles], praying for my family – my immediate family, praying for this church, whatever issues happen to be going on, I'm working through that in prayer.
- I always try to have my own time of devotion in the morning where I'm in the Word reading, praying. I try to go on prayer walks just to get the heartbeat for the community where I'm serving, and I make sure that I have family and Sabbath time.

Consistent with the 2014 study from The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren, it appears that pastors rank prayer, Bible study and rest as the practices that help them maintain their spiritual life.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the study also found that congregations did not share these values for their pastors.

2.4.4.3 Hobbies

Two pastors expressed the importance of maintaining hobbies as a form of pursuing wellness. Similar to daily devotionals, these were sometimes integrated into a day's work or reserved for non-work time.

A pastor who had a penchant for study made sure he scheduled time to maintain reading for pleasure as well: "I do a lot of reading. I am an avid reader. I wouldn't say voracious, but I'm avid. But I love reading. And I love writing, so that's what I do too."

Another pastor said, "It would be easy to never read another book" so he combined his study time with his recreational time.

One of the things in order for my own personal health to maintain is, I'm a recreational runner. And so, I have an Audible account and put it in the headphones, and so I'm listening to audible books when I run and then in the car as you're commuting or travelling, the same thing, you can listen to books ... And podcasts is [sic] the other huge thing. So, it's sort of like book summaries or insight from the authors if you don't have time to read the whole book.

⁷⁹ Dieter J. Schönwetter, "Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (CCMBC) Pastoral Trends Report," May 25, 2015.

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This pastor balanced his duties with his hobbies to make the aspects of his role, which might not feel as life-giving, more enjoyable. He was also creative with his use of podcasts to get valuable insights from books without having to read them.

Other pastors mentioned they enjoy spending time with their families or spouses.

2.4.4.4 Community

When it came to experiencing a lack in work-life balance, most pastors cited loneliness or lack of community. One pastor commented that the community in which her church was situated was hard to break into.

I find it hard to make friends myself ... that's one of my big challenges because the people that are, like, my age with a similar family setting, for example, they're here because they grew up here and they've known each other for forty years.

She noticed that people in the same age and stage of life were closed off to making new friends because of their shared history. The pastoral role often means frequent moves and ministering in new contexts. Pastors are at a disadvantage in these communities. Another pastor cited rural living as a disadvantage for forming friendships.

Sometimes, it can be – pastors of rural churches – **I'm in a rural church, my last one was a rural church as well – can be quite – can be isolating. It can feel isolating. What I mean by that is, as a pastor, it's hard at times to find other pastors to walk with and to exchange ideas and to pray with each other and to encourage each other.** ... I have to travel probably a good thirty to fifty minutes to sit down with a pastor who is theologically aligned with me and kind of have the same perspective.

This pastor had two barriers to finding a community of mutual support: first, his rural location cuts him off from accessing his peers; and second, his desire for theological alignment limits who those peers are. This means, a local ministerial, while likely valuable to some extent, does not meet the qualities he is looking for in a friend unless it includes someone with similar theological convictions.

Another pastor noted the importance of like-mindedness for having a life-giving friendship. He noticed the difference when the nature of his friendship with a colleague changed during COVID due to differing views on the pandemic: “I do talk usually with my [colleague], although I find he is admittedly – we tend to be on different perspectives on the pandemic, so that can tend to breed confrontation. So, sometimes that's exhausting, less than life-giving.”

One pastor said loneliness among small church pastors was a “public health crisis in the church.”

[Small church ministry] is isolating and lonely. That is a – if there is a critical – it is a public health crisis in the church. **The loneliness of the small church pastor cannot be – it's a pandemic. It's a public health crisis in the church** – the loneliness and isolation of small church pastors – that they have to face those challenges alone and don't often have people that they can reach out to help and support.

While this pastor generalized a deep-seated sense of isolation for small church pastors, some reports from pastors were more optimistic. The following accounts came from pastors who had access to counselling, mentors or spiritual direction, something that the previous pastor said most small church pastors did not have:

- I have a spiritual director, I have a coach, I have a mentor. Like, I've found people in ministry who will help me.
- I have a family – or, well, there are still two or three couples in the church that I would say that I find great encouragement from.
- People I respected ... said they went to a spiritual director [and] I was like, "I have no good reason not to try this." So, I did. And what I found was that it wasn't that my walk in Christ wasn't growing before, but it just helped to accelerate the process so much. You know, we all have blind spots.

These pastors communicated a sense of wellbeing in their ministry because they felt supported through an understanding community, whether that was a paid service or encouragement and support through friendships. Some pastors accessed support through their denominations and others solicited support on their own.

Two pastors talked about not being in a state of wellness at the time we interviewed them. One pastor we interviewed was nearing retirement and talked about fatigue setting in. Another respondent was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness that affected their sense of wellness and ability to perform duties.

Pastoral support systems (like denominations and other ministry organizations) can try to anticipate the typical pastoral challenges of ministry by providing counselling and spiritual direction or coaching, opportunities for community-building and networks, and encouraging dedicated Sabbaths. But there will always be circumstances, like tragedy or illness or even a pandemic, that a service or program cannot predict. These support systems should be flexible enough to meet pastors' unpredictable needs to build and support resilience in ministry.

2.4.4 Primary responsibility

In interviews with ministry experts and pastors, we gathered a variety of descriptions for the pastoral role that communicated different paradigms for understanding and working out the primary responsibilities of a pastor. We categorized the descriptions into table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4 Various paradigms for the pastoral role as described by ministry experts and pastors

Paradigm	Description
Pastor-chaplain	Emphasizes the care aspects of the pastor's role; a personable, relational person who is willing to attend to the personal needs of the people in the congregation.
Pastor-employee	Pastor takes on a disparate ministry effort; pastor often describes a sense of vulnerability because they are usually solo employees in largely congregational or board-directed scenarios.
Pastor-empoweree	Pastor helps congregants uncover their gifting or discover their ministry passion and release them to use it for God's glory.
Pastor-equipper (APEST model)	Pastor's role consists of assembling a ministry team that accords to Ephesians 4:11, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors [or shepherds] and teachers." (NIV)
Pastor-facilitator	Pastor facilitates an environment for the congregation to flourish that promotes safety, listening, dialogue, healthy disagreement etc.
Pastor-leader	Pastor is revered for having something that the congregation needs or cannot achieve on its own; often described in terms of vision casting, missional entrepreneurship and organization aptitude.
Pastor-missional	Pastor looks to the congregation and community as sources of revelation; tends to react against a teaching-centric, attractional church model that elevates programs and models missional engagement.
Pastor-preacher	Pastor sees preaching, teaching and administering the sacraments as their main duty and obligation to the congregation.

Interview respondents did not refer to these paradigms by name. After the interviews, the researchers assigned categories based on common themes in language and emphasis. Pastors did not necessarily limit themselves to one set of responsibilities. For example, pastor-leaders often cast vision via preaching and, therefore, prioritize the role of preaching and teaching, as well. One framework was tended to be emphasized over another when respondents articulated goals for what they wanted for their congregations.

Ministry experts were more likely to use the language of leadership to describe what they thought pastors were doing in their churches (i.e., leading congregants through meaningful change). Pastors' understanding of their primary responsibilities was closely tied to their conception of success. This came through in the interviews when pastors described what they were trying to accomplish in their small churches. For example, one pastor linked her responsibilities as a pastor-equipper to what she understood as ministry success.

One of my biggest things is the people that ... have been coming for a while that are now stepping into bigger areas of ministry. And so, to me, **it's about encouraging people in that, and really speaking into where God has placed them, as well as where God has given them the talents, and also equipping them to do ministry.**

Her measure for success was seeing her people step into ministry service.

A pastor-preacher considered it a ministry success in his church when he saw the effects of his preaching and teaching in responsive congregational living.

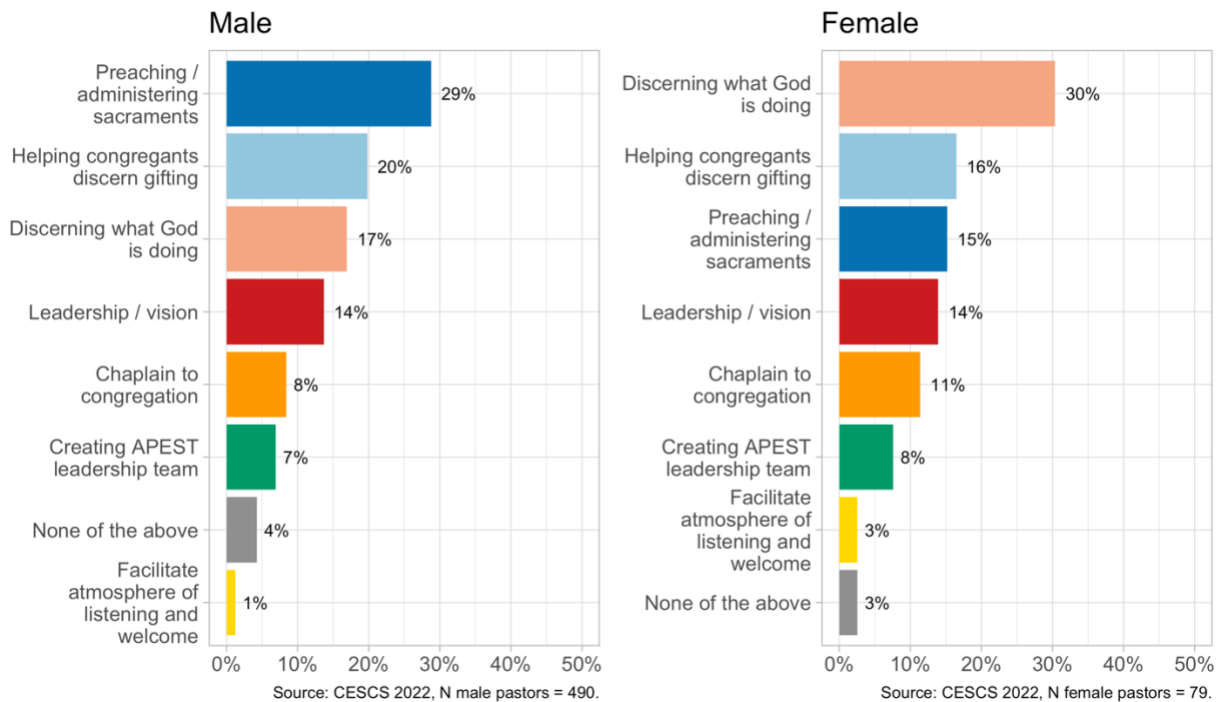
Je suis en train de réussir dans mon ministère si je vois que mes prédications, mes messages, mes enseignements, les visites aboutissent à des ... personnes qui savent comment vivre leur foi au quotidien, que ça soit au foyer, au travail, [ou] avec leurs amis.
(Reformed)

Translation: I am succeeding in my ministry if I see that my sermons, my messages, my teachings, the visits, lead to ... people who know how to live their faith on a daily basis, whether at home, at work, [or] with their friends.

In some cases, pastors suggested certain models did not apply in their contexts. For example, one pastor said her congregation is composed of mostly elderly people, who “in order to get ministry done ... [we] have to bring in outside volunteers.” This would defeat her sense of success if her framework for the pastorate was largely missional or as empoweree.

Understanding that a pastor’s sense of success informs their primary duties, and vice versa, we asked pastors in the survey which description best captured what they understood to be their primary responsibility as a small church pastor (figure 2.25 below). Once again, the range of options survey respondents chose from were informed by the responses we gathered from qualitative interviews with ministry experts and pastors.

Figure 2.25 Primary responsibility as a small church pastor, by gender, percent



The descriptions listed on the y-axis correspond to the models of pastoral ministry in table 2.4. The pastor-employee paradigm was eliminated for the survey as this was neither a promoted, nor recommended, model for the pastoral role. It also neglects primary responsibilities, other than the whims of a congregation or board. The description labels in figure 2.25 are shorthand for the longer descriptions pastors encountered on the survey. Survey respondents only chose one option from the following:

- To provide leadership-casting vision and leading change for growth.
- To help the congregation discern what God is doing in the community around us so we can join him.
- To help the congregation understand and use their giftings for ministry.
- To preach the word of God and administer the sacraments or ordinances.
- To care for the people in the congregation and look after their needs.
- To create a leadership team of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.
- To facilitate an atmosphere of listening and welcome.
- None of the above.

Almost thirty percent of male respondents viewed their primary responsibility as a pastor in terms of preaching and administering sacraments. A similar percentage of female respondents viewed their role as a pastor through a missional lens, discerning what God is doing in their communities. Some of the gendered challenges women said they faced in the pastorate (see section 4.5) may be influenced by fundamentally different understandings about their primary

duties as pastors. Women seem to be more mission minded, which takes them into the community, where men tend to concentrate their role on the pulpit.

Helping congregants discern their gifting (pastor-empoweree in table 2.4) was similarly ranked for men and women, though for a slightly smaller percentage of women. Only fourteen percent of men and women saw their primary responsibilities as providing visionary leadership, and even fewer viewed their role as a chaplain to the congregation. In interviews, the chaplaincy model was more common among older, more experienced pastors. The lower ranking of this paradigm of pastoral ministry may indicate a decline in a primarily care-based understanding of the pastor's role.

Figure 2.25 indicates pastors are fairly divided about what constituted their primary responsibilities as there is no runaway response. The largest differential is between women's first and second ranked responses and the sample size is quite small. Convictions about primary pastoral responsibilities are likely informed by experience, training, culture, theology, philosophy of ministry, and context. Pastors' everyday duties, and the practical structures of their roles, however, bore much more resemblance.

2.5 Expectations

Pastors and congregations navigate a variety of expectations for one another. One pastor said expectations are not always clearly communicated in things like a job description, but if you don't meet those unspoken expectations, "you hear about it." Sometimes these expectations are shaped by a predecessor or traditions and covenants founded with the church (what we call congregational covenants; see section 1.4.)⁸⁰. The following section explores the dynamics of expectation in the small church.

2.5.1 Congregational expectations of the pastor

We asked pastors to describe their congregations' expectations for them as a pastor. Most respondents said they felt their congregations expected they would: be trustworthy, available, take on the bulk of ministry, and complement the weaknesses of the predecessor.

2.5.1.1 Trustworthy

Trustworthiness usually related to the congregation's expectation that the pastor would not meddle with the *covenant* or try to change the church too drastically.

⁸⁰ When we refer to congregational covenants, as set out in section 1.4, going forward, we will place covenant in italics to indicate this special use of the word.

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- [I need to be] very transparent ... not pushing [the congregation] to great change. They have a certain – there's [sic] certain expectations, past ways of doing things, which is pretty typical. And trusting, I guess, trusting – putting trust in me, that I will be there for them. ... Building those relationships at a new level, personally.
- People want to know you're listening to what they're saying. They want to know that you care. They want to know "I can trust you." You know, I think especially where a lot of country churches, they do start from one or two families or three families. In the DNA, right there is the fact that I'm trusting my family with you. And I think, you know, relational – that's one of the words we use to describe [our town].

Pastors said their small congregations wanted to trust the pastor would stick to tradition, i.e., the *covenant*. As is the case in any relationship, the congregation wanted to be accepted for who they are without feeling pressured to change or conform to someone else's vision for who they should be without the relational capital to do so.

2.5.1.2 Available

A pastor's availability to the congregation was another important expectation that some pastors shared. For pastors of Caucasian-majority churches, access reflected a general sense of intentionality to form relationships. That is, knowing the pastor would try to get to know them as individuals and spend time with them, a quality, one pastor noted, that would not be expected of large church pastors.

I think for many, it's just time. It would be – not all expect that, but I think many, by and large, would just want time with the pastor. And in a smaller congregation, that is in some measure more attainable than in a larger church.

In New Canadian churches, the concept of access and availability was more pervasive. A pastor of an urban, New Canadian church described "availability is the first thing," when asked about congregational expectations for him as a small church pastor.

Availability, you know, connection. They would want to hear from me one way or another. ... Active connection. I may call them ... that's one thing that people would expect, you know, in their loneliness, some encouragement, prayer over the phone with them.

A similar need for access to the pastor was reflected from a handful of French New Canadian pastors as well.

- *La manière que les petites églises d'origine africaine – les gens sont très – ils ont toujours besoin de la présence du pasteur, assez constamment.*

Translation: The way that small churches of African origin – people are very – they still need the pastor's presence, pretty constantly.

- *Je crois ... d'avoir une relation vraiment pastorale, et je veux dire ami-ami, ... que la personne peut accéder au pasteur facilement pour quel que soit ses besoins, de pouvoir lui parler, de pouvoir échanger avec lui. Et ça c'est un point que je pense que les gens apprécient beaucoup du pasteur.*

Translation: I believe ... to have a truly pastoral relationship, and I mean friend-friend, ... that the person can access the pastor easily for whatever he needs, to be able to speak to him, to be able to exchange with him. And that's something that I think people really appreciate about the pastor.

One pastor said he navigated his congregation's expectations by using technology to scale his availability through messaging applications, like Viber and WhatsApp. This way, congregants get a sense they have connected with their pastor without him having to reach out to members individually. We discuss technology in more detail in section 6.1, especially as it relates to pastoring during COVID-19.

2.5.1.3 Take on bulk of ministry

At other points in this report, we cover how small church pastors function as generalists, often taking on non-pastoral duties (section 2.4). But some pastors felt expectations for their role reached beyond reasonable boundaries for their responsibilities.

- Something that I think is important to emphasize is that in a lot of small churches the pastor is kind of expected to be the jack-of-[all]-trades. They're kind of expected to do pretty much everything. Like, the mentality, again, of the pastor doing the ministry rather than equipping the saints to do the ministry. And I think that's probably an across-the-board mentality in most denominations, and it's particularly tough in small churches because there is only one pastor, and it becomes really tough to navigate that.
- [W]e created ... this expectation that a pastor [is] going to be whatever – a superstar, a pastor, a shepherd, a caregiver, a visionary, a prophet, a janitor. You name it, right? [chuckles] So, I don't know how we created that, but pastors lean into that, and maybe it's because we are caregivers, and we want to care for and support and help people. Sometimes we put improper expectations on ourselves, and sometimes those expectations come from the outside.

Another pastor felt she needed to do everything because the relationships between people in her congregation were too broken for other people to step up. After a painful church split, she said the "people were scattered, ... they were hurt, ... camaraderie was broken," so "there

wasn't anybody else." She came in as a "mediator ... to begin the healing process" but it led to taking over most ministry in the church.

I just felt like when you step into that role a lot of times people just get comfortable and go "Oh, okay, she's doing a good job. I don't have to step up there." Right? And then, there was no prayer ministry, so then who's going to start a prayer ministry? Well, you're the pastor. You got to do it. So, the idea is that you have to do all the teaching, leading, setting up of ministries in that way.

We noticed, in other cases, rather than paring down after a church split or the loss of staff, congregations expected the pastor to maintain the church structures and programs from before. Even in a case where the church was doing well, a pastor spent an inordinate amount of time on one event that was becoming increasingly harder to host, just because it was simply something the church was known for doing.

[I]n the summer we sponsor a sort of a summer concert series out in the grocery store parking lot ... [but] there are fewer and fewer singing groups travelling on weekends or whatever, where can I find some people who can come and sing for us in the summer during our summer concert series?

We suspect programs like this event are part of the *congregational covenant* and losing them is like losing their *raison d'être* as a church. Section 1.4, on *congregational covenants*, discusses how pastors managed to lead their congregations effectively through change at a covenant level.

In one case, we saw that unhealthy expectations not only extended to duties but also to knowledge. When it came to the pandemic, one pastor said he was expected to be an expert in areas for which he had not received specialized training.

A really big struggle is just that we're not experts. We're being asked questions about things that we are not experts in, and we should not be experts in, right? I know about the history of the faith, I know about the text of Scripture, I know what we believe and how that applies to daily living. I don't know anything about infection rates. And that's been really challenging because we get asked about that a lot and we get pushed in two directions.

This congregation expects the "jack-of-all-trades" part of the moniker without acknowledging the "master of none" part. The pandemic revealed a need for him to reshape the congregation's expectations for the pastoral role.

[2.5.1.4 Make up for predecessor's weaknesses](#)

In many cases, congregations very intentionally hire a pastor who is not like their old pastor. Several Canadian Doctor of Ministry dissertations studied pastoral hires, fires and transitions,

from which a theme emerged that pastors are “hired for [a former pastor’s] weaknesses and fired for [their] strengths.”⁸¹ Gary McIntosh calls this the pendulum effect: “A small church that loses a pastor who focused on developing loving relationships may sense a need for better administration. However, after calling a new pastor with more administrative skills, they’ll soon long for a pastor with more relational skills.”⁸² One pastor we interviewed entered his role recently and said he was chosen to fill a relational deficit left by the previous pastor.

[The] previous pastor, unfortunately, was very aloof, and as a result [the congregation] expected an aloofness. And so, the expectations were built in. “No, we need a more personal pastor.” You know, “We need a pastor who’s more hands-on,” is what they call it. But when they do get it, they don’t know what to do with it.

This pastor noticed even though his congregation knew what they needed in a new pastor, their expectations for the pastoral role had still been shaped by the previous one, so there was an adjustment period as he transitioned in. Another pastor spoke about how congregants felt forgotten by their previous pastor.

I think in the past some of them got kind of lost in their homes or, you know, they weren’t – there wasn’t attention by the pastor. ... [T]hey look to the pastor, they expect the pastor to call and to have relationship that way.

The previous pastor likely did not stay in the role because expectations were never communicated, and congregational trust was never built as a result. In this case, the pastor’s relational weaknesses made them yearn for a relational pastor, and they welcomed the intentionality of their current pastor with little growing pains.

We encountered one scenario where the congregation had a healthy, trusting relationship with their predecessors but hired a very different successor simply because they wanted to see the church move in a new direction.

[T]he two previous pastors were men in their fifties ... They were more introverted than me, for sure. The previous pastor had strengths in areas of administration, preaching and teaching. Those were kind of his greatest successes, I would say. Very different than me. [laughs] But he also, like, because those were his – I would say his areas of expertise – it kind of trained the church not to expect high pastoral care. Like, “Oh, the pastor needs to visit me every week.” And things like that. Like, that was never expected when I came. So, that was good.

⁸¹ This was a refrain recorded most succinctly in a DMin thesis that studied unsuccessful pastorates, Christopher Richard Bonis, “The (Un)Successful Pastor: An Investigation of Pastoral Leadership Selection Within Churches in Ontario” (M.Th., University of South Africa, 2015). The trend was researched more thoroughly in a DMin thesis by Daniel Joseph Green, “New Pastorates: Possibilities and Problems” (D. Min., Acadia Divinity College, 2011). And also mentioned in a thesis by Peter George Lohnes, “Leading While Leaving: The Role of a Departing Pastor in Preparing a Church for a Healthy Pastoral Transition” (Acadia Divinity College, 2008).

⁸² McIntosh, *One Size Doesn’t Fit All*, 64.

In this pastor's case, the congregation still swung the pendulum when they brought her on as a successor, but she did not feel like she functioned as the anti-predecessor even though she brought different strengths to the pastoral role. In fact, she mentioned the freedom she felt that pastoral visitation was not required of her, an expectation and pattern that was set by her predecessor. This case serves as evidence that pastors can prepare their congregations well for new and different kinds of leadership.

2.5.2 Pastoral expectations of the congregation

Pastors were also asked about what they expected from their congregations. Most expected two things: dependable help and honest communication.

2.5.2.1 Dependable help

One pastor was trying to implement a more hands-on approach in his congregants after his predecessor had created a culture of very little congregational participation. He said he had to teach his congregation to take on the duties they once expected the pastor to do.

Well, in the past ... we had a senior pastor that did everything alone. He did not delegate anything ... he would do everything from janitorial to administration to preaching to service leading, the music, everything. ... So, now that I'm the senior pastor, I delegate a lot of stuff to my local congregation.

Another pastor realized if he asked too much of his congregation, they ran the risk of burning out. He tried to create an environment of freedom so that they weren't burdened by his expectations for them.

[In a small church] you've got a small church; you've got a core of people that do all the work. And sometimes, they get to the point where they get burnt out. And that's probably a reason why they leave, is they just, you know, they don't want to do the work anymore ... What I have learned is – what has really been a blessing is to give them the freedom to do what the Lord has asked them to do.

While he learned to have lower service expectations for the congregation to avoid burnout, it also came with a voluntary loss of control. At the time of the interview, all members of his worship team had moved on from the church, something he viewed through the lens of giving them freedom. He said he now relied on YouTube videos to guide times of musical worship (YouTube in worship services is also discussed in section 6.3).

2.5.2.2 Honest communication

Other pastors said they expected honest, straightforward communication from their congregants. Two pastors framed this as an expression of maturity.

- [We've always] said, "If there's an issue, people come and talk to us one-on-one." And we've always said, "Our doors are open." But sometimes, people are not comfortable with that. People don't like confrontation. Sometimes, it's uncomfortable for me. [chuckles] You know, some people handle that differently. So, it's being able to kind of move past some of that stuff and be adults and have those conversations and grow through that. That's what we need to do. (Restorationist)
- Ah. A good question. Maturity. ... That they would be honest enough with me that, you know, if I did something wrong, they would talk with me. If they have an issue with me, they come talk with me rather than going to, again, the power brokers. And, you know, every meeting we always hear, "Well, I've talked to somebody." Well, tell them to come talk with me, and not because I'm going to get mad at them because that's biblically healthy for them to learn that if you have an issue, let's talk about it. (Baptist)

It's important for pastors to maintain open and healthy lines of communication with their congregation and to relay expectations between the two. Breakdown tends to happen when lack of maturity or unhealthy expectations disrupt the channel and cause tension in the relationship.

2.5.3 Spousal expectations

Family members of small church pastors often navigate responsibilities and expectations at the church as well. In 1970s North America, there was a movement in evangelicalism where pastors were expected to take greater responsibility for modelling Christian values in his or her family to the church.⁸³ The movement implied the family of the pastor ought to be considered as an entity that bears an official status within the church with unofficial responsibilities and expectations. The pastors we interviewed said very little about expectations and roles for their children, but in his research on contentment of clergy families, Allen Lee, Professor of Christian Counselling at Kingswood College in New Brunswick, said, "[Children] recognized they were treated differently and held to higher standards of behaviour and performance."⁸⁴ Pastors in our interview sample spoke more about the expectations put on their spouses.

Some pastoral spouses hold official positions of leadership, common in Pentecostal or Charismatic congregations. One Pentecostal pastor said, "When [a pastor] is called to the

⁸³ Leith C Anderson, "Christian Ministry in the 21st Century," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151, no. 603 (July 1994): 262.

⁸⁴ Allen A Lee, "Ministry Longevity, Family Contentment, and the Male Clergy Family: A Phenomenological Study of the Experience of Ministry" (Liberty University, 2017), 6.

church, his wife has to play a major role in it.” He mentioned she must be bi-vocational or volunteer but assumed she would take on an active role in partnering in ministry duties. Expectations for the spouse may be set by the congregation or a conviction simply lived out by ministry spouses.

Another Pentecostal pastor said, “My wife and I are both musicians, and so ... we do pretty much most of the worship leading,” but he suggested the expectations for her involvement were minimal. Wives helping with worship is a common small church trope. In her memoir as a minister’s wife, Karen Stiller reflected on her own encounter with this expectation when she was guided to the organ while visiting a small church her husband was preaching at. She recalled thinking, “I didn’t play the organ or any other instrument, but clearly there had been a minister’s wife in the past who had.”⁸⁵

A pastor in a multi-cultural, urban church said congregants sometimes preferred going through his wife to mediate messages to him: “They’d rather go through my wife, sometimes, than go through me. ... Sometimes, they will go to my wife and say, ‘You think the pastor would do this?’ And she’ll say, ‘Why don’t you just tell him?’” This phenomenon might be rooted in the presence of many New Canadians in his congregation. In the ministry expert phase of interviews, we learned that pastor and spouse can function as a father and mother, of sorts, to the congregation, so it may be more comfortable for some congregants to approach their mother figure rather than their father figure.⁸⁶

Some spouses are ordained in the same church or trained as a pastoral team, as in many Salvation Army corps (congregations). In interviews, we encountered three cases where respondents’ spouses were also ordained in the same denomination. For the two that ministered as couples, they shared the load of ministry, often taking turns with preaching and other pastoral duties. One pastor reported a congregant saying, “When [your husband] preaches, he convicts and [makes me] ... squirm and uncomfortable in [my] seat, but when [you] preach ... it’s like a big warm hug.” When asked what the benefits of ministering as a couple are, she said, “Diversity adds depth to ministry.”

Another member of a pastoral couple said that a challenge with having children was that they couldn’t both be “on” on a Sunday morning because one of them had to be with the children. This led to people in the church feeling “slighted and hurt because they weren’t getting our attention on Sunday morning.” If the church is expecting both spouses to “pastor” on Sunday mornings, it will be hard for the couple with young children to meet that expectation, especially if the church does not have childcare. Non-clergy spouses likely feel a similar pressure, especially if the congregation has unspoken expectations for the role of the spouse, but it is likely exacerbated by having a co-pastor role.

⁸⁵ Karen Stiller, *The Minister’s Wife: A Memoir of Faith, Doubt, Friendship, Loneliness, Forgiveness, and More* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020).

⁸⁶ Hiemstra and Callaway, “Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Ministry Expert Interviews Report,” sec. 2.6.1.

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One pastor said his wife is also ordained in the denomination, but difficult circumstances caused her to step away. He said at their current church she feels “relative freedom” but “senses a desire that people will want to ... see us as co-pastors or as taking an equal lead, and so she definitely feels that pressure.” This pressure is more perceived than real, he added. He said their first church was more misleading in their expectations of her, having articulated that she would not be expected to serve in any given capacity, then the church “kept asking her to help out with children's ministry and all that, and she does not like working with kids whatsoever. ... She felt that pressure.”

Some pastors were not so much concerned for their wives' roles at the church, but their work outside the home. For some, they depended on their spouses as a source of income. One pastor said, “I'm in a full-time position. I would say that I am subsidized by a wife who has a good part-time job.” A few New Canadian pastors mentioned that their spouses also needed to work at different points for the extra income, but one said their culture held to traditional gender roles, and they decided to stick with that cultural pattern in their own family. The theme of spouses providing a subsidizing income is explored further in section 2.4.1.2.

These accounts detail very different expectations and avenues for pastoral spouses. It is important to note, both the spouse and the congregation will have different expectations and convictions about what the role should look like. Communication and boundaries remain important keys to clergy family and spousal flourishing.

2.6 Pastoral Tenure

Understanding small church, pastor tenure (how long a pastor stays in the same pastoral position) is important for several reasons. First, it helps us to understand if pastors are staying in a small church long enough to earn their congregation's trust and if they are moving into a fruitful phase of ministry because they have it. We noticed in our interviews with small church ministry experts that the duration of a pastor's tenure at a church often had a direct effect on the quality of relationship and trust with the congregation.

- We don't do ourselves any favours when pastors stay for eighteen months and then leave ... there needs to be time.
- They care what you think, and that comes from years of just serving that only comes with longevity.
- *Il y a une bonne relation parce que le pasteur est là depuis vingt ans; il a gagné la confiance des gens.*

[**Translation:** You have a good relationship because the pastor has been there for twenty years; he has won the trust of the people.]

Several experts said that to gain the trust of the congregants in their church, the pastor has to establish their commitment to the church and the community by investing in relationships over time. One expert noted that a pastor who rents a house instead of buying, communicates a lack of commitment to the church and the community: “If the pastor is renting ... that’s also a sign to the congregation that they may not be planning to stay for a long time.”

Second, if tenure tends to be short, it can be an indicator that there are problems in the pastor-congregation relationship. One expert noted that inexperienced pastors tend to get appointed to small churches. The church doesn’t expect them to stay long, so the church resists their program for change: “The people become discouraged with that. And so, they settle. ... And end up getting stuck.” Congregations who experience frequent pastoral turnover develop deep relationships with each other, but not with the pastor. By way of contrast, a pastor who had been at her church for over a decade said, “I can see the ways that people have grown. I can think of times when they’ve said, ‘This has changed me.’ I can because I know my people and I’ve been here long enough ... I’ve seen them grow. I’ve seen them deepen. I’ve seen them learn.”

Third, if successive pastors stay only a short amount of time in a congregation it can be an indication that there is a problem with the internal, relational dynamics of a congregation. A French denominational leader said that his denomination walks churches through pastoral transitions about once every ten years. He noticed, however, transitions that happened before that timeframe were usually in the same church, repeatedly. This communicated to him a problem with the inner workings of the congregation.

Fourth, the pattern of tenures can help identify points where pastors are likely to leave, giving denominational leaders, and others who support pastors and churches, an opportunity to intervene. On our survey, we asked how many years the respondent had been in his or her current position, how long the previous pastor had been in that position and how long the second-last pastor had been in that position. Knowing the tenure of three pastors could help establish if there was a local church pattern.

Figure 2.26 below shows the density⁸⁷ distribution of the number of years respondents had been in pastoral ministry by gender. On average, male respondents had been in ministry for twenty years and female respondents for fourteen.

⁸⁷ A density plot is a visualization of data over time where the area under the curve adds to 1.

Figure 2.26 Years in ministry, by gender, density

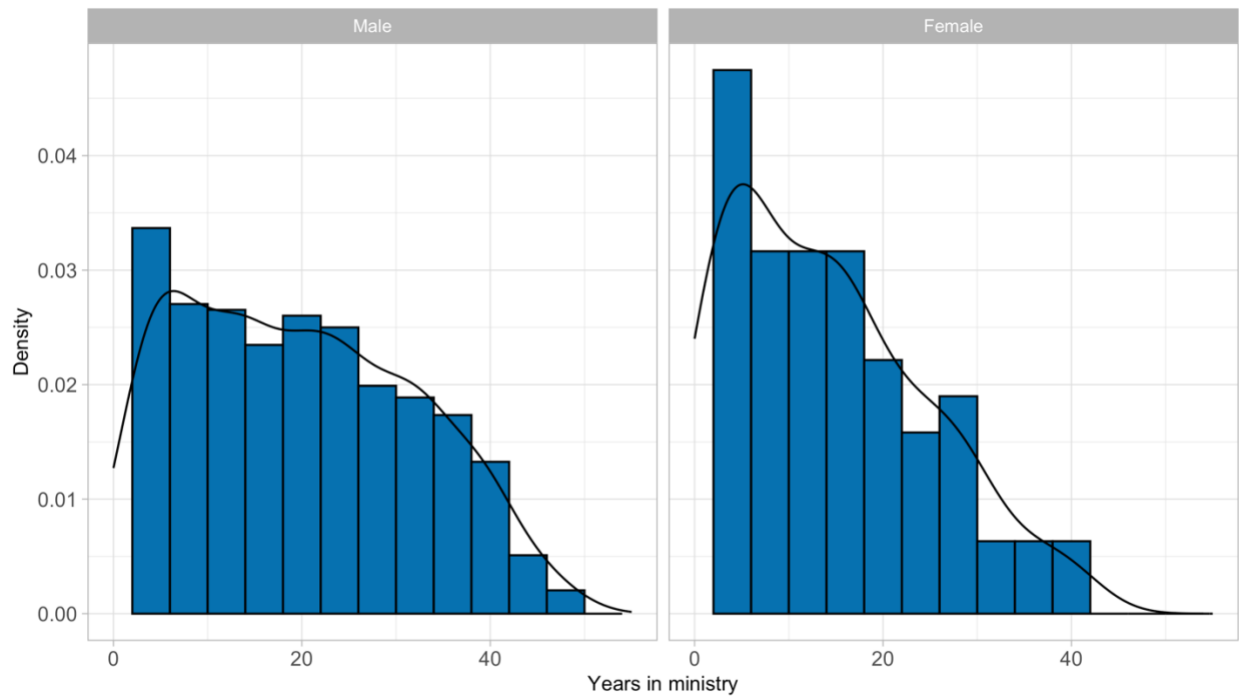


Figure 2.27 below shows the density distribution of the number of prior ministry positions respondents have held by gender. On average, male respondents held 2.6 prior ministry positions and female respondents held 2.9. Looking at years in ministry and number of prior ministry positions, on average male respondents held ministry positions for 5.5 years and female respondents for 3.6 years.

Figure 2.27 Number of prior ministry positions, by gender, density

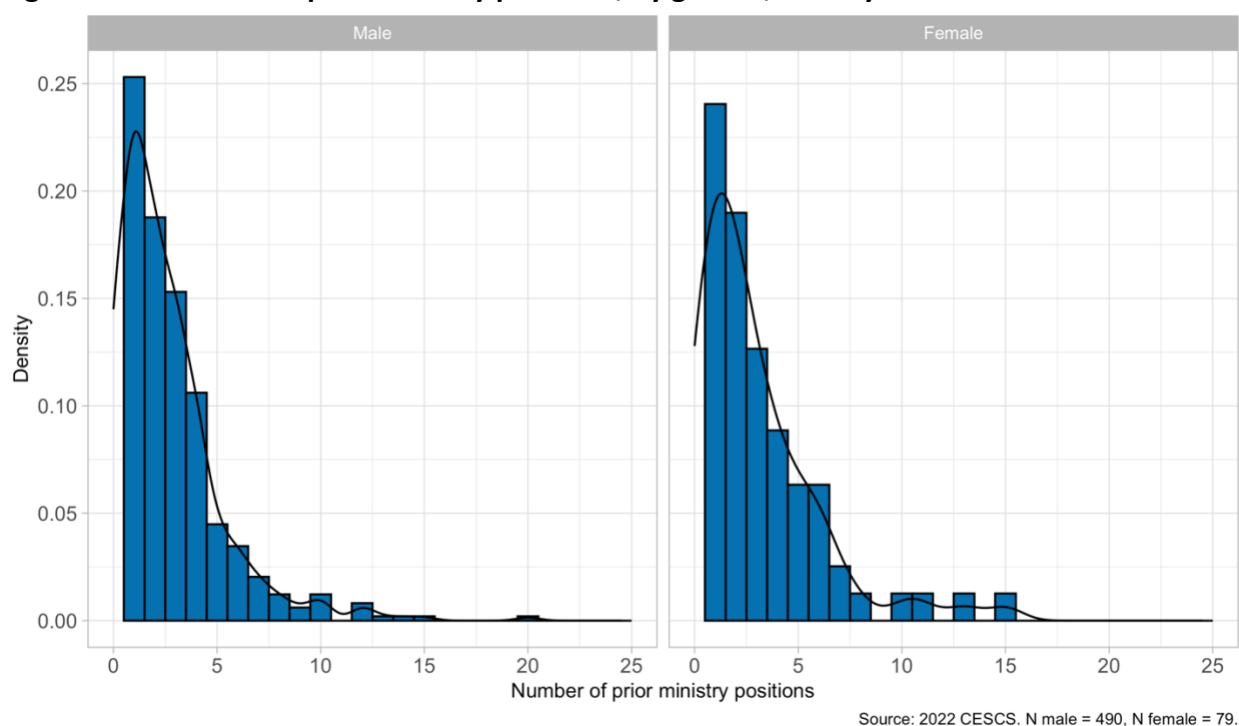


Figure 2.28 below is a composite chart showing the density distributions in years of the respondents' current ministry position for: the respondent, the previous pastor, and the second-last pastor. The figure is broken out by gender. Table 2.5 below provides the average years of incumbency for the same groups found in figure 2.28 along with the median values.

It is clear from both figure 2.28 and table 2.5 that female pastors tend to have shorter incumbencies than their male counterparts. Interestingly, however, female pastors' predecessors also tended to have shorter incumbencies. This is significant because pastoral tenure can be an indicator of local church health. Churches marked by conflict or difficult interpersonal dynamics will often have a more difficult time keeping pastors. Gender is but one variable affecting tenure and we would need to know more about each situation to explain pastoral tenure. It would appear, however, that female pastors are more likely to take positions in churches that have a history of shorter pastoral incumbency, suggesting that women are getting churches that are more difficult to pastor. This did not come up in the literature we consulted for this study.

Figure 2.28 Tenure in respondent's current ministry position, respondent, previous pastor, and second-last pastor, by gender, density

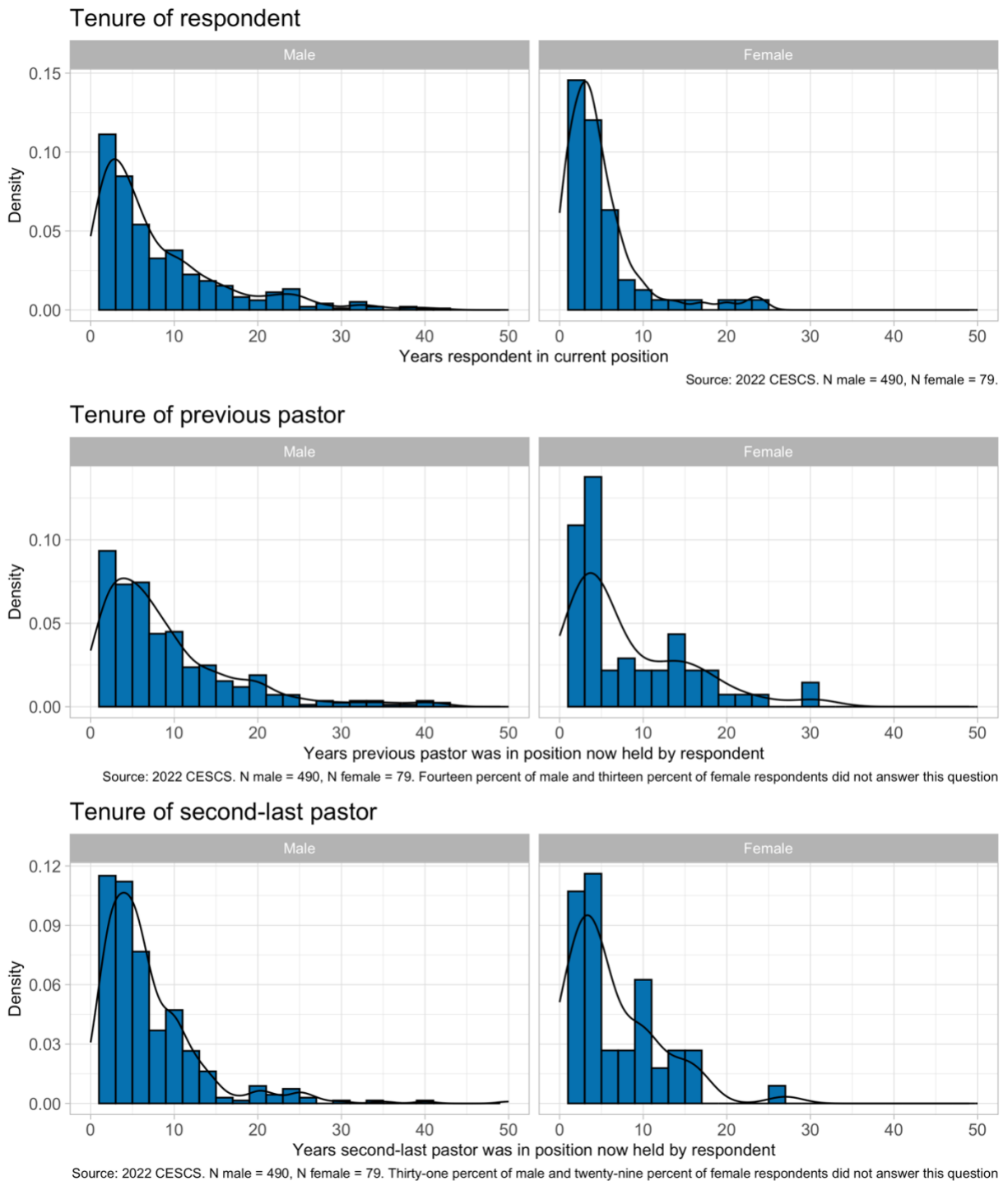


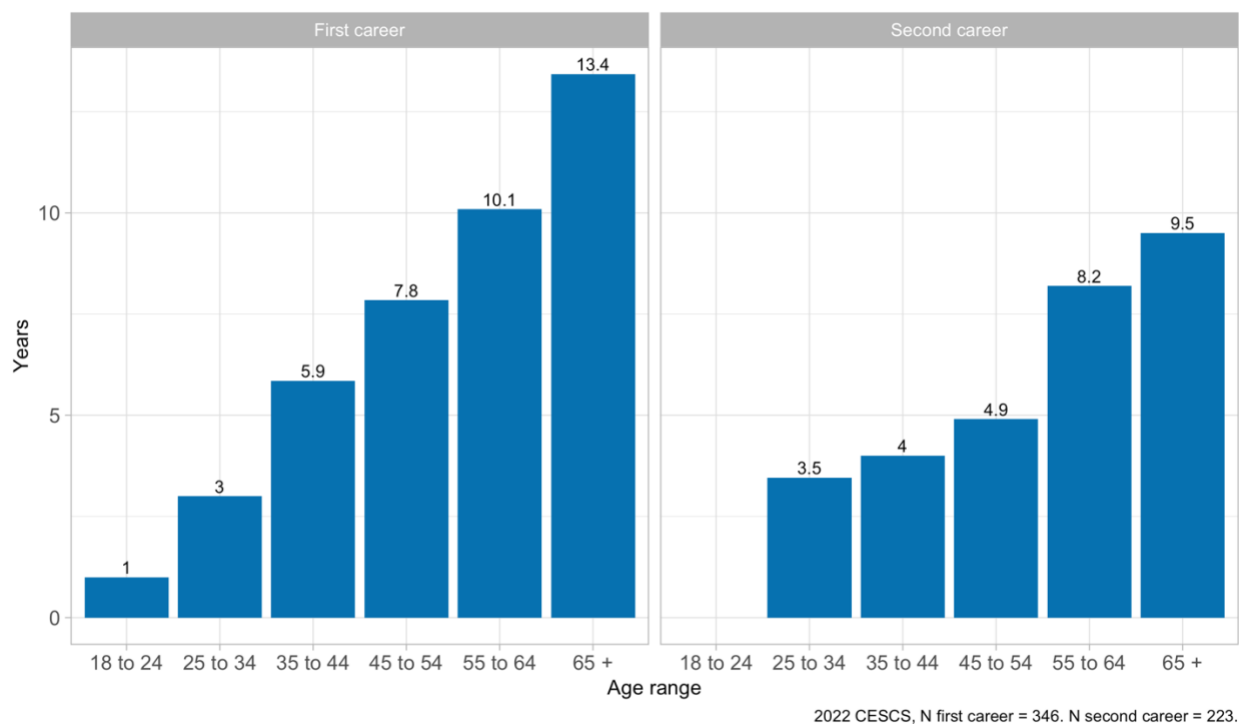
Table 2.5 Average and median tenure in respondent's current ministry position, respondent, previous pastor, and second-last pastor, by gender, years

Gender	Incumbent	Average	Median	Non-response (percent)
Male	Respondent	8.0	5.0	0
	Previous pastor	9.0	7.9	14
	Second-last pastor	7.0	5.0	31
Female	Respondent	4.8	4.0	0
	Previous pastor	8.2	5.0	13
	Second-last pastor	6.4	4.5	29
All	Respondent	7.5	5.0	0
	Previous pastor	8.9	6.0	14
	Second-last pastor	6.9	5.0	31

N male respondents = 490. N female respondents = 79.

Pastoral age is correlated with pastoral tenure. Figure 2.29 below shows the average tenure of respondents in their current pastoral position by whether they entered pastoral ministry as a first or second career and by age range in years. Generally speaking, the older the pastor, the longer she is likely to stay in one pastoral position. The brevity of the tenure for those in younger age ranges can, in part, be explained by the lack of opportunity they may have had to serve. A twenty-four-year-old, for example, may be freshly out of Bible college and only be a year into his first pastorate. Second-career pastors also had shorter tenures but given their pastoral careers could have begun at any age, these shorter tenures may also reflect a lack of opportunity.

Figure 2.29 Average tenure in current ministry position, by whether pastoral ministry was entered as a first or second career and age range, years



Conclusion

Who better to understand the needs of the small church than the small church pastor. Pastors described themselves as generalists, but they are specialists in small church ministry; they know their people and their context. The small church pastor is best situated to understand the needs of the small congregation. Understanding the unique elements of the small church ministry: structurally broad, functionally diverse, and relationally oriented, will inform how those in institutional support roles can help pastors better meet the demands of small church ministry. With resourcing and training that is tailored to fit the small church context and pastor's strengths, pastors are more likely to stay in their roles, which builds trust with the congregation, and creates the environment for effective ministry.

3. Community Engagement

3.1 Community Perceptions and Cultural Distance

As pastors talked about their congregation's relationships with their communities, there was usually a sense they were trying to overcome what they believed to be negative community impressions either of their congregation specifically or of evangelical Christianity generally.

One pastor said his community had anti-church and anti-Jesus attitudes. He described his church's relationship goals with their community in the following way:

[That t]he people inside the community don't see us as this, you know, toxic, angry entity inside the community that actually does more harm than good, that hurts people or destroys lives or just uses people for their money or whatever it is, the stereotypes that people have of the church.

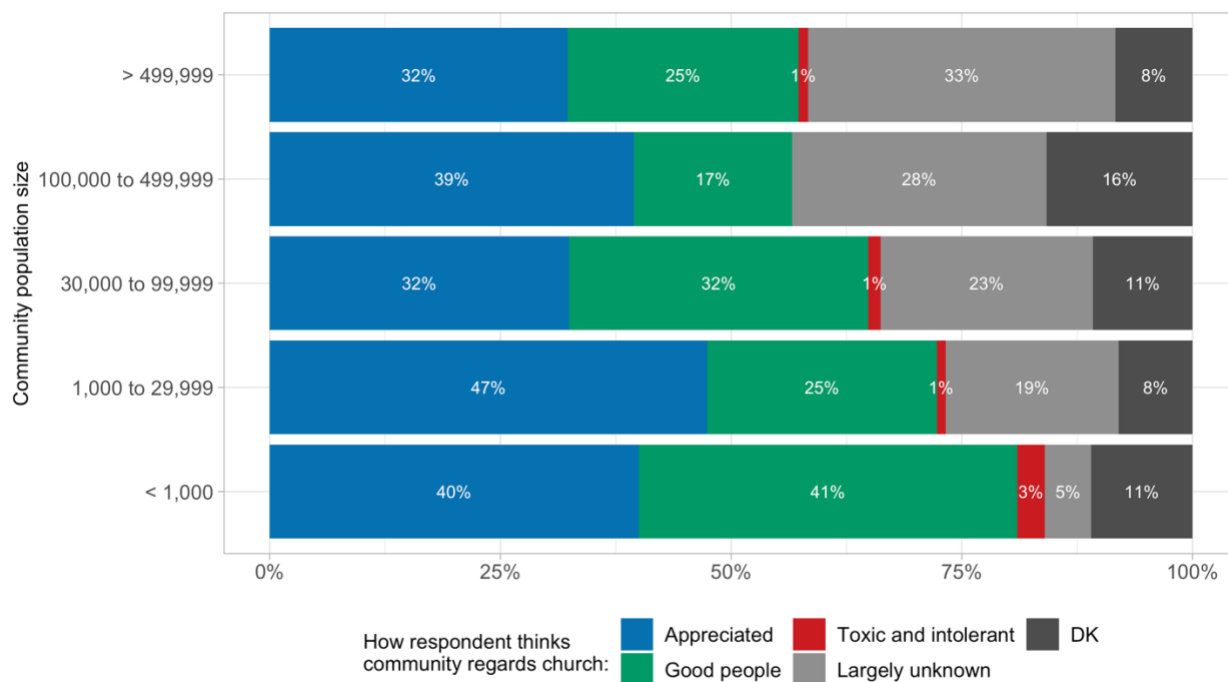
Another pastor talked about his church working to overcome their reputation as "kind of a very strict – I'll use the phrase 'holier than thou' kind of a reputation ... where you're not really welcome." Another pastor spoke of wanting her community to know:

We're not just, you know, tucked in the back corner here in town, but that we're available and that they can come, we can go meet them, and we're going to meet them [where] they're at. Like, we're going to accept them for who they are in a non-judgmental way.

These are stark descriptions of cultural distance with their communities. Pastors are aiming *not* to be toxic, angry, holier than thou, tucked in the back corner, judgmental, and a social drain on their communities. It is a list of nots, and clearly pastors feel overcoming these is the most pressing relational priority.

A rural pastor said his church's "reputation is better now than it was. ... [The community] see[s] us as adding quality and fabric to the community." Interestingly, when we asked pastors in the national survey how they think their community regards their church, pastors in small and rural communities reported far more positive community perceptions (figure 3.1 below). Pastors in these smaller communities were less likely to say they did not know how the church was perceived in the community, suggesting far less cultural variability and distance in small and rural communities. As community size grew, most pastors still said their communities thought of the church in a positive light, but they were also more likely to say they did not know how the community perceived them as opposed to their more rural counterparts.

Figure 3.1 How respondents think community regards their congregation, by community population size, percent



Source: CESCS 2022, N pastors = 569.

New Canadian pastors talked in different ways about the cultural distance between their congregations and the majority cultures around them. One pastor told us about how he encouraged his congregation to embrace Quebec values – just not the ones that are contrary to the values of God. The fact that he feels the need to make a distinction between Quebec values and Quebec values that are contrary to God’s values, suggests that his congregants see all Quebec values as contrary to God’s.

[P]our nous bon comme on est une église multiculturelle, c'est clair qu'on encourage beaucoup là – on encourage beaucoup à les gens à adhérer et ben adhère à la culture québécoise ou aux valeurs québécoises, pas forcément ceux qui sont contraires aux valeurs de Dieu, mais de pouvoir s'acclimater, à s'intégrer vraiment dans la culture canadienne ou québécoise, et je crois ça c'est très important. Malheureusement, j'ai pu voir quand même dans mon travail d'église comment qu'il y a beaucoup d'églises ethniques, et j'ai beaucoup de difficulté avec cette approche ethnique, qui ont tendance à rester entre eux, et de ne pas avoir d'ouverture, de pouvoir s'acclimater, de vivre aussi au sein de la société, et ça a un impact aussi.

Translation: For us because we are a multicultural church, it is clear that we encourage a lot – we encourage people a lot to embrace and sincerely embrace Quebec culture or Quebec values – not necessarily those that are contrary to the values of God, but to be able to acclimatize, to truly integrate into Canadian or Quebec culture, and I believe that it's very important. Unfortunately, I could still see in my church work how there are a lot of ethnic churches, and I have a lot of

difficulty with this ethnic approach, which tend to keep to themselves, and not to have openness, to be able to acclimatize, to also live within [the dominant] society, and that also has an impact.

Another pastor suggested, if his congregation reflected the ethnic makeup of the church's neighbourhood, then it would be evidence of his church having a successful relationship with the community.

Lorsque l'église, par exemple, la nôtre qui se dit d'origine africaine, mais qui vit dans un environnement de Canadiens blancs, s'il n'y a pas aussi une présence des membres de cette communauté-là, nous n'avons pas réussi. Si [indistinct] juste Africain, alors qu'on vit au milieu de Canadiens blancs, alors à ce moment-là, j'estime moi que nous n'avons pas réussi.

Translation: When the church, for example, ours which claims to be of African origin, but which lives in an environment of white Canadians, if there is not also a presence of members of this community there, we have not succeeded. If [indistinct] [it is] just Africans, when we live among white Canadians, then at that point, I don't think we made it.

This is a yardstick that might also be cited by pastors of non-immigrant churches, but it is one that assumes the church's congregational covenant is about reaching the community around them rather than reaching a particular group of immigrants or refugees. In this sense, the pastor was articulating a desire for covenantal change that may not be shared by his congregation.

Often New Canadian congregations will join more established denominations. They do this for a variety of reasons including having access to the denomination's training and resources. Perhaps just as important, being affiliated with a denomination recognized by provincial governments allows their pastors to register marriages and have clergy access for hospital visitation. Formal affiliation, however, does not necessarily mean integration into a denomination's social network. When asked about partnerships with other groups, a Baptist pastor talked about two other churches they worked with who were not a part of their denomination.

Non, nous avons, nous avons quelques églises avec lesquels nous collaborons assez souvent, qu'ils sont pas de [notre dénomination] – nous avons tous simplement deux. Il y a – c'est le [indistinct] qui n'est pas de [notre dénomination], mais avec laquelle nous collaborons de temps en temps. Et puis nous avons aussi une autre église, elle est indépendante, mais c'est une église espagnole – nous collaborons quand même de temps en temps avec eux.

Translation: No, we have, we have a few churches that we collaborate with quite often, that are not from [our denomination] – we just have two. There is – it is the [indistinct] which is not from [our denomination], but with which we collaborate from time to time. And then we also have another church, it's

Significant Church

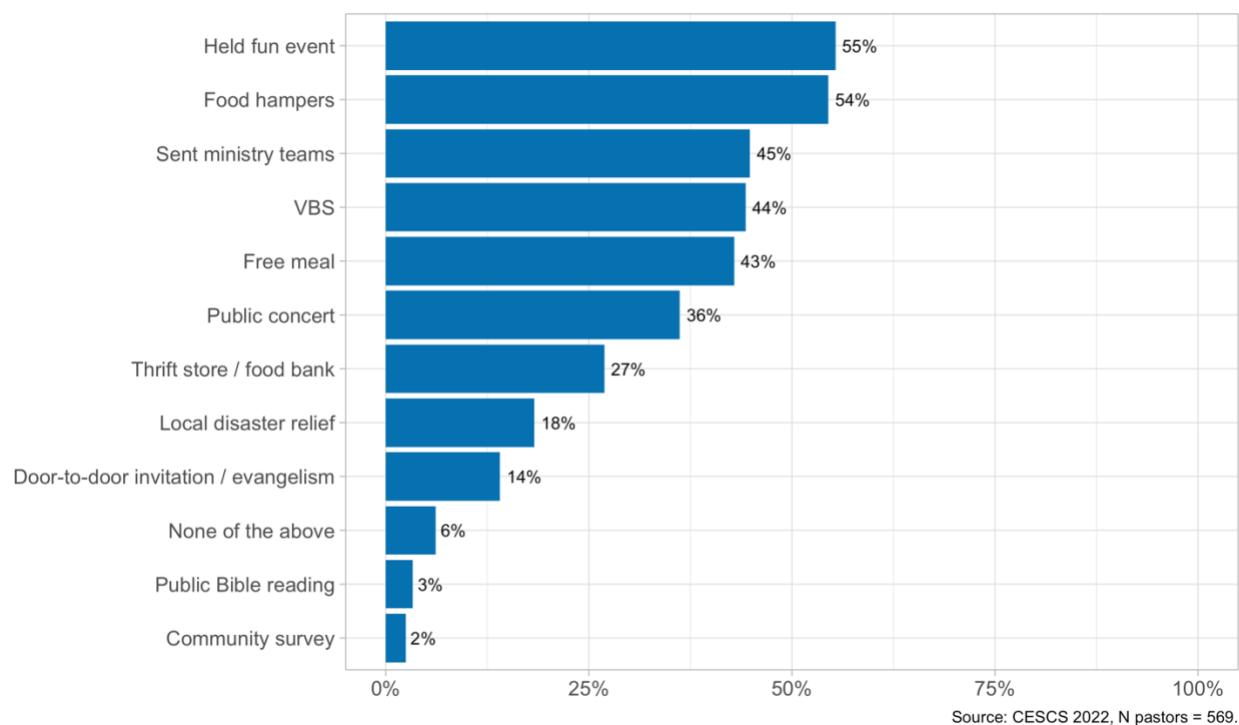
independent, but it's a Spanish church – we still collaborate with them from time to time.

Significantly, these churches were close by and at least one of the two churches was also a New Canadian church. His church was primarily African, but it seems that a shared New Canadian experience provided a better basis for cooperation as opposed to denominational affiliation.

3.2 Community Engagement

One of the measures of success that pastors talked about in interviews was their interaction with the community around them. On the national survey, pastors were asked to check all the ways they engaged their community in the previous five years (figure 3.2 below). Note, the question's time period included community initiatives prior to the onset of COVID restrictions. The varied list of community engagement activities was informed by qualitative interviews with pastors.

Figure 3.2 Congregation's engagement with the community in the previous five years, percent



Respondents reported their congregations had, on average, 3.4 engagements from the list in figure 3.2 in the previous five years. Noticeably, the top six results, each representing at least a third of responses, are episodic in nature. That is, events that have a clear beginning and end. This indicates the majority of community engagement is periodic, rather than consistent. The episodic nature of their interactions suggests small churches, in this sample, tend not to be integrated into the life of the community in an ongoing way.

Note, too, how low evangelism fell on the list of community engagement activities. A recent study from Alpha Canada, in connection with the Flourishing Congregations Institute, found that Christians in Canada not only have different definitions of evangelism, but they have different aims for it as well. One of their major takeaways from the reports was, “The most encouraged and practiced method of [evangelism] today is showing vs telling.”⁸⁸ Our findings from our interviews with small church pastors were no exception. Pastors seldom described their congregations undertaking the overt, proclamatory evangelism as talking, which was common in the 1980s. Instead, they described evangelism as building connection with their communities.

It is hard to build connections and relationships, however, with inconsistent interaction. Community will be better engaged, better interacted with, when they’re engaged in the context of an ongoing relationship. In many cases, small churches are in a better position to facilitate these kinds of relationships because they are warm and family-like, but the question remains, “How do others become part of the family?”

⁸⁸ “The Priority & Practice of Evangelism: Canadian Church Leader Perspectives in 2021” (Alpha Canada, September 9, 2021), <https://alphacanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Alpha-Evangelism-Report-FINAL.pdf>. 8.

4. Networks

4.1 Network Theory

Network theory is a way of understanding systems originally developed by mathematician Leonhard Euler (1707–1783). The main analytical tools for network theory are network graphs made up of *nodes* and *edges*.⁸⁹

Euler's insight remained largely confined to mathematical theory until computers provided the computational power to extend network theory to other disciplines. The insights of network theory can now help us think about ministry networks.

Denominations and different kinds of ministerials are examples of social networks that we will call *ministry networks*. The nodes in these networks are people (pastors, denominational leaders, local church leaders, etc.) and the edges are the relationships between them.

It is important to point out ministry networks are best understood as networks of individuals, not organizations. For example, denominational relationships are best understood as being between pastors and denominational leaders, not between the pastor's local church and the denomination.

Edges are relationships between nodes, and they are measured in what network theory calls *distance*. We can understand distance as a measure of the strength of a relationship. A relationship is stronger if the distance is smaller, and weaker if the distance is larger.

We can see how this works if we consider the network represented by a road map. On a road map, the nodes are the villages, towns and cities, and the roads between them are the edges. There are different ways of quantifying the distance between two towns. First, we could simply count the number of different roads we would have to travel to get from one town to the next. Second, we could consider the lengths of these roads and add up the kilometers represented by each road to get a measure of the distance. We know, however, not all roads can be traversed at the same speed. Travelling on a divided highway at 100 km/hour shortens the distance between towns compared to travelling on a pot-holed, gravel road. Faster roads, therefore, have shorter *network distance*.

Let's suppose you connect to someone in a ministry network through your relationship with another person, an intermediary. In this case, we could count the *distance* in terms of relationships. The relationship between you and the intermediary is distance one, and the relationship between the intermediary and the person you're connecting to is distance one, giving a network distance of two between you and your new contact. This is analogous to

⁸⁹ Guido Caldarelli and Michele Catanzaro, *Networks: A Very Short Introduction*, 1st ed, Very Short Introductions 335 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4.

counting the number of roads between towns on a map. In our ministry network example, instead of counting roads we are counting relationships.

In 1967, American psychologists Stanley Milgram and Jeffrey Travers demonstrated through an experiment using the American postal system that, on average, a person could be reached through no more than six people.⁹⁰ This became popularized in the idea that there are only *six degrees of separation* between the people on earth.⁹¹ This amazing finding can lead to a false sense of closeness because although we may find a path of six or less connections to any individual in the world, we seldom do because the network distances represented by each of these connecting relationships are not equal.

Edges or relationships can have different *weights*. Thinking back to our map analogy, a 100 km/hour divided highway can be thought of as having less weight per kilometer than a pot-holed, gravel road. Weight is a measure of how easy it is to make a connection over edge, or relationship. Some relationships are easier (have lesser weights) than others.

4.2 The Importance of Ministry Networks

A chief benefit of networks is they allow you to access the resources represented by its nodes. Network distance is a measure of the accessibility of those resources. Help that arrives too late is often no help at all. For example, if reinforcements arrive on the battlefield the day after the battle is lost, they are no help.

In the 2000s, it was common to hear denominational leaders describe their roles as resourcing their congregations. This model of denomination-as-resourcer came with several assumptions. First, it assumed denominations had the resources their congregations needed. Second, it assumed that these resources could be delivered promptly.

The increasing complexity of ministry calls into question denominations' capacity to anticipate the resources their churches will need. Moreover, as denominational budgets tighten so does their ability to communicate with their churches. One expert, for example, complained that his denomination had "removed most of the old ways of being in relationship." By this he meant their regional denominational representative, who helped them navigate difficult situations, had been removed, and a denominational magazine had been discontinued. He explained:

I think the denomination shot itself in the foot when they got rid of the [denominational] magazine. I understood there were financial reasons and other things. But, um, it was, it was a way of getting into the home as opposed to having homes, having to go to the denomination. And it was a way of having a voice amongst all of the congregations. Now there's no voice among all the congregations. There's nothing that speaks. There's no place where you know that ongoing conversation about issues, um

⁹⁰ Caldarelli and Catanzaro, 47–48.

⁹¹ Caldarelli and Catanzaro, 48.

people writing, people writing in and responding. ... [Regional denominational representatives] were responsible for their area and they could be in touch. You could call them. And now, um, it's not quite the same ... We have to call head office and head office has to send, has somebody call us, and they're not going to be local. So, the personal contact, the personal nature of having somebody that you know, dedicated to your area, that's gone. So, all the personal touch, um, and communication back and forth. That's what's being cut off and it effects a church like us when we want to call a pastor.

This ministry expert said the best resource a denomination can provide to its churches is access to its network of pastors and leaders.

I would say that **the biggest thing that we get from the denomination – the biggest resource – would be the pool of relationship[s] to draw on that we're afforded to have with other pastors.** There's not necessarily much in the way of, like, resources and things that make their way to us. But because we're [a] smaller denomination – I certainly, certainly by no means feel I know everybody and certainly by no means do I know everybody well – but because we don't have that many people, I do have very good and very close friends that are other pastors in our denomination, which is incredibly helpful when I need somebody to talk to or need somebody to bounce an idea off. People who were in – who, like – I have [a] relationship with that are truly, really, and deeply friends of mine. So, when I'm struggling, I can talk to them and say, like, "I just need to vent about somebody in my church." Or "I don't know what to do about this." Or whatever that looks like, to have somebody that I can go to. But they also understand things that, you know, and if I'm upset with something or someone they can bring, perhaps, some perspective to be able to say, "Well, you know them, and I know them, and they wouldn't do that." Or to, you know, but just to be able to have a small enough group of people that we can sort of say, like, "I don't know everybody, but I have really gotten to know them, them, them, them and them." And that really matters for me to be able to have that as a resource, that people are resources.

The network he is looking for provides:

- "[S]omebody to talk to or need somebody to bounce an idea off."
- People who are "truly, really and deeply friends of mine."
- "[W]hen I'm struggling I can talk to them and say, 'I just need to vent about somebody in my church.'"
- Someone who can help when "I don't know what to do about this."
- "[T]o have somebody that I can go to" who "understand[s] things ... they can bring ... perspective."

Another denominational expert talked about pastors “resourcing” each other.

It doesn't have to be like a hierarchical kind of organization where, um uh, you know, like a denomination might need to be. It could be a simple, it could be a resourcing, connecting, networking organization where small churches can, "Oh there's somebody over there who's praying for me. And I can be praying for them," you know? And somebody, uh, there's a church that's asking, the church over, over in Calgary, saying, "We've got hymn books. Does anybody need them?" Churches saying, "We're selling our chairs because we've got new chairs. Does anyone need chairs?" ... "We had this great speaker and he ran this week for us," you know? There's somebody says that on a chat, and because of that I get linked to somebody who I would never imagine would come and speak in my church, but now this person is speaking at my church.

Notice that a hierarchy, the typical organizational network for denominations, is not what he's advocating. Rather, he's looking for something “simple,” that directly connects churches and pastors (i.e., has a small network distance).

A key point of his argument is you have pastors resourcing each other rather than a single denominational entity resourcing all its churches. The resourcing is of many-to-many, rather than one-to-many. In his imagined shoutouts to the others in the network, he asks for and offers help, and he illustrates the network's function with many different examples. Although he does not say this explicitly, he is arguing that no single node in the network – including the denomination – will be able to meet every need. Note, this ministry expert works in a denomination with a hierarchical structure, and clearly, he sees needs in the churches he works with that his hierarchical denominational structure cannot meet.

One pastor talked about her denomination's tight-knit network, emphasizing its “availability of resourcing” which, significantly, is “availability of denominational personnel to us.”

I think availability of resourcing has been hugely important for us and then availability of denominational personnel to us. ... When I had a problem last week, I called my conference superintendent/denominational president for prayer, input, advice, things like that. And as a small church and then [as] a small conference in the denomination, those two things just feel like they go really well together because not only then do I know the people in my congregation by name, I know all the pastors in my denomination by name. And so, that – we are a very relational body that way.

These are networks of people who share ministry challenges and experiences, who can offer her wise counsel, friendship, a place to vent and, importantly, are accessible. Resources that are inaccessible when you need them are of little use.

4.3 Network Distance

In the previous section we talked about the importance of having an accessible network of one's peers. Networks can be hosted on different kinds of technological platforms, such as social media, telephone network or regular, in-person meeting.

In section 4.1 we introduced the idea of network distance, and that accessibility can be conceptualized as network distance. Using social media as a network hosting example, it would be natural to assume that everyone has direct access to the others and that the network distance is small. The nature of the platform, however, is just one factor contributing to network distance.

In our interviews, we heard about different kinds of network distance, things that for those who are creating an accessible peer network for pastors will need to consider. In the following sub-sections, we will consider several of these kinds of network distance.

4.3.1 Geographic distance

Geographic distance can be mitigated through digital means, but it is clear from our interviews that it does not erase it, especially for those pastoring remote, rural churches.

This is especially true where in-person denominational meetings occur. One remote pastor said:

I don't – we don't travel to all the [denominational] events that they have in [a city] that are more suited – that are available out there.

In this quote, he pivots from “I,” as pastor, to “we,” as church, framing the problem of geographical distance as one shared by his whole congregation. He starts out to describe denominational events as “more suited” to some unnamed group before catching himself and landing with “that are available out there.” Clearly, “out there” is outside of his church's accessible range. The geographic distance is too great.

Another rural pastor talked about how his denomination's “head offices are ... two provinces away and there is no regional pastor that oversees our district or province.” He went on to say, “It was a little bit more difficult with people being farther away to have that, you know, over coffee or just talking at a pastors' gathering or whatever. I found this difficult.”

The reality of geographical distance tends to remove small church pastors from pastors' gatherings and conversations “over coffee.”

A key difference between in-person and virtual networks is the way they facilitate discoverability. During in-person meetings people may run into each other, another person may make an introduction, or someone may listen in on a conversation before deciding to participate. Digital media has analogs for all of these, but interactions are focused through

windows and chats framing out the environmental context that people read to intelligently make social connections. Our cultural experience has also left us skeptical about representations that come to us through screens. Moreover, digital Zoom Rooms, and the like, are, in most cases, managed by a meeting host rather than being serendipitous encounters or spontaneous side conversations.

What is often overlooked is that richer, social interaction experienced by in-person meetings facilitate deeper relational bonds. When digital meetings are experienced on a deeper, richer level, it is likely because people previously met in person. To the extent that pastors and other church leaders have less likely met in person, they are more likely to be on the periphery of denominational and other networks. A pastor who had transferred into a new denomination when taking up his current post explained that denominational networking is “difficult.”

That's a little bit harder for me because I have been – in this denomination, I haven't been as connected with – and this is a very good denomination. But I think because the head offices are, you know, two provinces away that it's been a little bit harder to connect and there is no regional pastor that oversees our district or our province. ... My associate does most of the connecting with the denomination. And so, he's on, like, leadership boards and that sort of thing. Yeah. **So, I've found it difficult to find the time for that, and because this was a new denomination for me it was a little bit more difficult with people being farther away to have that, you know, over coffee or just talking at a pastors' gathering or whatever.**

The “difficult[y]” of being an outsider works to keep him there. In this case, he is an outsider because of geographical distance and because he has never been adequately integrated into the denominational network.

4.3.2 Cultural distance

Network distance can also be cultural. In this section, we will look at distance experienced by Indigenous, New Canadian, rural and female pastors.

4.3.2.1 Indigenous cultural distance

As has become clear to all of us in recent years, Indigenous Canadians have reason to be wary of the dominant culture, and this wariness extends into the church. An Indigenous pastor explained that:

The reason why our church is under [our denomination] is because they were the only ones that ever approached our community and helped us structure the church. And, you know, if the Baptists came and helped us, we would have become Baptist. If the Charismatic, we would have done the same thing. But because we only had one [denomination], you know, you're stuck with it.

Clearly, he and his congregation are somewhat indifferent to the denominational tradition they belong to. They are there because the denomination provided the help they needed. The directionality of the relationship tends to be inbound with the aid coming in and the church carefully vetting who can come in to minister. He continued:

But we don't prohibit any other denominations to come and minister at our church, you know. But we're very careful, though, we don't want somebody bringing snakes or whatever.

Indigenous people may be hesitant to participate in broader denominational networks for many good, historical (and perhaps current) reasons. What is clear here, however, is that cultural differences create network distance.

4.3.2.2 New Canadian cultural distance

There was cultural distance for some of the New Canadian pastors we interviewed as well. This New Canadian pastor described his congregation's relationship with his denomination as "*de rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir*." ["a meeting of giving and receiving."] He added that:

L'interaction qu'on a entre [notre dénomination] et notre église n'a pas la relation qu'il y a – les rencontres annuelles que nous faisons, les disons les mises à jour qui nous sont apportées très régulièrement, et nous nous aussi en tout le paiement de nos redevances aussi, selon nos moyens, nous venons d'ailleurs d'envoyer un, un petit chèque pour soutenir aussi ce que [notre dénomination] est en train de faire. Cet ensemble des éléments donc de rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir, c'est ce qui caractérise la réussite de la relation entre notre église et [notre dénomination].

Translation: The interaction that we have between [our denomination] and our church does not have the relationship that there is – the annual meetings that we do, let's say the updates that are brought to us very regularly, and we also in all the payment of our denominational dues too, according to our means, we have just sent a small check to also support what [our denomination] is doing. These things, therefore, understanding of giving and receiving is what characterizes the successful relationship between our church and [our denomination].

He begins explaining that his church "*n'a pas la relation qu'il y a ...*" ["doesn't have the relationship that ..."] before catching himself to explain it is a relationship of exchange. Later, he explained what he expects from the denomination.

Nous attendons de [notre dénomination] qu'elle ne s'ingère pas dans la gestion quotidienne de l'église. Nous pouvons recevoir des conseils, nous sommes ouverts au conseil, au soutien, à l'aide, etc. Mais nous demeurons totalement autonomes. Nous

gérons les services, le ministère, de la manière que le Seigneur nous met à cœur de le faire. Et, [notre dénomination] a toujours respecté cela. Et, nous nous apprécions.

Translation: We expect [our denomination] not to interfere in the day-to-day management of the church. We can receive advice, we are open to advice, support, help, etc. But we remain totally autonomous. We manage the services, the ministry, the way the Lord makes us want to do it. And [our denomination] has always respected that. And we like each other.

It is a relationship of exchange and respectful distance – *“Il n’y a pas de visite, c’est vraiment rare. Mais c’est souvent des courriels.”* [“There are no visits [from the denomination], it is extremely rare. But there are frequent emails.”]

4.3.2.3 Small church distance

Ethnicity is not the only vessel holding culture. Small churches have a culture and experience that creates distance between them and larger, urban, multi-staff contexts. One small church pastor explained this in his response.

I sometimes think that people that exist in multi-staff contexts primarily kind of forget that not everyone exists in that world. So, when I go to denominational events or denominational training, I sometimes get the sense that people have no idea what it's like to serve in a small town or a small church.

In her case, she is physically attending denominational events with people from multi-staff contexts, but they “exist in [different] world[s]” – a geographic or spatial analogy expressing vast distance. This pastor is not only highlighting the cultural challenges of the small church but the small, rural, solo context. The diversity of churches in our sample of interviews alone suggests that small churches have varying cultural experiences, which means small churches experience varying degrees of cultural distance from their urban counterparts.

Another small church pastor mused about starting a small church conference (a networking event).

I was even thinking about just how few small church conferences there are, as opposed to large church conferences. My – a colleague and I were going to do one in our denomination. We said, “We've got to pull together a small church conference,” because it's just fundamentally different than the resourcing, material and training you get at a large church conference. So much of it just doesn't apply.

In this case, he has been invited to what he characterizes as a “large church conference,” but most of what they experience there is culturally far away because “[s]o much of it just doesn't apply.” A solution, as he sees it, would be to create a small church conference where the large church cultural distance is removed.

4.3.2.4 Urban-rural distance

Several pastors talked about a cultural urban-rural divide. In all cases, it was respondents from rural contexts reflecting their estrangement from denominations which they felt were urban-centric. One rural pastor, when asked about what made for a good local church-denomination relationship, said:

Ooh, golly, that's a good question. [sighs] Because ours doesn't have the best relationship with the denomination, because they're not happy with where the denomination is going, to be honest. ... **I'm actually working through that right now because they feel that the denomination is get – has really become urban-centric in the last twenty years or so**, and have made a couple decisions, especially involving, kind of, LGBT stuff or a couple other theological issues, that they have not been happy with. And they kind of feel like the [denomination] is, maybe, leaving them behind. ... I've encouraged people to get on board, but they're not biting yet. I'm hoping someone will.

This rural church identified theological issues (“LGBT stuff or a couple other theological issues”) with urban concerns. That a set of theological issues is identified with a geographical concept neatly shows that this set of differences, again, have a spatial-distance analogy – the distance between urban and rural space.

Another pastor spoke of an “inevitable ... breaking of ties” between the “conservative churches” and the rest of the churches in her denomination. As she sees it, the inertia preventing schism is the cost of “set[ting] up a new denomination in Canada is kind of – that’s a process, if it’s even going to happen. Just getting the charitable donation status, you know, like, as a non-profit is hard now. You know, all that would change with that.”

Theological difference is not strictly cultural difference. When thinking about networks, however, theological differences are often described using geographical distance analogies. Where distance is great, connections may remain, but people in the networks may be essentially inaccessible to each other, and this inaccessibility is a place where mutual suspicion and misunderstanding can grow.

4.3.2.5 Gender distance

Finally, women also experience distance within denominational networks. Gender differences are not strictly cultural, but we are including it here as part of the discussion on network distance.

One respondent, speaking about her local ministerial and denominational networks, highlighted a “hidden sexism” (see section 4.5.2 Women clergy, below) in other clergy’s behaviour and language that affected her access.

It's more specifically thinking of, like, my encounters with the other clergy in my city has not all been positive. **There's been a lot of sexism and a lot of exclusion of women from the pastoral role. I would be talking, and they would just speak right over me, like I wasn't even there. And then, denominationally or among my [denominational] colleagues, there's more of the sort of hidden sexism that emerges where they think they're really big advocates for women in ministry but don't realize the way that their language and behaviour [exclude] women from their conversation.**

While we include this as part of a conversation on distance, it is more properly an example of being effectively excluded from the network. The exclusions come in the form of being talked over, treated as if she was not even there (denied access to the network), and patronized by their advocacy for women, which neither includes her nor draws on her experience to shape their advocacy. She describes the problem with both the local ministerial and the denomination as preventing her participation in their conversations. Non-connection is a very difficult distance to bridge.

Women, therefore, tend to look for women clergy insiders to mentor them and to bridge them into the denominational networks. Another woman pastor expressed how important it was to her to find a woman mentor.

And then, denominationally or among my [denominational] colleagues, there's more of the sort of hidden sexism that emerges where they think they're really big advocates for women in ministry but don't realize the way that their language and behaviour [exclude] women from their conversation.

More support, yeah, and they, you know, for me, I felt like as a woman coming into the ministry – when I was doing the [training] track, there wasn't a lot of mentorship because you're talking about finding a woman mentor. I worked in the [local church], which was 2.5 hours from the nearest next [church in our denomination]. Do you understand what I mean? So, it was just a weird way that it worked out. So, I mean, our district tried and did their best, but – it worked out.

When asked to expand on the challenges faced by women pastors, she talked about networking events, in particular.

Oh, gosh. [huffs] Okay, first of all, when you go to any kind of meeting with pastors, you are totally the minority. And, of course, you – usually looking at cross-denominational – and then there are denominations that believe we are not supposed to be in preaching, that we're just doing the wrong thing. And it comes out in their attitude. **So, as a woman in ministry, you – first of all, you either become one of these ladies with a big mouth or you become a mouse, right?** You try and hide yourself in

fear. And I think some of it – sometimes it's a little bit of your own insecurities because you know people are judging you. And whether they say they are or not, they are. They do. Their attitude comes forward and they, like, just the way they treat you is very evident.

Both of these pastors, when asked about their challenges as female clergy, spoke about the challenges of accessing collegial networks, not about their challenges pastoring their congregations. This woman explains that “pastoral care is one thing,” but there is a whole other range of essentially interpersonal and networking questions that she needs help with.

Yeah, like, mentorship specifically is something that I personally have been pushing in our fellowship as of late because I want to see more young women in ministry or young people in ministry, and they need mentorship. So, I pushed for, like, I've mentioned it myself to leadership a few times because I felt I need it, but now I see other pastors and I know that they need it. So, something that will help – so, pastoral care is one thing. **The other thing is mentorship, like, someone who's going to help you when the business meeting comes, and you have a dozen questions. Like, someone that's going to sit down with you and say, "Okay, this is the way this usually works."** Or, you know, when the time comes for you to have your pastoral review, which happens every two years, "This is how this works." Or, you know, "This is how you run a board meeting." Because I didn't learn that in school. We probably touched on it, but you still don't know how to run it. Like, you know, you take one or two, you know, classes that teach those sorts of things like weddings and funerals, but when the day comes and you have to do a funeral, like, I had no idea. Like, I had no idea. You know, so, someone that will mentor you and help you through those sorts of things as well as keep you accountable to your personal spirituality, I guess.

Female mentors become important because the peer networks that are nominally open to women pastors are, nevertheless, experienced as closed. The friendship and advice they might otherwise receive from their extended peer network has to be gained through a female mentor, and, if female clergy are to gain access to the wider peer network, it will often be through a woman who is already inside. This means that there is usually an additional network distance of two relationships that women pastors must negotiate to access the same peer network as men.

In a context where a denomination's network is increasingly its greatest offering to its pastors, churches and members, denominational leaders should work to reduce internal cultural distance so as not to diminish the value of what they have to offer.

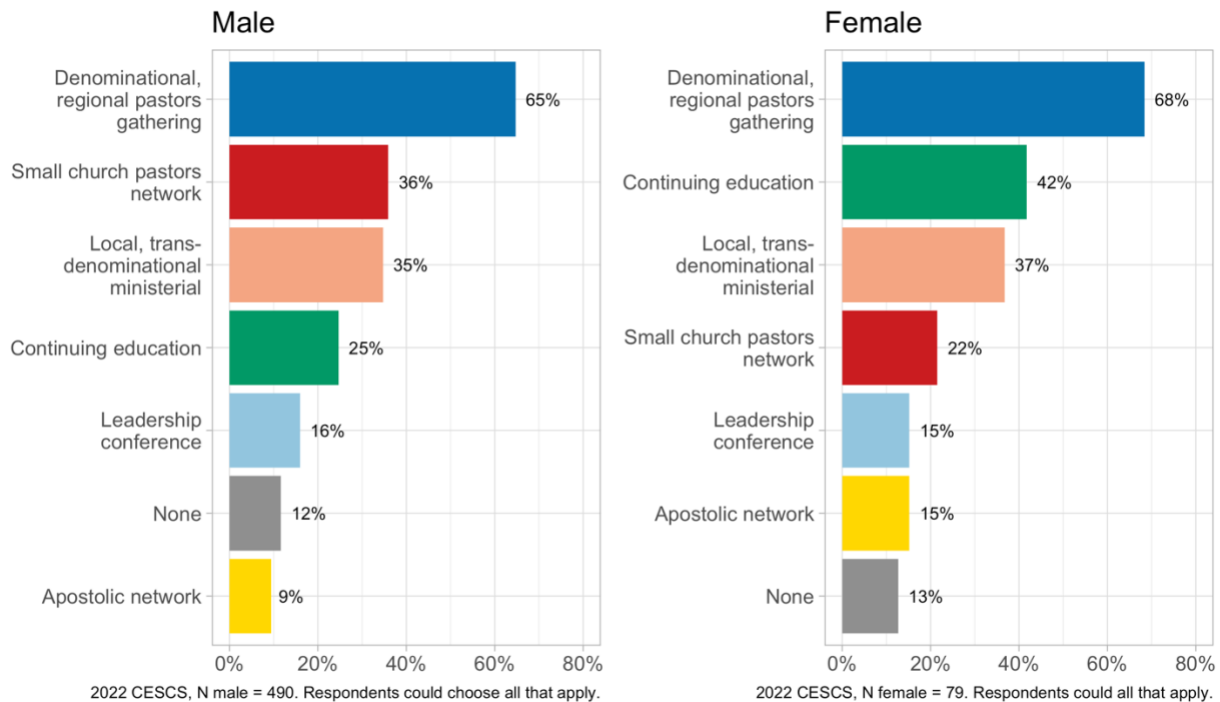
4.4 Networks Pastors Participate In

Given what we heard from the ministry experts and pastors about the importance of ministry networks, we asked survey respondents to tell us which networks they participated in during the previous twelve months. The list of networks was informed by our interviews. The survey

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was conducted between February 15, and April 8, 2022, during the COVID pandemic and this likely limited pastor participation. Figure 4.1 below shows the percent of respondents who participated in each kind of network by gender. On average, pastors in our study participated in 1.9 of the networks listed in figure 4.1 in the previous twelve months.

Figure 4.1 Networks respondents participated in over the previous twelve months, by gender, percent



Denominational network participation was most common at sixty-five percent for men and sixty-eight percent for women. Only three percent were non-denominational, which means there were a lot of pastors in a denomination that did not interact with a denominational network.

Women were more likely to participate in continuing education networks and men in small church pastor networks. We suspect that women clergy are more likely to participate in continuing education networks because they are more likely to be welcoming of women, than a male-dominated local ministerial (see sections 4.3.2.5 and 4.5 below).

4.5 Women in Ministry

4.5.1 Complementarian or egalitarian

A national ratio of men to women in evangelical ministry across Canada is unknown. The number of men and women in pastoral roles is inevitably affected by commitments to complementarian and egalitarian interpretations of scripture. For this study, we defined complementarian as the belief that women and men have equal but different roles in the home and in church, meaning women should not serve as pastors; and egalitarian, as the belief that women and men are equally called to serve in all ministry offices. Survey results are tabulated below.

Table 4.1 “Are you more complementarian or egalitarian?”, for select group types, counts and percent

Group type	Group	Counts			Percent ^b		
		Compl.	Egal.	DK	Compl.	Egal.	DK
All		213	338	37	37	59	3
Gender	Women	5	71	3	6	90	4
	Men	208	267	15	42	54	3
Tradition ^a	Anabaptist	13	22	2	35	59	5
	Baptist	103	93	7	51	46	3
	Holiness	43	104	5	28	68	3
	Pentecostal	10	72	2	12	86	2
	Pietist	19	11	0	63	37	0
	Other	25	36	2	40	57	3

^a Only traditions with thirty or more observations shown. Readers should use caution interpreting statistics with few observations. See table 2.1 in section 2.1 for the denominational composition of each tradition.

^b Row percents may not add to 100 because of rounding.

About thirty-seven percent of survey respondents said they were complementarian and just under sixty percent said they were egalitarian. Ninety percent of the women who completed the survey said they were egalitarian, whereas men were more evenly spread between the two choices. Only three percent of men said they were unsure. In this next section, we expand on women’s unique experiences as small church pastors. We acknowledge this section may not be applicable for those churches and denominations who do not ordain women because of their complementarian views of scripture.

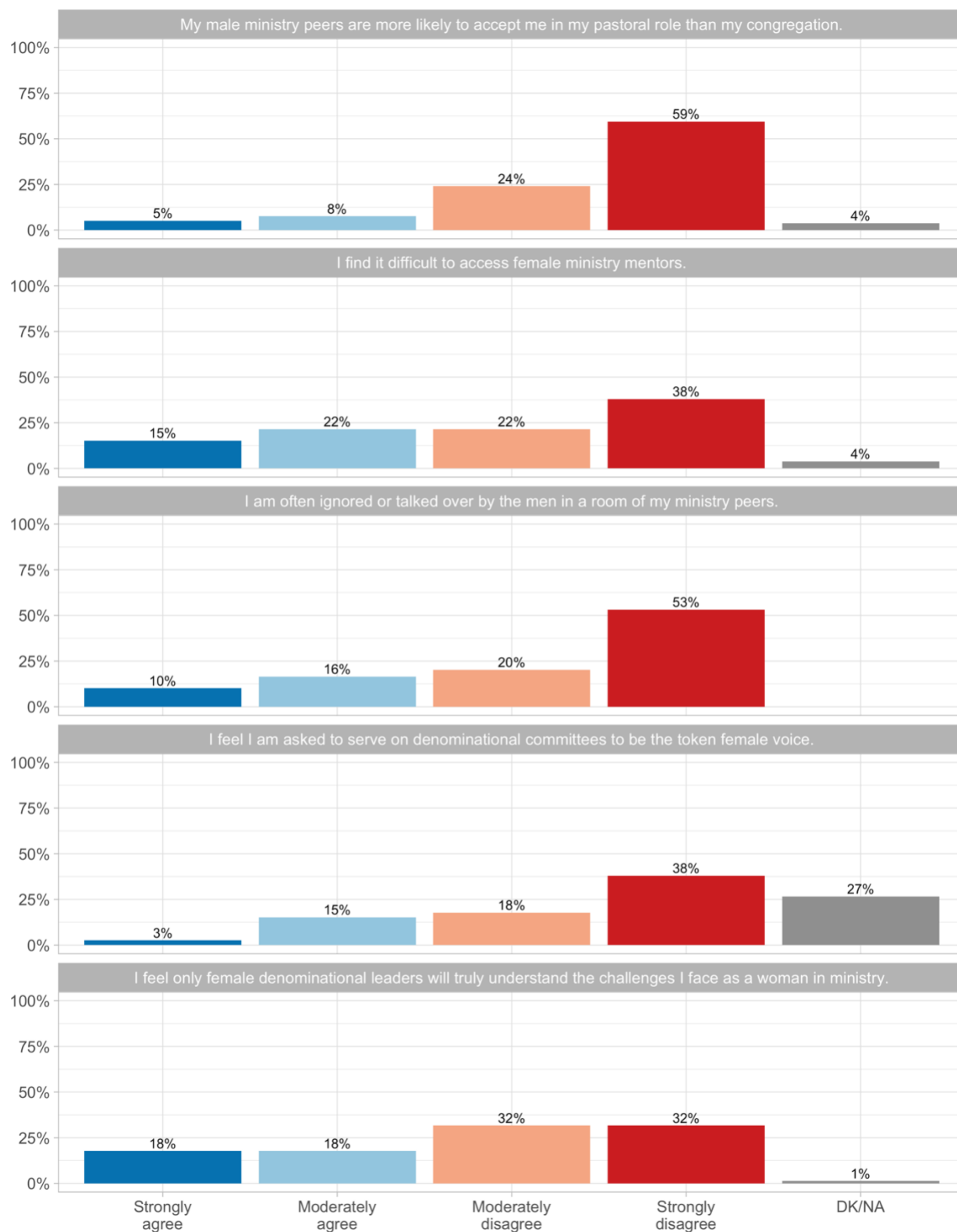
4.5.2 Women clergy

Women accounted for almost a third of the interviews conducted and seventy-nine qualified survey responses came from female respondents: about fourteen percent of the survey sample. In interviews with female pastors, we found that women experience the pastoral role in some unique, gendered ways. Some of these differences were in finding mentors and relating to peers and denominational leaders. The challenges women mentioned in interviews informed five questions that were posed to female survey respondents (see figure 4.2 below).

Women were more likely to say they experienced sexism from their peers rather than from their congregations. Women who experienced little to no hidden sexism in a congregational context reported their congregations were more accepting of female leadership; this was usually because these congregations had previous experience with a female pastor.⁹² The survey supported the qualitative findings with over eighty percent of women survey respondents disagreeing with the statement that their male ministry peers were more likely to accept them than their congregations were (see figure 4.2 sub-plot 1).

⁹² An in-depth exploration on similar themes can be found in Benjamin R. Knoll and Cammie Jo Bolin, *She Preached the Word: Women's Ordination in Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190882365.001.0001>.

Figure 4.2 Agreement with questions about women in ministry, women respondents only, percent



2022 CESCS, N female respondents = 79.

In many cases, women had to work harder to be heard and recognized, describing a degree of network distance that they had to overcome. The data suggests churches and denominations have policies in place without implementing the accompanying practices that encourage full and equal participation from women. So, while denominations officially support women in ministry, this is not necessarily accomplished through policy.⁹³ However, about only one-quarter of women in the survey said they experienced these behaviours (see figure 4.2 sub-plot 3).

Some women reported negative experiences in contexts where they interacted with pastors who do not support women in ministry. A few pastors mentioned how difficult ministerials could be because it meant cooperating with men who did not see the legitimacy of their roles: “There are denominations that believe we are not supposed to be in preaching, that we're just doing the wrong thing. And it comes out in their attitude.”

On the topic of calling (figure 4.2 sub-plots 2 and 5) some women reported, in interviews, that as young girls they did not have role models to shape their aspirations for the pastorate. Two pastors said they had been drawn to serve God vocationally at a young age, but not seeing women in leadership roles led to delayed clarity about their calling to ministry.

I grew up in a denomination that was not affirming of women in ministry. ... I felt called by God into service, but the only paradigm I had for that was the mission work. ... [I]t wasn't until my second year of seminary that I thought my call was to be a pastor.

A pastor who entered her role as a second career, and faced little opposition as a woman, said, “I feel like I'm able to support other female pastors because of it.” This shows that some female clergy are reaping the benefits of their forerunners and are determined to support the next generation of women leaders. Over one-third of surveyed pastors agreed it was difficult for them to access female ministry mentors (see figure 4.2 sub-plot 2). Another third said they would feel understood if they had a woman represented at the denominational level (see figure 4.2 sub-plot 5).

Finally, women were asked about their relationship with their denominations. One pastor said that as one of the few females in her denomination, she serves on several committees and councils to meet quotas for women and minorities, and fields several other requests: “I get calls all the time.” This situation applied to less than one-fifth of female survey respondents, however it is noteworthy that some women feel the burden of tokenism in the number of roles and responsibilities they were asked to fill (see figure 4.2 sub-plot 4).

⁹³ This has been observed in other smaller-scale studies on women's experiences in ministry. See Lindsay Callaway and Illana Reimer, “Council Formation Report” (Canadian Christian Women's Council, September 8, 2022), 19–25; Amy Vetter, “Requirements for Women to Flourish in Egalitarian Churches: The Internal Cultural Issues After Policy Change” (MA, Caronport, Saskatchewan, Briercrest Seminary, 2022).

Conclusion

Contemporary ministry is fast-paced and complex. Resources are commonly accessed through networks rather than through a single organization. A network's resources could be vast, but it needs to be accessible and responsive if it is to be helpful for pastors who need to solve a ministry problem today. Denominations and ministry organizations have roles to play in facilitating accessible networks of peers for small church pastors. Those who administer the networks will need to be alert to the different ways network distance manifests itself and work to minimize it so that these networks become more effective for all participants.

5. Denominations

The themes in the subsections that follow seem to be a cry for denominational leaders to engage small churches in a way that recognizes they are a different kind of church than larger ones while affording them equal importance. Not all the comments from ministry experts and pastors were negative, but it is important to note positive regard for denominations seems to be rooted in relationship.

5.1 Denominational Expectations for Small Churches

We asked interview respondents to tell us what their denomination expected from them and their congregation. Significantly, denominational expectations were almost always described in terms of supporting the machinery of the denominational organization, not of being in relationship or sharing in a common ministry. Most pastors mentioned the expectation of them to uphold denominational doctrine and live a moral life. Absent in the descriptions was a shared sense of denominational mission. We seldom heard, for example, about denominationally supported missions or ministries.

Pastors usually described their denominational activities in terms of administration or supporting the denomination's organizational structures. These expectations were commonly mentioned in terms of statistical reporting, financial dues and participation.

5.1.1 Statistical reporting

Statistical, number-wise reporting was mentioned by several respondents as a denominational requirement.

A pastor, with a non-existent relationship with his denomination, described the statistical reports as "just plain stats," stripped of personality and story, and this characterized the relationship his church has with the denomination.

There's just data, baptisms, church membership, who's on the leadership – those kind of stats. That is an annual thing, yeah. There's no other, that I'm aware of, formal checklist or a document that gets reported other than just plain stats.

Another pastor talked about a recent survey designed to give "some kind of metric" of what is going on in their churches so that their denomination learns what they "need to focus on."

This last couple of years, we've been asked to fill out a survey about how many people are coming to our church, and how many baptisms, how many weddings, and all these sort[s] of things, and how many salvations. And they want to know, really, I guess, just want to put together some kind of a metric as far as really what's going on in our churches across the country as far as all the same questions you're asking. What kind of

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worship styles are we using? How Pentecostal are we, as opposed to, do we not really emphasize those things? Just so that they have some idea, really, what really is needed in our fellowship, what emphases they need to focus on.

Another pastor saw the statistical report obscuring what is going on in the local church context.

[I]t used to be, at least – I was an elder in the [denomination] for a long time as well, and the pressure was on to report, you know, how much you had grown, like, number-wise every year, and they'll set goals and things like that.

What is measured gets attention and this pastor's point is that what the denomination measured may not have been what needs attention in his congregation.

5.1.2 Financial dues

Small church contributions to denominational ministries are, perhaps, the aspect of the congregation-denomination relationship that congregants are most conscious of. The most frequent response, when we asked what denominations expected of their congregation, was about denominational “dues” or “pay[ments].”

The language around congregational support for denominations was almost always the transactional language of “pay[ments]” or the coercive language of “dues.”

This pastor talked about how the absence of a strong relationship with denominational officials, and others in the denomination, reduces a congregation's understanding of that relationship to “paying dues.”

I get people away from the paying dues thing into a relationship ... then the people don't just see names, "Oh, so-and-so, our district superintendent, our executive director of the denomination said this and we have to give them money." That's all they think it is. You know?

Another pastor, when asked what her denomination expects of her church, said tersely, “Um. [sighs] Pay the bill.” In a variation on a theme, using the language of payment, a pastor described the denominational payments as an expression of “denominational loyalty.”

You know, we always try to pay – a portion of our income goes to something called the [denominational fund], which supports our denomination, our schools, and the positions that necessarily are more administrative and don't receive an income from a local church ... So, there's definitely a sense of loyalty in the sense of, like, we need to do our dues – follow through on our dues because the denomination is there to help us.

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Here “dues” are “paid” out of “loyalty,” and those dues support “our denomination, our schools, and the positions that necessarily are more administrative.” The language of loyalty is a step up from the language of trade, but the objects of his loyalty are institutions (denomination, schools and administration) and abstracted from the ministry of his congregation. The return on their investment may come as help from the denomination, but the denominational endeavors, and the congregation’s, are distinct.

In several cases, where the relationship between the denomination and the congregation was poor, “pay[ments]” were withheld to express the congregation’s dissatisfaction with the denomination. A rural church pastor talked about his congregation’s estrangement from what they saw as their “urban-centric” denomination.

Probably the greatest communication that my church did – apparently, they have sent – individuals have sent letters to the denomination, and I've heard a couple talk about being frustrated. They were not answered. Our church has communicated by cutting the amount that they offer the denomination. **They decided to communicate through money.**

When denominational support is understood as payments, the denomination-congregation relationship is framed as a financial or retail transaction. Financial framing leaves interpersonal relationships out of the frame, and if denomination-congregation relationships get reduced to finances, it is likely because the relationship had been allowed to weaken in the first place.

In an exceptional response, one pastor described their congregation’s financial “support” for – not payment to – their district.

So, we support our district. We support our denomination financially as well, and that's a good sign of the church's understanding that we work better together.

Their support is part and parcel of their common work together. When denominational financial support is framed by payments or dues, it is likely a sign of poor denomination-congregation relationships.

5.1.3 Participation

Several pastors talked about their denomination’s expectations that they, or members of their church, would participate in periodic denominational meetings. One pastor described his denomination’s expectations this way:

I think if you want to say, kind of on a sterile level, I think the expectation is that we are contributing to the function of the denomination. That means ... supporting the ministries financially, participating in programs, providing leaders that sit on boards and different denominational leads.

The denomination requirements are experienced by this small church pastor as “sterile” and “function[al].” They provide people to “sit on boards,” and while this is common organization language, “sitting” is a minimal requirement of the denominational machinery that may not be connected to the giftings of the people sitting. Another pastor described a litany of participatory expectations that likely took a substantial amount of time and commitment to meet.

We are expected to attend bi-monthly pastors’ gatherings. So, it's six times a year. Takes up a whole day, usually, before the [COVID-19] pandemic. We would have to drive to wherever it's located, and we would spend the whole day with other pastors. I mean, this is fine. And attendance at annual conference. Yeah, those are pretty much the expectations of the denomination.

Where pastors and congregants are expected to have denominational involvement, it assumes there is enough relational capital for small churches to commit the little time and people power they have to fill these roles. The importance of relationships is further explored in section 5.2 below as an expectation small churches have for their denomination.

5.2 Small Church Expectations for Denominations

5.2.1 Communication

Relationships can be one- or two-way. For example, one pastor mentioned the one-way demands of the denomination to “promote” their communications to the congregation.

Yeah, there's not a great deal of direct communication between head office and the church in the sense of, like, outside of emails to me. So, the relationship there is not big, but I think you just kind of promote, you know, you keep – the lines that are open, you keep them open. Right?

Her evaluation, based on communications being mostly limited to email, is that “the relationship there [between her church and head office] is not big.” Denominational leaders often push information out to churches with an expectation the churches will take an interest in, and participate in, the denomination’s activities and share its priorities. Most of the pastors we talked to expected this to go the other way as well. One pastor, when asked about his congregation’s relationship with his denomination, put it this way:

I think that [the denomination’s] expectation is that we would be in an active supporting relationship with them. And I think the other side of that is, too, is that we – the expectation from the church to the denomination would be, **"Are you aware of what's going on the local level? Are you aware of the unique pressures, not only in the church, but of our particular church?"** So, I think the expectation is that, from the

church to the denomination, is when we're looking for help or resources or support that you will be there for us when we need them.

His denomination expected an “active supporting relationship” from his local church, but the pastor and the church were looking for active support as well. First, they wanted the denomination to be “aware of what’s going on at a local level” and in “our particular church,” and second, they wanted to know that the denomination will be there for “help or resources or support, that you will be there for us when we need them.” Communications are more likely to be passed on in the context of good relationships. The absence of good relationships may mean there is little to no communication happening at all.

5.2.2 Encouragement

Another small church pastor expressed surprise at who ends up in denominational roles, saying some are administratively gifted but relationally weak: “Someone who doesn’t seem to have the ability to listen well, who just – a lot of nervous energy, talking a lot.” Similarly, another pastor said she was looking for someone who will understand her situation, someone who will “listen well,” even for just “fifteen minutes,” and after listening, “speak into our life and offer encouragement,” or, she adds, “just listen well.”

Another pastor talked about the importance of having someone to “encourage you,” resting the initiative for encouragement with the denominational representative. It is important that the initiative for connecting comes from the denomination. This pastor said she wanted someone from the denomination to “check in” with her.

Our leadership is – what's the word I'm looking for? Like, the leadership of our denomination has way too much on their plate. **So, there's nobody that works in, like, say, HR. There's no structured mentorship. There's nobody really checking in. Like, if they check in, it's like they want something, or like you're one of their friends, kind of thing. Like, there's no system whereby pastoral care is provided to the pastor, if that makes sense.**

Often, even when solo pastors are connected to local or denominational ministerials, they are still constrained from talking through difficult pastoral situations because of congregational expectations of confidences. These expectations will vary from tradition to tradition and even from congregation to congregation. Sometimes congregants will understand and expect that a pastor may share a confidence with a supervising denominational official.

Where there are no other permitted forums for pastors to work through difficult and confidential pastoral matters, the supervising denominational official-pastor relationship becomes very important for pastoral wellbeing, and by extension, the wellbeing of the local church.

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One pastor, echoing the language of COVID-19 to convey urgency, described pastoral isolation and loneliness as “a public health crisis.”

So, it's profoundly hard. It is isolating and lonely. That is a – if there is a critical – it is a public health crisis in the church. The loneliness of the small church pastor cannot be – it's a pandemic. It's a public health crisis in the church – the loneliness and isolation of small church pastors – that they have to face those challenges alone and don't often have people that they can reach out to help and support.

Denominations need to realize that local confidentiality expectations may prevent pastors from accessing the supportive resources the denomination believes it has provided.

5.2.3 Freedom

Some ministry experts, especially those who work with New Canadian churches, talked about congregations trying to deliberately limit denominational influence in their congregations. A leader who works with New Canadian churches talked about how, in the past, Chinese churches often looked to join denominations that would allow for congregational autonomy.

So, the other thing, when I was doing some research into, um, for the Chinese church, for instance – a lot of the churches that emigrated or the founders who emigrated in the seventies and eighties, particularly, picked, um, denominations that allowed for congregational autonomy. Um, because they wanted to establish their own identity on their own terms rather than being dictated to them by a denomination.

A ministry organization leader who previously worked with a denomination talked about small churches being “very suspicious” that he, as a denominational representative, was coming into their church to “meddle.”

You have to realize that I was an outsider going into a small church, especially representing a denomination. They're very suspicious. Small churches are very suspicious about people coming and telling them what they should be doing. Um, they probably might want to meddle and trying to figure out what the latest fad might be.

His rejoinder to their suspicions was listening and respecting their decisions. Clearly, listening and respecting them were not things the churches he encountered expected from a denominational “outsider.”

5.2.4 Orthodoxy

Questions of trust also extended to trusting denominations to be orthodox. A ministry organization leader cautioned that churches needed to be:

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Very clear with its denomination as to what the essential doctrines are and beliefs. Uh, because right now, right? You've got things about sexuality, about family, about gender, and all of that kind of thing. ... Um, so you know, "Is God's Word the word of God?"

Traditionally, a key denominational function has been to ensure consistent orthodoxy across its churches. Clearly this expert sees this role being reversed with congregations drawing doctrinal lines for denominations.

A denominational leader also pointed to differences "centred around theology" as something that would cause a church to "not communicate denomination resources to their congregation." In her experience, the concern is that the "denomination is not traditional enough." Again, she was describing congregations that see themselves as the guardians of orthodoxy (and tradition) against the denomination.

A leader who works with New Canadian churches also echoed this concern about "see[ing] denominations drift" away from more "conservative positions" leading them to question if they "want to be a part of [a 'drifting' denomination]."

I think, further, diaspora churches ... they see denominations drift toward openness to different sexualities, the more they have said, "We're not sure we want to be a part of this." So, they're more conservative, um, in many ways. ... Some of the critical race theory that talks about different levels of oppression, that doesn't resonate with them at all.

Concern that denominations may be adopting heterodox positions is not merely a small church issue. It is interesting, however, that at least three experts raised it in interviews.

5.2.5 Support

Some interview respondents offered suggestions for ways denominations might better support small churches. One simply called for denominations to "start celebrating the small church." This call for recognition was echoed by another leader in his response:

When you do the denominational events, uh, have some of the guys from smaller churches on the platform doing stuff because you always have the guys in the big churches, and the big music, and all that. And to be honest with, and also to acknowledge that you have smaller ministry settings in the room.

This denominational leader is acknowledging that small church leaders can feel invisible at denominational meetings.

A ministry organization leader working with New Canadian churches thought the burden of denominational dues, and possibly rent for worship space, should be lightened for New Canadian churches.

One thing that the denominations should realize, that the financial commitment they do to churches is very tough on ethnic churches because, because ethnic churches cannot really stand on their own after three or four years because most of these people are newcomers. They cannot even give to the churches enough for the church to survive, especially when churches are paying rent, and when I'm talking about rent, I'm talking about crazy amounts a month, like \$250 for a Sunday meeting. This is crazy for a church of thirty people! Half of them are on minimum wage, this is crazy!

A few of our experts talked about large churches as if they were organs of the denomination, or even a substitute for the denomination. This may be because, like denominations, larger churches develop bureaucratic or administrative structures to manage the complexity of congregational life. One pastor claimed larger churches owed support to smaller ones because of their denominational-familial connection.

Well, how it's expected and incumbent upon the strong to support the weak. You know, I see that as a problem in this denomination. When I see bigger churches getting bigger and strong and weaker ones getting weaker, how do we not ignore that? Right? It's easy to get lost in your own ministry and forget that you're part of something bigger, and I think that needs to be addressed.

Another pastor, and denominational leader, called for “a little more intentionality” in how large churches support smaller ones, believing large churches have a responsibility to support smaller churches in their communities.

One leader who worked with small, New Canadian churches spoke about how larger churches, often from the same ethnic group, will fund the theological education of pastors in smaller churches. She explained:

One of the solutions of the larger churches, they have a relational connection to you, has been actually giving money, and towards their education. So, um, that's about, so in some of the larger churches we'll talk about "We're investing in these churches," and there's no expectation of them giving back.

There are several implicit points of contrast here between the nature of small church and denominational relationships, and small church and large church relationships. First, large churches make an “investment” in small churches without an expectation of return. In other places, we have heard about smaller churches feeling overlooked or ignored by denominational leaders. Moreover, earlier in this section we heard a ministry leader plead for denominations to lighten the financial burden of their dues. Second, is the note of mutual respect. The same leader spoke of the “tremendous learning opportunity that goes both ways” between large and small New Canadian churches. Often, the denominational leaders we spoke to described small churches as needy, discouraged, insular or broken.

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Two of our experts talked about how denominations sometimes work against small churches by calling away good pastors. One expert said, “Denominations need to have a reality check about ministry in small churches. ... It is not an uncommon thing for them to say, ‘Well, they don't need an MDiv.’,” the implication being that pastoring a small church does not require an advanced theological degree.

A ministry organization leader used strong language to communicate his offense at the denominational suggestion that small churches may take at being used as a “training ground” for larger church pastors.

I guess the whole other conversation that we need to have is how long do, especially in cities or even rural, denominational leaders, usually see smaller churches as good training grounds for new pastors coming out of seminary where you can put them or point them into a small church to see how they do before sort of elevating them to a larger church or parish. Small churches really, really are disgusted by that approach just because they're being used. And they see the cycle of good, young, promising pastors come and go.

This pastor of a small church wanted denominations to give small churches the same attention they give “flagship-type churches.”

I think for a denomination to have sort of a good connection to their churches, need to treat them all the same. You know, not just give a lot of attention to, like, the larger churches, more influential flagship-type churches, but to show care and concern for the smaller churches or struggling ones. **You know, and just pick up the phone once in a while, and talk to the pastor and include them, and those things are important. So, I guess if I had a message for our fellowship, ... that those things are really important to just sort of stay connected, don't let people think that they're forgotten.**

Many of the pastors felt like denominations did not consider their ministries or ministry contexts important enough to warrant denominational leaders' time or interest. These responses suggest there is a need for small churches to feel respected and understood by their denominations for a relationship to flourish.

5.3 Denomination-Church Relationship

A close, personal relationship between a pastor and a denominational official is vital if a denomination is to have a good relationship with that church. Given a denomination's relationship with a local church is usually a relationship with, at most, a few individuals in a congregation, denominations must cultivate and nurture these relationships, especially since these people are the denomination's bridges to the rest of the congregation.

A denominational leader linked the decline in small church trust of denominations to a wider cultural shift from “loyalty to value added.” She explained:

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Maybe fifty, seventy years ago people went to church more out of faithfulness and loyalty, a sense of belonging, and, you know, this is the right thing to do, and I don't want to downplay that. I think that was important and it is still important. It was a real mark of faithfulness for people to attend out of loyalty. But there's been a shift in recent years where people are more and more looking for "What's the fruit of this? What's the value added?"

For her, loyalty was the outworking of trust which has been replaced by a transactional relationship. A pastor recognized that small churches cannot be involved in or respond to "every aspect of denominational programming." Nevertheless, this pastor said small churches need to make an effort to be "loyal" to the denomination by participating in its programs as it is able.

I think a small church can't be involved in every aspect of the denominational programming. And I think the small church has to pick and choose, and sometimes the priority that's best for that small church may not be the emphasis of the denomination or of the district at that time. And, uh, and I don't think they need to be browbeat over it. I think they need to be congratulated that they're trying. [laughs]

A ministry organization leader working with New Canadian churches explained that a denominational relationship may not be the primary organizational relationship for New Canadian churches. He explained that the absence of a strong relationship between denominations and New Canadian churches can be seen in denominational ministerial. He explained how a ministerial based on ethnicity usually yielded a tighter relationship.

So, I'll give you an example, [a Canadian city], has, I think, twenty-seven Filipino churches, and they are from different denominations. So, they have a formal affiliation with their denominations, but their real day-to-day affiliation is with the other Filipino churches. So, they have an umbrella of inter-denominational Filipino churches, and they all get together there. Filipinos, regardless of their denominational background.

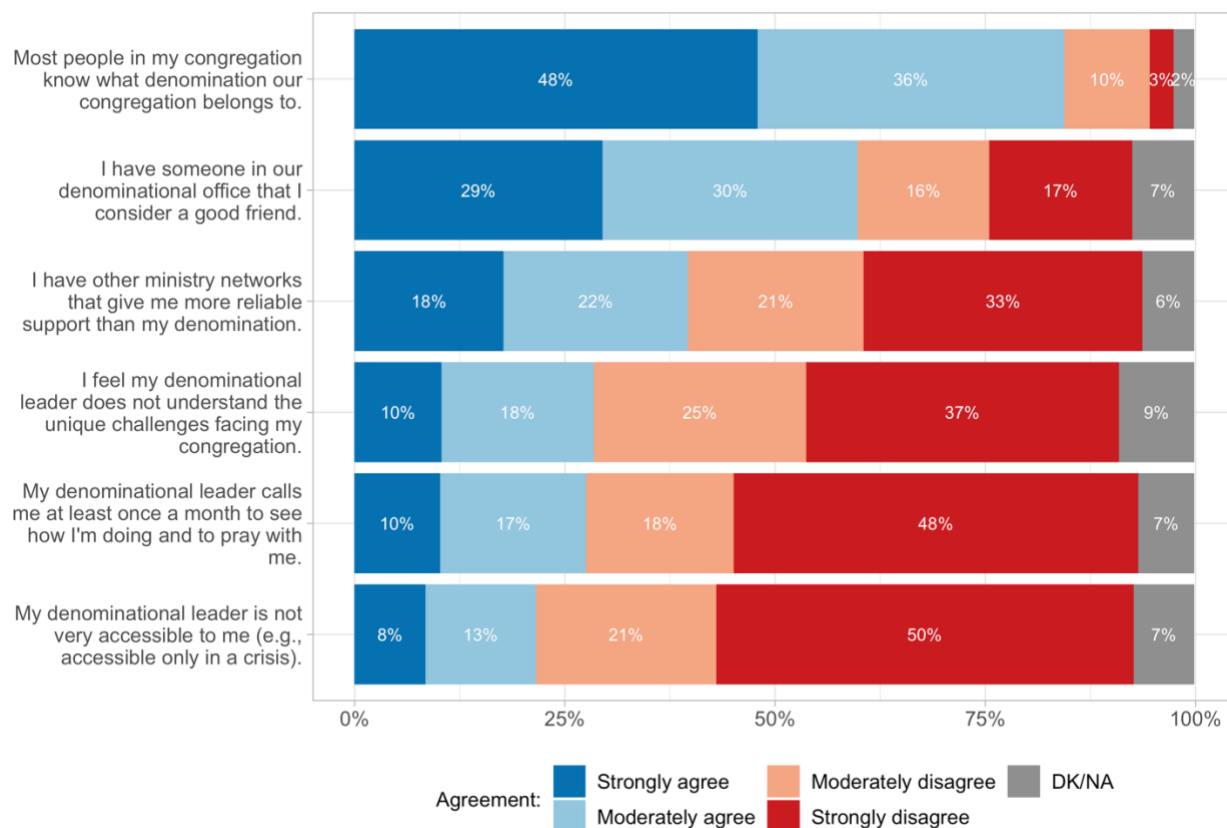
These Filipino churches have an "affiliation with their denomination" and then "their real, day-to-day affiliation ... with the other Filipino churches." He "do[esn't] know why" or "where the problem is within the ['ethnic' – English-speaking] relationship," but if it is to become a real, day-to-day relationship, there is clearly work to do.

Thirteen of our pastor interview respondents reported having a positive view of their denomination, seven had a negative view and for the remainder it was difficult to say. All respondents who had a positive view of their respective denominations had a personal connection with someone in their denominational office, and almost all participated in the work of the denomination in some way. Conversely, all respondents who had a negative view of their respective denominations had no personal connection in their denominational head office, nor did they participate personally in their denomination's ministries.

Significant Church

On the survey, we asked five denomination-related questions to understand how pastors perceived their congregations. Results are graphed in figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 Agreement with select statements about respondent's and respondent's congregation's relationship with their denomination, percent

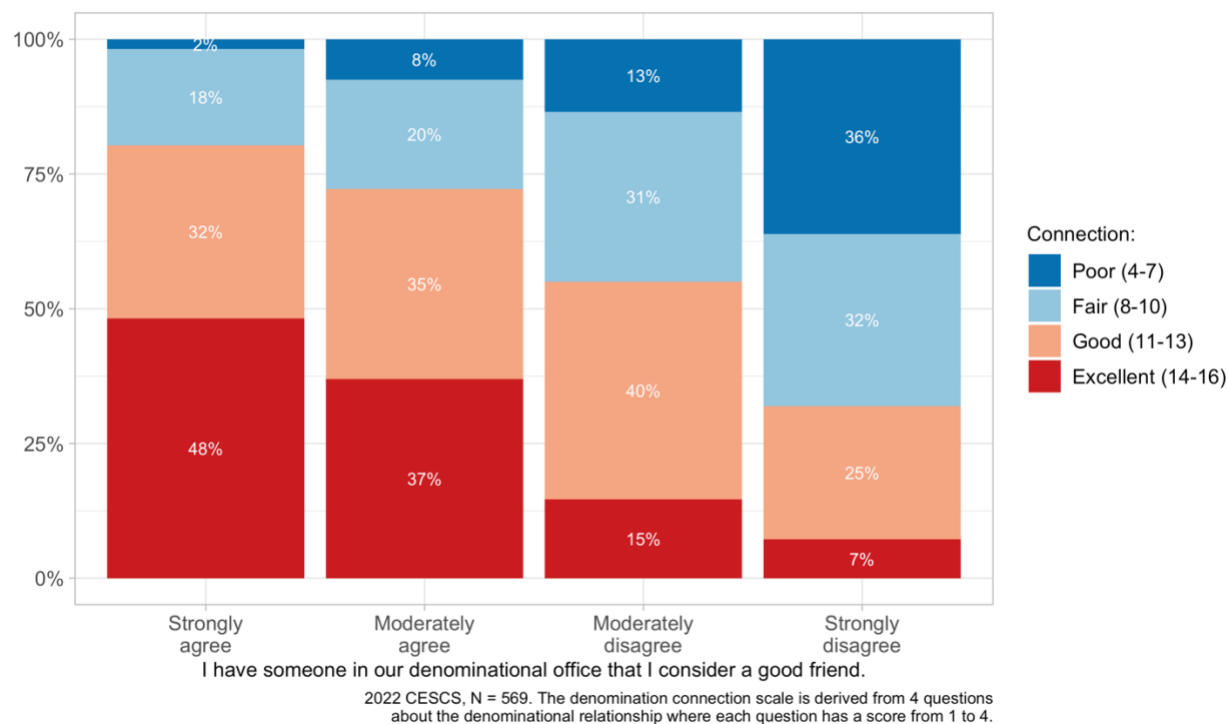


2022 CESCS, N = 569.

Pastors were generally more positive about their denominations on the survey than in interviews, however two-thirds of pastors said they disagreed with the statement that they received monthly calls from a denominational leader to check in and pray with them.

To test if having a personal relationship within a pastor's denomination correlated with a positive view of their denomination, we developed a denominational connection scale based on four of these denominational questions and categorized them by agreement with the statement, "I have someone in our denominational office that I consider a good friend," (see figure 5.2 below).

Figure 5.2 Denominational connection, by whether respondent has a good friend in his/her denominational office, percent



Survey responses supported the observation, from qualitative interviews, that pastors tended to have a better connection with their denomination if they had a personal relationship with a denominational representative.

5.4 Denomination Switching

We noticed that having a positive and supportive connection with the denomination had implications for whether a pastor remained in the denomination. In interviews, there seemed to be a pattern of substantial investment in the pastor from the denomination among those who remained within their denomination. For example, one pastor's denomination heavily invested in her through the process of training and placement. She was given several part-time opportunities as she pursued ordination and the denomination gave her freedom to pursue ministry at a pace and frequency that made it possible for her to switch careers and slowly integrate into her new role. We saw the link between denomination investment and fidelity more generally among second-career women.

Another pastor said he valued theological alignment in his network of pastors which situated him more firmly in his denomination of choice. In ways that surprised us, questions of doctrine were usually in the background in the ways pastors described their denominational transitions.

Significant Church

One pastor said he was caught off-guard by the different ecclesiologies, having switched from a Reformed to an Anabaptist denomination. He said he missed the mutual support and solidarity that was promoted in the more hierarchical structure of the Reformed tradition.

[M]y biggest frustration has been in the relationship between churches to a denomination. The Reformed – that's a strong bond. The denomination is there for the church and the church is there for the denomination. I ... would say [my current] church still functions as independent. ... And the denomination, in some sense, allows that.

Significantly, these ecclesiology differences seem to come as a surprise to him suggesting they were not considered in the decision to change denominations.

Thirty-five percent of survey respondents and about twenty-three percent of pastors we interviewed had switched denominations at some point in their pastoral ministry. In interviews, one pastor used the passive language of “landing” to describe his transition as his choice was a consequence of a flight rather than a choice.

I was in a [Baptist] church for a couple of years and then landed in the [Holiness denomination], and I've been in [Holiness denomination] ever since.

In some cases, respondents mentioned a switch happened simply because it suited their needs at the time, whether that was a job opening or a desired location.

- I was not part of [Pietist/Free Denomination] previously. I had no real experience with the [denomination] before coming [here]. No churches would really look at me because I lacked what they deemed to be applicable experience.
- My wife wanted to be closer to her grandkids and kids. So, we moved.

One pastor seemed to suggest that the more she moved denominations over the course of her career, the less she came to expect from the denomination.

Because I've been through so many denominations, I'm not really expecting a lot from the denomination. But having said that ... I'm not at all disappointed with the support they give. I think they support to the degree that they can. I just ... don't go to the denomination for my personal growth or my personal maturity, cutting edge type things.

Conversely, a pastor who displayed a high degree of denomination fidelity said she was “very well networked,” supported and established in her denomination. She said pastors who feel isolated “just aren’t taking advantage of [their denomination],” but it’s important to note that she also lived near the center of her denominational, academic and ministerial networks.

Significant Church

An Indigenous pastor said he was associated with his denomination simply because “they were the only ones that ever approached our community and helped us structure the church.”

We saw no cases of switching in our French interviews, all of whom were New Canadians, nor from eight of the nine women we interviewed. On the survey, however, twenty-two percent of French respondents and twenty three percent of women had switched denominations.

If denominations want to retain pastors, it is worth noting the value that pastors place in feeling connected to their denominational offices, their sense of loyalty when a denomination has invested in their growth, and the very practical and life stage circumstances that factor into their decisions about switching denominations.

Conclusion

The rate of denominational switching surprised us, but the trends indicate pastoral attitudes toward, and the implications for, denominations. To summarize:

- Switching is often for convenience or employment.
- Pastors seldom reflected on theological differences between their former and current denominational traditions.
- Women were more likely to remain with the denomination that invested in them during their theological formation and education.
- Denominational ties are more often about pastors’ personal relationships with denominational officials than the finer distinctions of denominational theology.

We think these trends show that what ties pastors to denominations is relationships more than doctrine. This doesn’t mean that doctrine is unimportant, but if the move between denominations does not require a re-evaluation of essentials, then pastors seem quite willing to set aside non-essentials, which are often denominational distinctives. There also appears to be a homogenization of evangelical traditions. Perhaps the common worship music, podcasts and books, both theological and popular, are smoothing out differences.

6. COVID-19

The research design for this project did not initially include studying the effects of COVID-19 on small churches. As public health restrictions were implemented shortly after the main literature review was completed in February 2022, the inevitability of the pandemic's impact on churches warranted consideration for this study. Ethics approval for the ministry expert phase of research was obtained before restrictions were implemented, so we did not ask experts about COVID outright. Nevertheless, ministry expert respondents made observations about the threats and opportunities the pandemic posed on small churches during interviews that occurred between July and September 2020.

Interviews with small church pastors took place between March 2, and June 10, 2021, over one year into the pandemic and its associated lockdowns and restrictions on public gatherings. Survey responses were collected from February 15 to April 8, 2022, after about two years of public COVID responses within Canada.

Significantly, responses to COVID in Canada included restrictions on worship gatherings and other church events. COVID did not just mean moving worship services online. Other aspects of church ministry, such as visitation, prayer and Bible study, also moved to virtual spaces. The effects of COVID on small church ministry and small church pastors is explored in the next sections.

6.1 Mastering New Technology

By far, one of the biggest challenges for most pastors we interviewed, was quickly mastering the technology to allow them to move worship services, and other aspects of congregational life, online. Small church pastors were not merely required to be generalists when it came to technology, but to become technological specialists – videographers, video editors, content producers.

This pastor talked about the stress of having to initially devote so much time to learning the technology when his concern was whether his “church [was] going to fall apart.”

So, I think the biggest learning curve for me was just online. We never did any live streaming. We just recorded video – I mean audio – and just, you know, put that on the website. But, you know, having video and – that is – that was a huge kind of learning for me personally. ... And while I kind of used to fret about, you know, wondering, "Is the church going to fall apart?" You know, "Are we going to make it?"

Happily, his church made the transition, and he was surprised by its resilience, but his experience showed that pastors were forced to make choices in the early days of the pandemic that left their congregations vulnerable. For a few pastors, moving services online was relatively easy or “seamless” because they had previously been using the technology.

Oh, [moving online] wasn't a problem at all. I'm not sure why. I knew about Zoom because of – because we're in [city], we had already been doing some things online too. ... So, when the pandemic hit it was actually very seamless for us to just go to Zoom.

This church already had the infrastructure and equipment to support the church's dependence on technology for ministry during COVID. This was not the case for many churches, especially those with smaller budgets in smaller communities. Some pastors told us about having to buy new equipment or upgrade their technological infrastructure to move online. Others said this wasn't a luxury they had. One rural pastor, in addition to learning new technology, had to cope with the limitations of the technology his church had on hand.

Well, at the beginning it was becoming a learner and maintainer of technology. I had to really pick up on Zoom and try and figure out how to make it work. And there were technological issues that we had to deal with just because of our systems weren't working properly. So, there was a lot of troubleshooting for me in a workweek just at the initial start. And then, even as we were going through it, all of a sudden, my computer would just crash on me and so then, because you're a small church, you don't just go out and buy a new one. And, you know, so you're bringing it in for service. So, there was a lot of disruption in that way. I became a maintainer of systems and services in that way, too.

Other churches could not move online because the internet infrastructure would not support it. A rural, Baptist pastor explained the lengths he went to to get their church's worship services posted.

I have been going to the church recording the video and initially we were trying to add children's story and music and all of that. But because we were using Facebook, keep in mind we had no internet here. So, we're [sic] very little internet. So, we were really limited in what we could do. So, I would have to drive into the closest, um, center in order to upload my video every week because the internet here in the village wasn't strong enough. So, a year ago, March, it was, it was quite a feat to get something online. So, the fact that we've had so many views once we uploaded it was amazing to us.

On the survey, if pastors said they moved to online worship, we asked what kind(s) of technological platforms they used to compensate for the limitations COVID imposed on them (figures 6.1 and 6.2 below). Interestingly, most pastors did not use just one platform. Over sixty percent of pastors used two or three platforms for online worship services (figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Number of online platforms used for worship services during COVID, percent

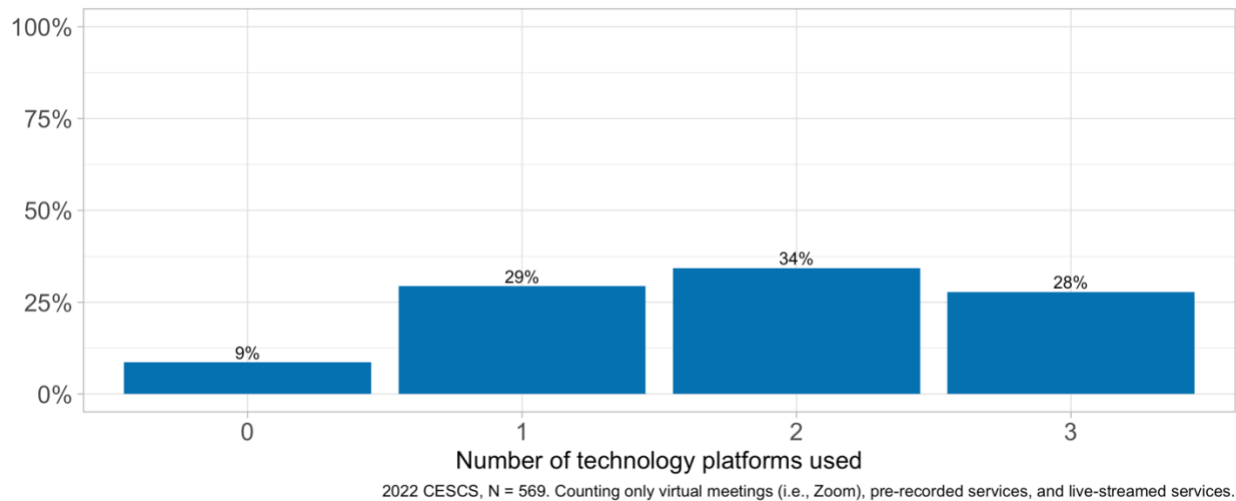
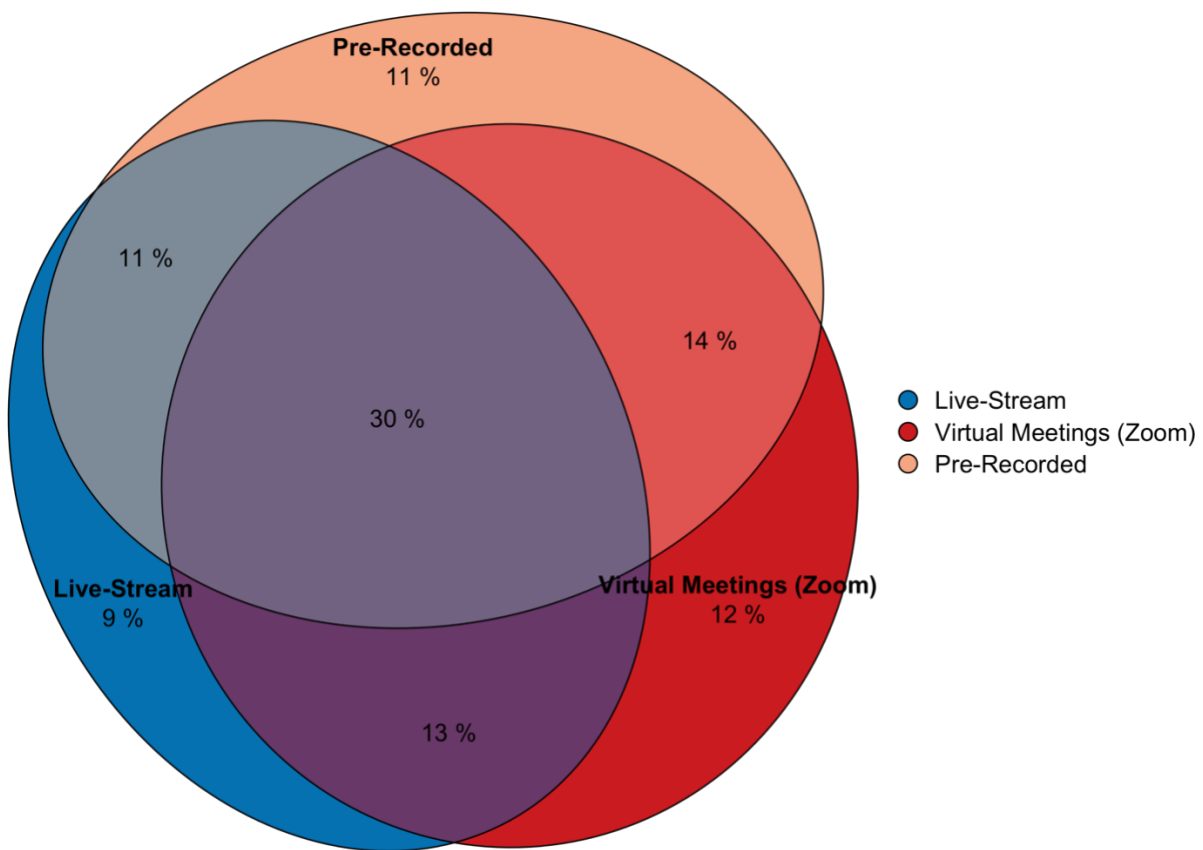


Figure 6.2 Virtual worship service platforms used during COVID, percent



There were basically three modes pastors employed: virtual meetings (i.e., Zoom, Google Meet); pre-recorded services that would later be posted online; and live stream services (i.e.,

through YouTube or Facebook). The breakdown of platforms used are plotted in figure 6.2 above.

The survey did not ask if pastors continued to use all platforms throughout the duration of gathering restrictions, or if they tried several and focused on the better fit for their context. What is important, however, is the number in the center, where all three categories overlap. Thirty percent of small church pastors in our survey were not just mastering one platform but had tried all three. The pandemic introduced a major shift in what was expected of pastors. Considering forty-five percent of pastors considered working with technology a weakness (figure 2.21 in section 2.4.3), and the correlation between ministry effectiveness and pastoral wellbeing (section 2.4), we can expect this negatively impacted many pastors' senses of success and enjoyment from their pastoral duties.

While challenges with technology were pervasive among the pastors we interviewed, and reportedly compounded in rural communities, sixty-eight percent of pastor survey respondents said their churches will continue with online services after all COVID restrictions have been lifted.

- So, it's been – it's part of who we are now as a church, the virtual side of it. And so, we look at when we are able to get back meeting on, you know, live, we'll not only have our live, but we'll also have our virtual church at the same time. That's because it's who we are now.
- Yeah, I think we will continue to do livestreaming or at least have video content and that stuff. So, that's probably going to continue. So, that's for sure.

Only twelve percent said they would not, and another twelve percent said they did not know. The remainder said the question did not apply, suggesting they had always been, or never went, virtual in the first place. The apparent eagerness to continue with online services could reflect a new understanding and rhythm for what ministry entails and an accommodation for the “growth” many pastors gained in virtual attendance.

6.2 COVID and Congregational Budget

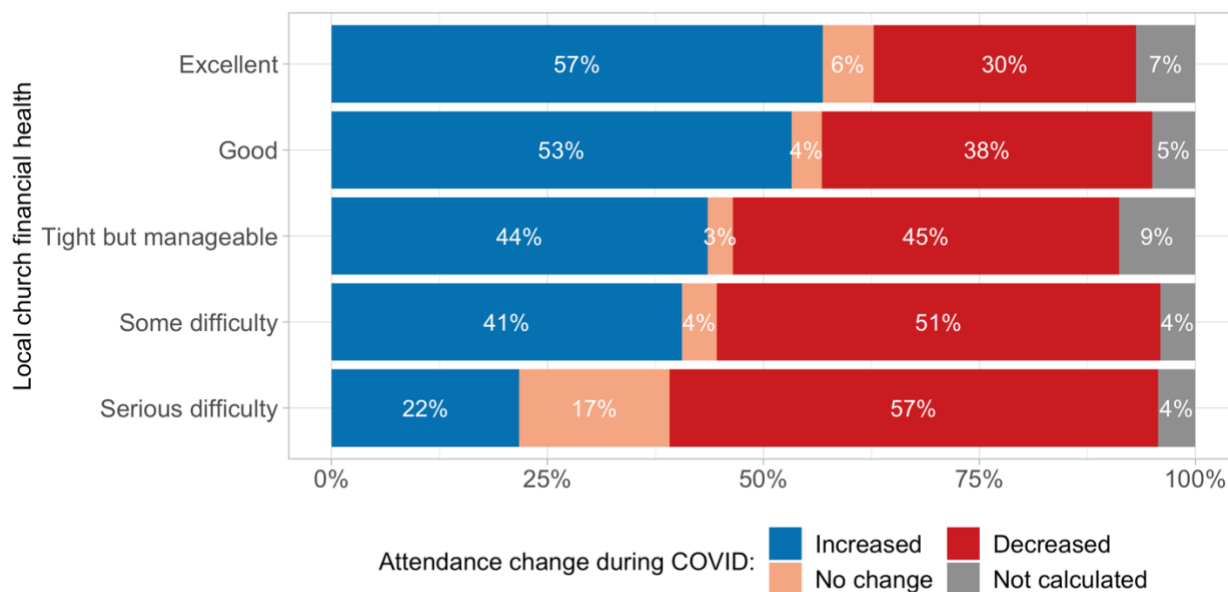
In some interviews, pastors tied an increase in giving, in some cases, to new attendees they connected with online during COVID.

- [P]eople online started to e-transfer money to our church. People who will never, ever come to this church, who will never, ever attend this church, were sending the transfers to the church because of the online service every week.
- We have people that I call part of our virtual church ... that are also tithing into our church.

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Over half the pastors who reported they were in good financial health on the survey also tended to see an increase in physical and virtual attendance during COVID (see figure 6.3 below). It follows that most pastors who reported they were in some, or serious, financial difficulty saw a decrease in attendance.

Figure 6.3 Attendance change from pre-COVID to during COVID using in-person and online attendance, by congregation's financial health, percent



2022 CESCS, N = 569. Survey responses collected between February 15 and April 8, 2022. COVID attendance includes in-person and online attendance. Where either attendance value was 200 or greater the attendance change value was not calculated.

In one interview, a New Canadian pastor talked about how giving was hit because his community uses cash, not online banking. This seems to have been both an issue of familiarity with the technology and a cultural preference for cash:

[B]ecause of our inability to meet physically, donations have gone down very low because most of our people, they are newcomers [to Canada] and unable to – they're, you know, they don't use the technology to donate. They would come to church and, you know, with cash, and they would donate it.

When virtual attendance was not counted, pastors, for the most part, saw a decrease in physical, in-person attendance during COVID.

6.3 COVID and Worship

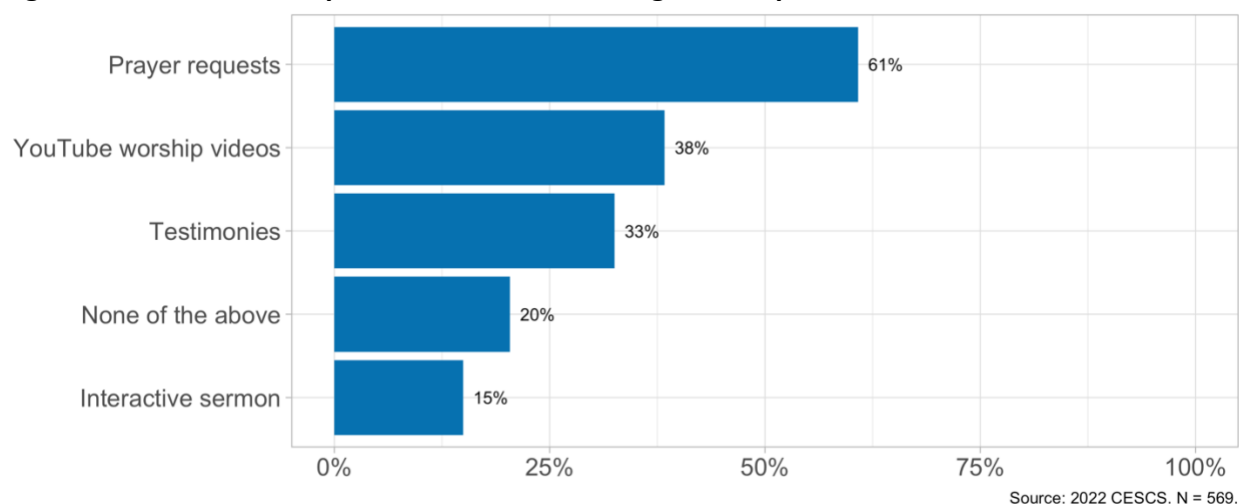
There was a great deal of variability in public health restrictions on in-person worship gatherings during the pandemic depending on case counts and each government or public health authority's tolerance for risk. Most churches, at some point during the pandemic, moved their worship services online. A denominational leader, reflecting on the nature of worship in a

Significant Church

small church, concluded that in the time of COVID “people actually needed the *content* [what a large church tends to offer] less and the connection [what a small church tends offer] more.”

Pastors indicated on the survey they were still intentional about providing some of the distinct elements of small church worship; elements that offered connection, like interaction, prayer requests and testimonies, albeit virtually (figure 6.4 below).

Figure 6.4 Online worship service elements during COVID, percent



Almost two out of three pastors said they maintained a time for prayer requests in their virtual services, and another third incorporated testimonies. Many of the pastors we interviewed talked about the importance of personal testimonies and prayer requests in their worship services. These testimonies provide connection, participation, or an opportunity to let the other congregants know about a need. In this sense, it is a way for others to be aware of and respond to each other’s needs.

Thirty-eight percent of pastors said they used YouTube worship videos to complement the musical portion of the service. We learned from interviews that during the pandemic, as churches moved their worship services online, they suddenly had to consider a whole new set of streaming license rules and regulations.⁹⁴

Churches are required to obtain a Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) license to use contemporary worship music in their worship services.⁹⁵ Several pastors talked about platforms, like Facebook, shutting down worship services for apparent copyright violations. A cursory examination of the terms found on the CCLI’s Streaming License Terms of Agreement page, shows a somewhat bewildering set of regulations – what is permitted and not permitted.⁹⁶ Given the descriptions of worship services we heard in our interviews, it seems

⁹⁴ CCLI Streaming License Terms of Agreement. <https://us.ccli.com/streaming-license-terms-of-agreement/>.

⁹⁵ Christian Copyright Licensing International. <https://us.ccli.com/>.

⁹⁶ CCLI Streaming License Terms of Agreement. <https://us.ccli.com/streaming-license-terms-of-agreement/>.

unlikely that most churches were fully in compliance. We suspect many pastors were simply unaware of the additional or different licensing rules or regulations required for streaming and online worship services.

Moving online was most often addressed as a technical issue or one affecting worship music or fellowship. Two pastors made astute observations during interviews, that online sermons had to be shortened to twenty to twenty-five minutes because longer sermons did not hold people's attention, or they represented too great a commitment to expect online. This shows how the online medium shaped worship services.

There were a variety of different COVID adaptations mentioned by pastors. Churches experienced an ever-changing set of restrictions to in-person worship that differed by region. Some of the activities described here may have been permitted at some times and in some places but not in others.

One pastor printed out people's names and set them on chairs prior to their morning service. They likely could have found a seat without the named chairs, but it communicated that they had a place in the church at a time when people felt disconnected. Another pastor mentioned he recorded his sermons in the church building "so that people who were familiar with the church would see a familiar background." A rural pastor said, "[O]ne time we went out to one of the [nearby] lakes and did a communion service for online [sic]. You know, different things like that."

6.4 Divisions over COVID Restrictions

Differences of opinion about how churches should respond to public health authorities' restrictions on worship gatherings caused divisions in many pastors' congregations. One 2022 report, studying church leadership and health protocols, said Evangelicals were the most divided on this issue among the Christian traditions represented in their survey.⁹⁷

A pastor we spoke with said his congregation decided to stop meeting in person during the pandemic in compliance with public health guidelines. The pastor explained the way COVID tensions have transfigured the people in the congregation, both surprising and disappointing him in some cases.

I think it's really fractured some of our expectations. There are those that are like, "No, we're good staying home." There's [sic] others, like, "Why aren't we meeting? You know, they can't tell us what to do." And those emotions are right at the surface. As well-intentioned as our decisions are, it has, I think, revealed to some people that they either don't need church or that they're maybe less – I'll say, I was going to say, committed. That may not be [indistinct]. Their ties to the church are more along the

⁹⁷ "The Next Normal: The Future of Christian Ministries and Churches in Canada" (WayBase, April 2022).

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lines, "If the church makes me happy, I'll be here. But if it doesn't make me happy, I'm out of here."

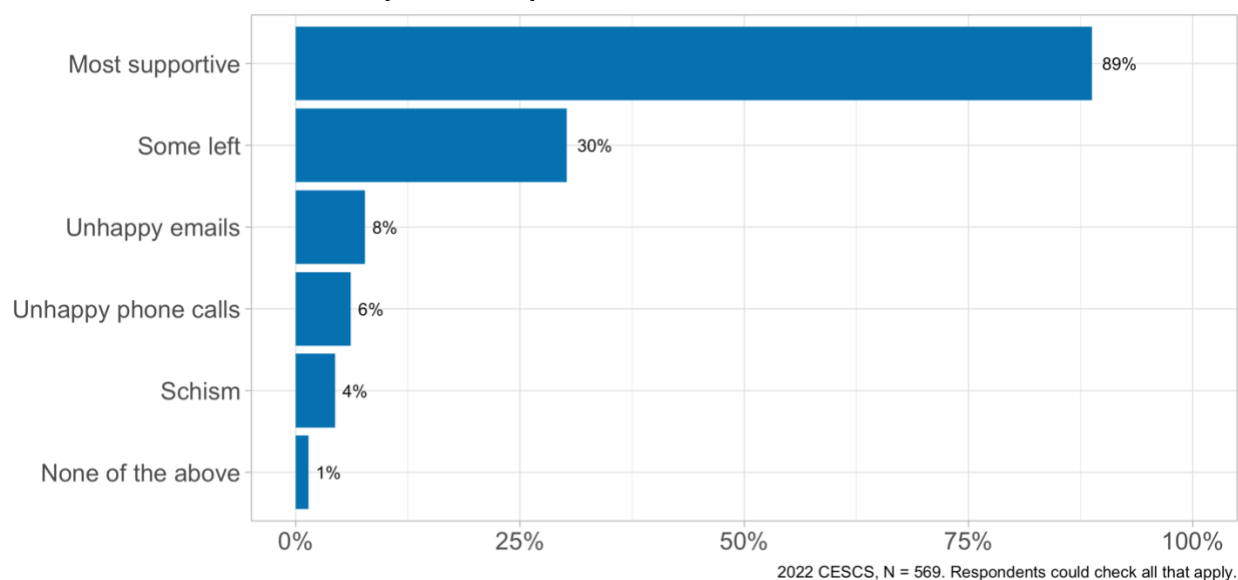
Thinking through how to respond to COVID lockdown orders was difficult for many pastors. On a theological level, this pastor thought his church should stay open, but ultimately, they decided to close in compliance with public health orders.

It troubled me in one sense because I think we should be open. But I recognize I'm dealing with people [in my congregation] who have a different – the degrees of understanding ... for some it's fearful ... I have some members in the church that say, "No, we should open. Just open. Open." ... I have to look at it from everyone else's perspective. So, from my perspective it's trying to keep people together. So, as much as it depends on me, you know, as Paul says, keep the peace. So, I'm looking at it, "What is the best course of action?" Is this necessarily a hill to die on, as they would say? ... We have to be careful with our community, we have to be careful with what we do.

Note that he weighed theology, internal and external church unity, external community perception and people's fears – a nuanced and complex decision-making process – knowing that he had only two options, open or close, neither of which was satisfactory.

Many pastors we spoke with said they lost, or would lose, congregants because of decisions they made in response to COVID public health restrictions on worship. About one third of the pastors we surveyed said some congregants left their church. Almost ninety percent of pastors said *most* of their congregation was supportive of their decisions in compliance with public health authorities. Four percent, roughly twenty churches, said divisions over public health compliance led to a schism in their church.

Figure 6.5 Congregations' responses to decisions in compliance with public health authorities' COVID restrictions on worship services, percent



An autumn 2021 Maru/EFC survey of 3,025 Canadians, over the age of eighteen, indicated that one in five pre-COVID attendees will likely not return to church. The reasons are broader than just disagreement over COVID, but most pastors took their COVID decisions knowing that no matter what they decided they would likely lose people.

6.5 COVID's Effects on Pastors

Pastors are tired. In the quotes that follow, pastors talk about mental, spiritual and physical exhaustion, using language like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to describe what lies ahead for them. The following pastor's description of where she finds herself after more than a year of COVID is long and frenetic. She talks about the ceaselessly changing circumstances she must cope with and the feeling that she just cannot rest – not yet.

I know everybody's at home, so it would almost seem like you're getting rest – but mentally, my brain has always been going, "What's going to happen next week? What changes are going to be made to how we're supposed to do things? What's the government asking us to do?" Your brain is also always kind of thinking, "You know, there are people right across the pendulum that think we should be following everything that they put out to a tee, and then you have right on the other end of the spectrum people who think we shouldn't have to follow what the government is asking us to do. They shouldn't be asking churches to close down. They shouldn't be asking us to wear a mask." So, you have people that are right across, and you try – like, for me, I try to see both sides and then in the end you have to go, "Okay, well, what is best for us as a church? What does God want us to do?" And that's also exhausting to try to get in there with what we should be doing as opposed to what this person says all the way around the pendulum there.

This next pastor described his exhaustion – prompting him to consider early retirement.

I'm exhausted. [laughs] You know, not just physically but emotionally. I would even say spiritually. ... I'm [nearing retirement age]. I haven't thought much about retirement until COVID started. ... I think for me personally, there's a fatigue that is kind of deep in the bones fatigue that – I'm not questioning my call. I haven't written a resignation letter. But my mind wanders to whether – how much longer I can do this. And to be fair, do I have what it takes to continue with this? You know, is this a job for a younger man? Is this, you know, is my season over? It's caused me to question not that I'm called to ministry, I do know that. But is it over here or am I done with pastoral ministry?

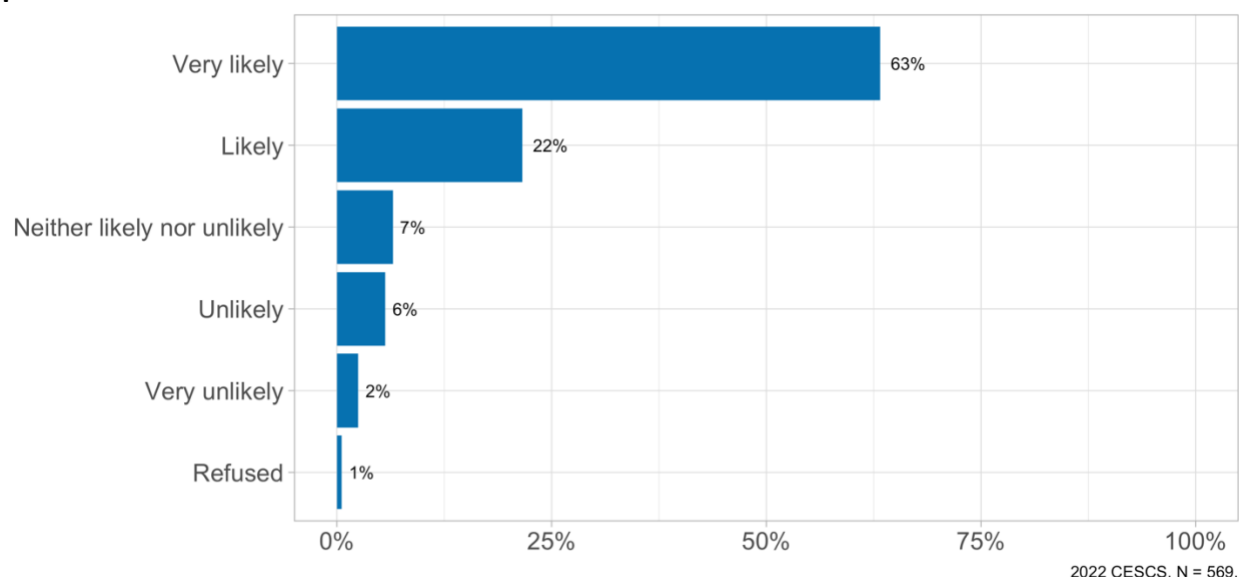
He went on to speculate churches will see a lot of pastoral turnovers when the pandemic ends. When asked, "Why then and not now?" he replied:

[laughs] Well, I think in the middle of a pandemic there's not a lot of options to go to, for one. I think there's also a sense of responsibility. I think in the middle of battle most

of us as pastors feel like we have a responsibility to stick it out until maybe it gets better or see it through.

At the time of the survey, about sixty-three percent of pastors said they were very likely to remain in pastoral ministry by the next year with about fifteen percent of pastors saying they were unsure, or it was unlikely they would remain in pastoral ministry (see figure 6.6 below). There was no significant difference in whether pastors said they would be in pastoral ministry a year from now, by gender.

Figure 6.6 How likely pastors said they were to be in pastoral ministry a year from now^a, percent



^a Survey responses collected between February 15 to April 8, 2022 during the COVID pandemic.

Because pastors were asked to conceive of where they would be in a year and taking the sense of duties pastors felt they owed to their congregations into consideration, the impact of COVID on pastoral turnover may have yet to take its final effect on churches across Canada. Pastors did talk about some of the immediate effects the pandemic had on them.

An urban pastor highlighted the physical toll of the sedentary and stationary lifestyle induced by an online existence.

And so, the prayer meetings, the life groups, everything has pivoted online. So, it's changed significantly in terms of – regards to the aches and pains and getting from being online too much, and then the inability to actually do any of the running around, physical exercise that I normally do as you can see my day, my normal day. That has really put a strain on my physical system.

Several pastors talked about the increased administrative burden created by COVID public health restrictions.

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- And then, of course, like, throughout the week it's like people calling to register for church or, you know, making a Facebook post about this or having to deal with, you know, making calls to head office about something or about the cemetery – like, you know, there's all that little stuff.
- But, yeah, I find myself doing more administrative, technological work than I did in the past, I guess, is pretty much what's taking up most of my time now.
- Other tech things. You know, like, how is it on our website now. Things like that. We tried to adapt to that. And that kind of landed on me, which is okay – not always okay, but that's [indistinct] during COVID.

Some pastors talked about the positive ways their congregations adapted to COVID restrictions, suggesting COVID has not been all trial and division. A young pastor who thrives in online environments said:

[Our congregation has] tried seventeen new things, new forms of ministry, new ideas in this year of COVID, and we've had 100 percent participation from our church in almost everyone. It's like there's a willingness. And so, when we saw that willingness of a country church to want to make an impact and want to change, we said, "You know what? We want to come here because that's ultimately what it's about." And it's not that often you see a church celebrating.

Another pastor marveled at the people who “stepped up” to help the church adapt.

Some of [the congregants] have researched better ways to do our online media offerings so that we can do services at the same time and help, and they were very quick to adapt to the constant changes that were happening, especially last spring and earlier this fall. Yeah, it's just been really great to see how a number of people just kind of stepped up and made church better for everyone.

6.6 Rural Difference

Some rural pastors talked about public health orders as restrictions designed for urban contexts. This rural pastor's church complied with public health orders but saw the public health emergency as more of an urban issue.

Honestly, it hasn't had nearly as bad an impact as it would, say, if it was a Toronto church. Because we're out in the country, most of the people here haven't been hugely affected by it. Although, there – some are a little bit nervous about going out. So, a lot of them are just sort of staying home. They're just, you know, staying away from the

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public. But for the most part, people here are quite free to just spend time outside. They have lots of property, they're out in the country.

A rural, Indigenous pastor questioned the government's designation of church as non-essential and, for the most part, kept his church open during the pandemic.

I don't understand why the government would not consider a church as essential. I mean. But we didn't really follow the government's guidelines on that one. We still went ahead and opened our church. The only time I closed it was when our local government encouraged us to. So, you know, I only closed the church – I did twice in the last year and a half because I said, you know, "We're not afraid here."

Keeping the church open, however, did not mean they did not take any precautions.

So, I felt sorry for the elders. Those were the ones that I felt sorry for because, you know, elders like to hug kids, they like to hug you. And I had to explain to them, "We can't hug."

Staying open or closed was not a question of not respecting the government.

For now, we feel strongly that the Lord would have us continue to obey the government as much as we possibly can, insofar as we can still obey God and what He commands us to do as a church.

When the Indigenous congregation did close in response to government requests, it was at the request of their local government, not the provincial government. It is likely that the local government was also substantially Indigenous. Closing in response to one government and not another seems to be a question of which one is viewed as legitimate.

Another rural pastor talked about encouraging his congregation to respect other's differences on COVID worship restrictions before concluding:

I will say, you know, rural community, it's very – being more far from urban centres, far from the virus itself, it's very, almost, non-existent in this area. So, it's been hard to do some of the things that the government mandates.

At the point of this interview, his view of COVID was that it was primarily an urban issue. Clearly, he, and the other two pastors quoted in this section, believed that COVID restrictions were too blunt an instrument that did not consider different rural and urban realities.

6.7 Other Ministry Elements

Many other aspects of ministry and church life were touched by the pandemic to varying degrees and effects, like children's ministry, small groups ministries, visitation and giving.

Significant Church

Small church pastors and ministry experts often mentioned, in interviews, how children were welcomed into the life (and worship services) of small churches. For example:

We have a number of young children, so we – there's a little nursery space at the back where mothers can take their children, but we don't – I certainly don't discourage children in the service. And so, you'll hear babies, you'll hear little ones, and it's welcome.

Children's participation in church life, however, was particularly hard hit during COVID restrictions. For the most part, livestreaming or Zoom services were not sufficiently interactive to hold their attention. Children's programs were shut down because of COVID restrictions and a lack of volunteers.

Adult ministries, like adult small groups, were also mentioned as moving online. Reception was mixed. Some pastors mentioned starting groups for those struggling with "addiction or mental health issues," those looking for "support or friendship," or those struggling with "loneliness, depression." Our interview sample was small, but women's online groups were mentioned more often than men's. One New Canadian pastor talked about how moving online "collapsed" his discipleship groups. It is likely that the difficult availability he mentions is driven by a combination of limited access to technology and variability in work schedules.

During COVID, for many of the pastors we spoke with, pastoral visitation moved, not online but onto the telephone. The telephone makes a listening connection, whereas Zoom is predominantly a medium of the eyes – a *video* conferencing platform. Clearly, pastors recognized that amid the stresses of COVID, people had a greater need to be heard than seen. Several pastors organized phone trees, a ministry tool from the past, to help keep their congregants connected. However, several of the pastors took on the task themselves and talked about how they got to know their congregants better because of these extended COVID telephone conversations.

- I would spend my time in here in the office, you know, phoning the members of our church, seeing how they're doing, praying with them, really getting a chance to know who they are and what's going on. It was a really great opportunity. I found out more about the congregation because you've got their undivided attention.
- Nobody's said, "Listen, you know, you don't have to call me every week." I think they've come to look forward to it. I think many of them are lonesome and just need that connection.

Conclusion

As has been observed at several times in this report, intimacy, relationships and fellowship are important parts of small church life. One pastor quipped, "So [chuckles] I often think, you know, the price people pay for a good fellowship is, you know, they've got to sit through my sermon."

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Other pastors talked about potlucks being “a huge part of our church [life].” Good fellowship and potlucks were among the first casualties during pandemic restrictions, and they may be the last to recover in the wake of reopening.

Pastors were not aloof to the spiritual impacts of what the loss of physical community meant for their congregations. A New Canadian pastor thought not meeting physically created “spiritual weakness” in her congregants’ walks with the Lord. Another pastor identified the disembodied services as gnostic, a heretical teaching that devalues the physical world seeing salvation in terms of escaping the limits of our physical existence. Small churches are in recovery. Pastoral and congregational care will be a continued need as institutions who offer ministry support monitor the effects of the pandemic on small churches in Canada.

7. Social Issues

Over the course of this study, and especially in interviews, pastors referred to significant issues they were facing that reflected the cultural moment in which the phases of study occurred. For example, during pastor interviews, pastors expressed concern over Bill C-6, which aimed to prohibit “conversion therapy” with a definition that had the potential to criminalize some kinds of Christian teaching and pastoral practice.⁹⁸ During the national survey, the bill was reintroduced and passed as C-4 and came into effect on January 7, 2022. Other cultural issues pastors mentioned were the revelations of residential school graves in Kamloops, prominent stories about racism, proposed public policy changes to medical assistance in dying (MAiD), continued issues related to LGBTQ+, climate change, etc.

In interviews, some pastors spoke about their need for help in understanding social issues, especially those that affected laws that concerned pastoral ministry.

I think churches need to be – need help on how to look at these bigger issues. We're just – a lot of us pastors are just busy, we're small, you know, maybe not smart enough, I don't know. But, so, we need to know that some of these bigger issues that may affect us legally are being well thought out, and they can give us some direction.

Two pastors spoke of working to address social justice issues with their congregations. One pastor led his congregation through some material on social justice. Notice how he was at pains to emphasize the biblical nature of the resource as a way of heading off anticipated criticism.

I wanted to address some of the social justice stuff. I used a small book that someone suggested to me online. Again, I can't remember the name of it, but it was basically a twenty-page primer, and I found it very useful, very biblical. So, we went through that over two meetings. So, their – some of their heads were spinning, to be honest, but then I would engage them in conversation afterwards and say, you know, “How are you doing on this? I saw that, you know, you were struggling with it a bit.” And then, we can talk about it more conversationally, and that was good.

Another pastor also sought to address social justice issues but felt the need to emphasize “a more biblical and balanced approach.”

Even just in the last year or so, you know, there's been some huge issues – social justice issues that have come up recently like the George Floyd conviction and things like that. Like, these are topics that are huge in our culture, and we need to address these things in our churches. So, just being a voice that [indistinct] and maybe addresses it from, you know, a more biblical and balanced approach, maybe, on some of the things you see plastered on Facebook ... but, like, the people who have the more polarized view – and there's not many – but, like, thankfully they don't talk to me about it.

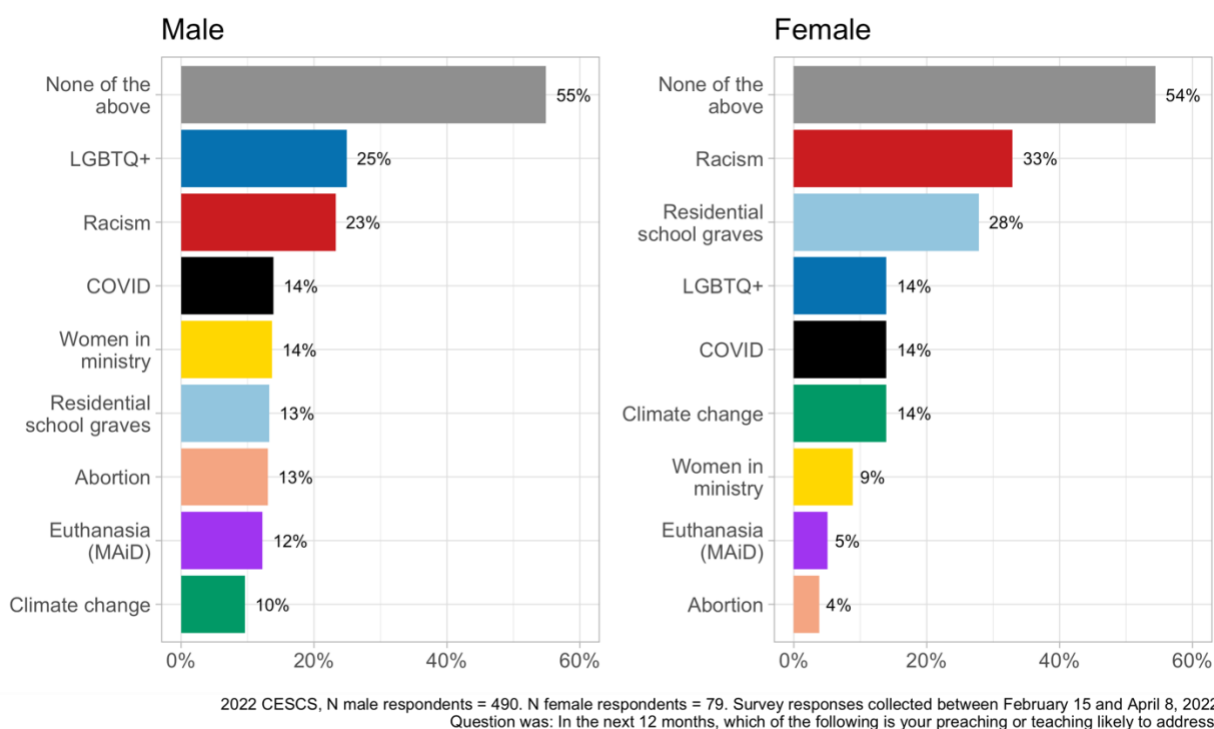
⁹⁸ “EFC - Bill C-6 to Ban Conversion Therapy,” October 5, 2020, <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/C-6>.

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In her case, addressing these issues with the congregation seemed more aspirational. Looming in the background are the few people with “the more polarized view” whom she is thankful do not talk to her about these issues. So, there is a tension – on the one hand she wants to raise them, on the other, she wants to avoid conflict over them.

Taking a cue from pastoral concerns with social issues, in our interviews, we decided to survey which topics pastors would address in their preaching and teaching in the next year. In figure 7.1 below, over half of pastors said that they did *not* intend to address any of the issues. In early presentations of the data, however, some pastors who had taken the survey clarified that they answered with the understanding that a preaching topic meant the subject would be the main point of the sermon, so the prevalence of “none of the above” could reflect pastors’ convictions about what constitutes a preaching topic. It may also be that they do not feel equipped enough to address these sensitive topics in a cultural context where having the “wrong” position could make you a pariah on social media or even cause division within their congregations.

Figure 7.1 Planned preaching and teaching topics for the next year, by gender, percent



Notice the difference in topics that male and female pastors said they planned to address. Men said they were more likely to address gender and sexuality issues, and racism, women were more likely to address racism and residential school graves.

Evangelicals have a historical tension with mainline churches that characterize themselves as the proponents of a social gospel. Often, concerns with social justice issues are bundled together with the social gospel which is perceived by many evangelicals to be rooted in liberal

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theology. Because of this association, there is sometimes a guilt-by-association dynamic at play where evangelicals avoid teaching on social justice issues because it might mark them as theologically liberal. The tragedy of this dynamic is that it often prevents Evangelicals from vigorously proclaiming the whole gospel in word and deed.

Conclusion

The research objective for the CESCO was to understand the needs of small churches through their pastors. A few themes from the interviews are that denominational attention, ministry resources, training institutions and even pastoral aspirations, are largely bent toward a large church context. Since most evangelical churches in Canada are small, we risk detrimental effects on the Church if we do not pay attention to what they have to say.

Supporting small churches well means understanding size dynamics, the idea that the small church operates in accordance with its size. Size not only refers to weekly attendance, staffing or budget lines, but means congregants have intimate relationships, worship services are unpolished and participatory, and the pastor often functions as administrator, IT specialist and custodian. Asking a small church to change these prescribed dynamics requires an understanding of the community in which the church is situated, the pastor's gifts and inclinations as a leader, and the congregations' ownership over how and why the church exists.

What we interpreted as a *congregational covenant* was a theme that informed much of our understanding about small churches. Respect for faithfulness to founding covenants and trust earned over time, are key components for carefully implementing change in the small church. It will be important for pastors and denominational leaders to navigate the differences in what *kinds* of change they desire for the small church because the typical small church pastor in our sample wanted to see spiritual growth in their church, whereas denominations tend to promote quantifiable growth. These goals for the small church translated into how entities viewed success, having implications for pastor-denomination connections and a pastor's sense of success and satisfaction in their work. A key finding was that most pastors did not rely on the measures of the annual statistical report to inform their personal sense of success but rather on their own qualitative system of measurement.

A common theme we heard from pastors was their theological education was focused on academic rather than pastoral subjects and did not adequately prepare them for the realities of small church ministry. Clearly there is a need for small church ministry tracks in Bible colleges and seminaries. Half the pastors surveyed were within twelve years of retirement age. There will need to be greater focus on calling and training small church pastors if churches are to continue to have pastoral leadership.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many of the norms of small church ministry as pastors scrambled to acquire the technological equipment and know-how to successfully move their ministries online. Sixty-eight percent of surveyed pastors said they planned to offer digital options for worship once pandemic restrictions lifted, indicating a major shift in expectations for small church ministry and the pastoral role. In addition to mastering new technologies, small church pastors handled division in their congregations, shrinking budgets and reported increased stress and loneliness. The impact of COVID on small churches and their pastors may have latent effects.

Reports of lack of support, access and isolation were widespread in our pastor interviews. We believe the concepts of network distance is a helpful way to describe the need for pastors to connect with supportive people rather than access more information. New Canadian and women clergy also face challenges specific to their contexts and experiences, requiring special attention for incorporating them into meaningful networks.

We have sought to amplify small church voices and listen to the grudges and glories those voices have to share. One of the greatest needs we identified from interviews was for denominations to understand the ways in which small churches are different and to support their ministries in appropriate ways. Pastors often described themselves in their role as generalists, having to take on a wider portfolio of duties than preaching and visitation. But small church pastors are specialists in small church ministry, and they specialize in caring for their people in their context: “I know my people and I’ve been here long enough.”

To the best of our ability, we have captured the dominant themes and ideas that ministry experts and pastors raised in our semi-structured interviews. Our goal with this document was to interpret overlapping and interdependent themes and present them in a clear and understandable way, while maintaining the voices and perspectives of our respondents. Some emphases and observations were different between phases of research, chiefly in the absence of conversations about leadership style and vision casting with pastors that were predominant among denominational leaders. The survey confirmed many of our hypotheses from interviews and painted a broader picture of the small church landscape across Canada.

We set out to understand from pastors what small churches need to function and flourish in Canada. We believe due focus on supporting pastors in, and adequately preparing pastors for, small church ministry will impact the Church for the better. More simply, small churches need to be understood and respected. This report is an opportunity to care for small churches as they *are* rather than how they are *not*.

We sincerely hope small churches will be supported and strengthened to the glory of God.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Expansion
CESCS	Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study
CGM	Church Growth Movement
COVID-19, COVID	Coronavirus 19 disease
CRCF	Centre for Research on Church & Faith
DK	Don't know
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid, genetic material
EFC	Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
Gen-X	Generation X, a sociological generation
Gen-Y	Generation Y, also Millennials, a sociological generation
Gen-Z	Generation Z, a sociological generation
HR	Human resources
NA	Not applicable
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PNTS	Prefer Not To Say
ROC	Rest Of Canada (i.e., excluding Quebec)
VBS	Vacation Bible School
StatCan	Statistics Canada

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
New Canadian church	A church where more than half the adult population are first-generation immigrants. We define New Canadian congregations as those where more than half the adult population are first-generation immigrants.
Church adoption	A church adoption involves the larger church taking a smaller one into its administrative structure and making the church a <i>site</i> or a <i>campus</i> of the larger church.

Appendix A. Methodology

The Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study (CESCS) is a multi-phase, mixed methods, ministry research study. The research is sponsored and guided by a ministry partnership between:

- Apostolic Church of Pentecost
- Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada
- Canadian Baptists of Ontario & Quebec
- Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
- Canadian Midwest District, Christian & Missionary Alliance
- Evangelical Free Church of Canada
- Pinewoods Chapel & Vision Ministries Canada
- Small Church Connections
- The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
- The Wesleyan Church of Canada
- Tyndale University

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's (EFC) Centre for Research on Church & Faith (CRCF) was commissioned to conduct the research.

The CESCS had seven phases outlined in table A1. Several of which will be described in more detail below.

Table A1. CESES phases

Phase	Time Period
Consultation	2019-05-21 – 2019-05-22
Partnership Formation	2019-05-23 – 2019-10-07
Literature Review	2019-10-08 – 2020-02-10
Ministry Expert Interviews	2020-02-11 – 2020-11-27
Pastor Interviews	2020-11-28 – 2021-11-18
National Survey	2021-11-19 – 2022-12-31
Dissemination of Findings	2023

Each phase involving human subjects was reviewed by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (TREB). The CESCS is an iterative research project with each phase building on what has been learned in the previous phases. The whole project involving human subjects was initially reviewed by the TREB and received clearance on June 30, 2020. However, this clearance was only for the ministry expert interviews with the pastor interviews and national survey phases receiving conditional clearance subject to future documents such as unwritten questionnaires receiving clearance prior to the commencement of their respective phases. Clearance for the pastor interview phase and the national survey were received on February 8, 2021, and January 12, 2022, respectively.

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Small church pastors affiliated with one of the EFC's affiliate denominations were chosen as the primary research population.⁹⁹ We also interviewed ministry experts (in other contexts, called key informants) who were academics, denominational leaders, leaders of ministry organizations serving small churches, and some small church pastors themselves.

A1. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted between October 8, 2019, and February 10, 2020, resulting in the interim report "CESCS Literature Review."¹⁰⁰

A2. Ministry Expert Interviews

The CESCS partnership committee, in consultation with the researchers, established a set of quotas for the ministry expert interviews sample to help ensure representativeness.¹⁰¹ The CESCS partnership committee then nominated ministry experts with these quotas in view, and researchers then sampled twenty-four ministry experts from a nominated pool of thirty-four to establish the quotas for representativeness. Three of twenty-four interviews were conducted in French.

Lindsay Callaway, Stéphane Couture and Rick Hiemstra conducted and recorded one-hour, semi-structured telephone interviews with ministry experts between July 7 and September 24, 2020.

Where consent was given by respondents, English interviews were initially transcribed using AWS Transcribe transcription service, and by research staff otherwise. Initial transcriptions were proofed by a CRCF staff.

Two coding and annotating passes were made for each interview, one by Rick Hiemstra and the other by Lindsay Callaway. Coding themes were generated from the interview content and from what was learned in previous phases of this research.

The interim phase report "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Ministry Expert Interviews Report" was presented to the CESCS partnership committee on November 27, 2020.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Affiliation/Our-affiliates> for a list of the EFC's current denominational affiliates.

¹⁰⁰ Callaway and Hiemstra, "CESCS Literature Review."

¹⁰¹ For quotas and how they were met, see tables A1 through A4 in Hiemstra and Callaway, "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Ministry Expert Interviews Report," 115–16.

¹⁰² Hiemstra and Callaway, "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Ministry Expert Interviews Report."

A3. Pastor Interviews

Quotas for the pastor, semi-structured interview sample were set in consultation with the CESCS partnership committee with the goal of ensuring representativeness for our research population.¹⁰³

The sampling pool was generated by inviting EFC denominational leaders to nominate a representative sample of five to six of their respective denomination's small church pastors subject to the following criteria:

- Pastors currently serving in a congregation with an average weekly worship service attendance of 150 or less.
- Pastors of churches they considered to be both healthy and unhealthy.
- Pastors of church plants were excluded.
- If possible, pastors of French, Indigenous or New Canadian¹⁰⁴ congregations were included.
- If possible, pastors of both rural and urban congregations were represented.
- Nominations must represent the regions their respective denominations minister in.

Twenty-eight denominations nominated a total of 194 pastors, and we interviewed thirty-one pastors from twenty-six of these denominations.

Thirty-one semi-interviews, lasting forty-five to sixty minutes, were conducted and recorded by telephone between March 2, and June 10, 2021. English-language interviews were conducted by Lindsay Callaway and Rick Hiemstra, and French-language interviews were conducted by Stéphane Couture. Four of thirty-one interviews were conducted in French.

Where consent was given by respondents, English interviews were initially transcribed using AWS Transcribe transcription service, and by research staff otherwise. Initial transcriptions were proofed by a CRCF staff. English-language transcriptions were done by Melody Bellefeuille-Frost and French-language transcriptions by Eliana Wolfe.

Two coding and annotating passes were made for each interview, one by Rick Hiemstra and the other by Lindsay Callaway. Coding themes were generated from interview content and from what was learned in previous phases of this research.

The interim phase report "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Pastor Interviews Report" was presented to the CESCS partnership committee on November 18, 2021.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ For quotas and how these were met see tables A2 through A8 in Hiemstra and Callaway, "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Pastor Interviews Report," 185–87.

¹⁰⁴ New Canadian congregations are those where more than half the adult population are first-generation immigrants.

¹⁰⁵ Hiemstra and Callaway, "Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study Pastor Interviews Report."

A4. National Survey Sample

Our national survey questionnaire was written to reflect and test what we learned in the CESCS's previous phases.

Survey responses were collected in English and French on the SurveyMonkey platform from February 15 to April 8, 2022. A referral sample was solicited through:

- Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) affiliate denominational¹⁰⁶ leaders
- A media release to Christian media on launch day
- Social media campaigns
- *The EFC Update* weekly email newsletter
- CESCS partner affiliate networks.

EFC-affiliate denominational leaders were invited to forward our survey invitation to pastors of small churches within their respective denominations. Only twenty of the EFC's forty-five affiliate denominations confirmed their participation in the study, and qualified responses were received from thirty-seven of the EFC's affiliate denominations.

Referral samples are prone to selection bias; the tendency for those who care most about a topic to respond. The following section will explore where bias may have crept into the sample. We will compare the distributions of our sample to the provincial and tradition distributions of EFC-affiliated small churches provided to the researchers by WayBase¹⁰⁷ and by comparing the sample to the Canadian population.

The survey received 977 responses; 922 English and 55 French. Incomplete responses or those originating from a non-Canadian IP address were removed from the sample, leaving 569 qualified responses.

¹⁰⁶ For a list of the EFC's current denominational affiliates see <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Affiliation/Our-affiliates>.

¹⁰⁷ Thank you to Kevin Phang at WayBase who provided the counts to the researchers on September 7, 2021.

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The provincial distribution of qualified responses was a reasonably good match for the distribution of EFC-affiliate small churches provided to the researchers by WayBase on September 7, 2021, the overrepresentation of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador in our sample being the notable exceptions (see table A2).¹⁰⁸ Compared to the Canadian population distribution, our sample was underrepresented in Quebec and overrepresented in the prairie provinces and the Atlantic provinces.

Table A2. Distributions of qualified responses, WayBase's list of EFC-affiliate small churches, and 2022 Q1 population estimates, by province and territory, counts and percent

Province or Territory	Counts			Percentage distribution		
	CESCS sample	WayBase small evang. congs. ^a	2022 Q1 population estimates ^b	CESCS sample	WayBase small evang. congs. ^a	2022 Q1 population estimates ^b
BC	76	601	5,264,485	13.4	15.4	13.7
AB	57	482	4,480,486	10.0	12.3	11.6
SK	50	296	1,183,269	8.8	7.6	3.1
MB	33	244	1,390,249	5.8	6.2	3.6
ON	192	1,382	14,951,825	33.7	35.3	38.8
QC	48	267	8,639,642	8.4	6.8	22.4
NB	26	193	797,102	4.6	4.9	2.1
NS	28	254	1,002,586	4.9	6.5	2.6
PE	6	24	166,331	1.1	0.6	0.4
NL	47	149	522,453	8.3	3.8	1.4
NT	2	11	45,640	0.4	0.3	0.1
YK	3	6	42,982	0.5	0.2	0.1
NU	1	2	39,710	0.2	0.1	0.1
Total	569	3,911	38,526,760	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a Evangelical, small church congregation counts for congregations affiliated with one of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's affiliate denominations. Counts provided to researchers by WayBase on September 7, 2021.

^b Canadian Population Estimates: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0009-01, Population estimates, quarterly, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710000901>.

Comparing the sample distribution with the distribution of EFC-affiliated small churches, provided by WayBase, suggests some more significant gaps (see table A3). Baptists were significantly overrepresented in the sample and Pentecostals underrepresented.

¹⁰⁸ The CESCS considered a congregation to be small if their average worship service attendance was 150 or less. WayBase estimated worship service attendance based on the congregation's donation income. (Email correspondence from Kevin Phang at WayBase on May 3, 2021).

Table A3. Distributions of qualified responses and WayBase’s list of EFC-affiliate small churches, counts and percent

Tradition	Counts		Percentage distribution	
	Sample	WayBase small evang. congs. ^a	Sample	WayBase small evang. congs. ^a
Anabaptist	37	358	6.5	9.2
Anglican	5	58	0.9	1.5
Baptist	203	931	35.7	23.8
Holiness	152	972	26.7	24.9
Historic	4	241	0.7	6.2
Pentecostal	84	1,031	14.8	26.4
Pietist	30	91	5.3	2.3
Reformed	16	162	2.8	4.1
Restorationist	11	67	1.9	1.7
Evang. Other	25	0	4.4	0.0
Not Applicable	2	0	0.4	0.0
Total	569	3,911	100.0	100.0

^a Evangelical, small church congregation counts for congregations affiliated with one of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada’s affiliate denominations. Counts provided to researchers by WayBase on September 7, 2021.

We explored the possibility of weighting the data to the small church congregation distribution provided by WayBase. Weighting can introduce its own problems into a dataset and, as a rule of thumb, weights should be between 0.5 and 2 while being as close to 1 as possible. *Provincial* weights would have ranged from 0.29 (Yukon) to 1.32 (Nova Scotia). Moreover, the weights for Nunavut, Yukon, and Newfoundland and Labrador would have all been lower than 0.5.

Exploratory weights for *tradition* were somewhat more variable owing to the uneven participation of EFC affiliate denominations in the survey. When we tried excluding Historic Protestant traditions from a tradition weighting (i.e., leaving them with weight 1 while calculating weights for other traditions) the weights ranged from 0.44 (Pietist) to 1.81 (Pentecostal).

Given how heavy the weights would have been and the relative uncertainty about the accuracy of various possible reference samples, we decided to make the reader aware of the data’s weaknesses and not to weight the sample.

A5. Rural/Urban Populations

A large portion of pastors in our survey sample who ministered in communities under 1,000 self-identified as “rural,” but urban-rural designations grew ambiguous in population ranges above 1,000. Statistics Canada (StatCan) speaks to the difficulty of categorizing communities using an urban and rural binary and acknowledges the contextual, often intuitive, nature of these terms.¹⁰⁹ Criteria for cities differs depending on the evaluating entities (i.e., the U.N.,

¹⁰⁹ “Population Centre and Rural Area Classification 2016,” accessed September 7, 2022, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects/standard/pcrac/2016/introduction>.

StatCan) and even between Canadian provinces.¹¹⁰ For the purposes of this report, we can comfortably refer to communities less than 1,000 as rural because of the strong sense of rural identity from our sample, but we will otherwise refer to populations as small (1,000 – 29,999), medium (30,000 – 99,999) and large (100,000 +) communities. Urban and rural designations will be used if pastors use them in qualitative responses.

¹¹⁰ “Kelowna and Sudbury: What Makes a City a City? | EUC | York University,” *Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change* (blog), accessed September 7, 2022, <https://euc.yorku.ca/news-story/what-makes-a-city-a-city-officially-kelowna-and-sudbury-might-be-in-for-a-surprise/>.

Appendix B. National Survey Questionnaire

B1. English Survey Questionnaire

Introduction [Page 1]

Eleven Canadian denominations and ministries are partnering on study of the needs of small evangelical churches in Canada. The partners of this Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study are:

- The Apostolic Church of Pentecost
- The Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada
- The Canadian Baptists of Ontario & Quebec
- The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
- The Christian & Missionary Alliance
- The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC)
- The Evangelical Free Church
- Small Church Connections
- Tyndale University
- Vision Ministries Canada and Pinewoods Chapel, and
- The Wesleyan Church of Canada.

If you are currently a pastor of a Canadian small church, we'd like to get your views. Your responses will help us to understand the contemporary needs of small churches. Perhaps equally as important, it will help denominational leaders, Bible colleges and seminaries, and those who support small church ministry better understand how to support small churches and train its leaders.

This survey will take about 20 minutes of your time. You will be asked questions about the local church(es) you're serving at, about yourself and your pastoral role, about your church's congregational life and worship as well as its relationship to the surrounding community.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this survey and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All data will be kept on a secure server. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. You are free to stop the survey at any time without penalty. Data from incomplete surveys will not be included in the dataset. By participating in this study, you do not waive any legal rights. Your participation in this study will not expose you to more risk than you would be exposed to in your regular activities.

To minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality, we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you have completed the survey.

Significant Church

Survey analysis will take place at an aggregate level and responses will not be tied back to you at an individual level. Leaders of participating denominations will receive aggregate survey reports for responses associated with their respective affiliate churches where sample sizes are large enough to ensure anonymity.

At the end of the survey, we will give you an opportunity to enter a draw for one of three \$250 Amazon gift cards. As well you'll have an opportunity to request a copy of the final public report that will be published at www.theEFC.ca within 6 months of the close of this survey.

If after completing the survey you change your mind and would like to withdraw your responses – and we are able to identify your responses through the contact information you have provided – please contact us at research@theEFC.ca before April 15, 2022 and we'll be happy to remove them.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics approval through the Tyndale University Research Ethics Board.

consent: Do you consent to participate in this survey? [Single response, required]

- Yes
- No [Exit survey]

Congregation and Community [Page 2]

Please tell us about the congregation and community you're currently serving.

prov. In which province or territory is your congregation located? [Dropdown, single response, required]

- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia
- Prince Edward Island
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Yukon
- Nunavut

Significant Church

- Outside of Canada

pop. What is the population of the population centre (i.e., village, town, city) where your church's worship space is located? [Single Response, required, display in single column]

- Less than 1,000
- 1,000 to 29,999
- 30,000 to 99,999
- 100,000 to 499,999
- 500,000 and over
- Don't know
- Not applicable

econ. Thinking of the population centre in which your congregation is located, which would you say best describes the local economy? [Single Response, required]

- Thriving: Jobs are being created, new people are moving in.
- Stable: Most can find work; the economy is neither growing nor contracting.
- Slow Decline: Community has adapted to lost jobs not being replaced.
- Poor: Jobs are disappearing, and people are moving away.

attdpre. **THINKING OF THE 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVID-19**, to the best of your knowledge, what was your congregation's average weekly worship service attendance? [Dropdown, first item "Don't know", and then range from 0 to 199 or more]

attdin. **THINKING ONLY OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED YOUR WORSHIP SERVICES IN-PERSON OVER THE LAST 4 WEEKS**, to the best of your knowledge, what was your congregation's average weekly service attendance? [Dropdown, first item "Don't know", and then range from 0 to 199 or more]

attdvirt. **THINKING ONLY OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED OR PARTICIPATED IN YOUR WORSHIP SERVICES VIRTUALLY OR ONLINE OVER THE LAST 4 WEEKS**, to the best of your knowledge, what was your congregation's average weekly service attendance? [Dropdown, first item "Don't know", and then range from 0 to 199 or more]

founded. To the best of your knowledge, in what year was your congregation started or founded? [Single response, dropdown, required]

- 2020 to Present
- 2010 to 2019
- 2000 to 2009
- 1990 to 1999
- 1980 to 1989

Significant Church

- 1970 to 1979
- 1960 to 1969
- 1950 to 1959
- 1940 to 1949
- 1930 to 1939
- 1920 to 1929
- 1910 to 1919
- 1900 to 1909
- Before 1900
- Don't know

occupy. To the best of your knowledge, when did your congregation first occupy its present worship space? [\[Single response, dropdown, required\]](#)

- 2020 to Present
- 2010 to 2019
- 2000 to 2009
- 1990 to 1999
- 1980 to 1989
- 1970 to 1979
- 1960 to 1969
- 1950 to 1959
- 1940 to 1949
- 1930 to 1939
- 1920 to 1929
- 1910 to 1919
- 1900 to 1909
- Before 1900
- Don't know

denom. With what denomination(s) is your congregation affiliated (if any)? (Select up to three) [\[Up to three choices, one choice required, on a separate survey page\]](#)

- Adventist – Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Canada
- Anglican – Anglican Catholic Church of Canada
- Anglican – Anglican Church of Canada
- Anglican – Anglican Network in Canada
- Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada
- Associated Gospel Churches of Canada
- Baptist – Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec
- Baptist – Canadian Baptists of Western Canada

Significant Church

- Baptist – Canadian National Baptist Convention
- Baptist – Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches
- Baptist – The Fellowship (Fellowship Baptist)
- Baptist – Baptist General Conference of Canada
- Baptist – North American
- Baptist – Union d'Églises Baptistes Francophones du Canada
- Be in Christ (formerly Brethren in Christ)
- Brethren – Plymouth Brethren
- Canadian Assemblies of God
- Canadian Church of God Ministries
- Canadian Fellowship of Churches and Ministers
- Catholic – Roman Catholic
- Church of God in Eastern Canada, General Assembly of the
- Church of God in Western Canada
- Church of the Nazarene Canada
- Canadian Reformed Church
- Christian Reformed Church in North America
- Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada
- Congregational Christian Churches in Canada
- Église réformée du Québec
- Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples)
- Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada
- Evangelical Free Church of Canada
- Evangelical Mennonite Conference
- Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference
- Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
- Fellowship of Christian Assemblies of Canada
- Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches
- Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada
- Free Methodist Church in Canada
- Grace Communion International Canada
- Grace Fellowship Canada
- Independent Assemblies of God International, Canada
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad (KBCA)
- Latter Day Saints (Mormons)
- Mennonite Church Canada

Significant Church

- Mennonite Brethren Churches, Canadian Conference
- Lutheran – Lutheran Church Canada/Missouri Synod
- Lutheran – Evangelical Lutheran (ELCC)
- Orthodox – (i.e., Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Ethiopian)
- Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC)
- Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador (PAONL)
- Pentecostal Holiness Church of Canada
- Presbyterian – Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Presbyterian – Reformed Presbyterian
- Reformed Church in America (Regional Synod of Canada)
- Salvation Army Canada / Bermuda Territory
- United Brethren Church in Canada
- United Church of Canada
- United Pentecostal Church of Canada
- Victory Churches of Canada
- Vineyard Canada
- Vision Ministries Canada
- Wesleyan Church of Canada
- Non-Denominational [Anchor at the end]
- Inter-Denominational [Anchor at the end]
- Other (Please specify) [Anchor at the end, write in]
- Prefer not to say [Anchor at the end, exclusive of other answers]

ethcong_a. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following ethnicities are represented in your congregation? (Select all that apply) [Multiple responses, select at least one, required]

- European (e.g., English, French, Irish, German, Russian)
- Indigenous (e.g., Inuit, Métis, North American Indian)
- Caribbean (e.g., Jamaican, Barbadian, Cuban, West Indian)
- Latin, Central and South American (e.g., Mexican, Argentinian, Guatemalan, Peruvian)
- African (e.g., South African, Ethiopian, Nigerian, Zimbabwean)
- Arab/West Asian (e.g., Lebanese, Moroccan, Iranian, Turk)
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Goan, Sri Lankan)
- Chinese
- Other East and Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese)
- Oceania (e.g., Australian, New Zealander, Fijian, Samoan)
- Jewish
- Other
- Don't know / Refused [Exclusive of other answers]

Significant Church

ethcong_b. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following makes up the *largest* ethnic group in your congregation? (Select just one) [Single response, required]

- European (e.g., English, French, Irish, German, Russian)
- Indigenous (e.g., Inuit, Métis, North American Indian)
- Caribbean (e.g., Jamaican, Barbadian, Cuban, West Indian)
- Latin, Central and South American (e.g., Mexican, Argentinian, Guatemalan, Peruvian)
- African (e.g., South African, Ethiopian, Nigerian, Zimbabwean)
- Arab/West Asian (e.g., Lebanese, Moroccan, Iranian, Turk)
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Goan, Sri Lankan)
- Chinese
- Other East and Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese)
- Oceania (e.g., Australian, New Zealander, Fijian, Samoan)
- Jewish
- Other
- Don't know / Refused [Exclusive of other answers]

newcan. To the best of your knowledge, what percent of the adults in your congregation were born outside of Canada? [Single response, required]

- Less than 25%
- 25% to 49%
- 50% to 74%
- 75% or more
- Don't know / Refused

altlang. Does your congregation regularly hold worship services in a language other than English? [on the French version of the survey use French]? [Single response, required]

- Yes
- No

missdem. Thinking of before the COVID-19 pandemic, which of the following life stage groups would you say were **NOT** well represented in your congregation? (Check all that apply) [Multiple responses, not required]

- Children (age 0 to 12)
- Teens (age 13 to 17)
- Emerging Adults (age 18 to 29)
- Adults – Singles (age 30 to 64)
- Adults – Married (age 30 to 64)
- Adults - Seniors (age 65 and older)
- Don't know [Exclusive of other responses]

Significant Church

staff. How many of the following kinds of paid staff work at your local church? [Single response per row, not required]

[ROWS]

- Pastoral, full-time
- Pastoral, part-time
- Non-pastoral, full-time
- Non-pastoral, part-time

[COLUMNS]

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

budget. To the best of your knowledge, what was your congregation's 2019, pre-COVID, annual budget? [Dropdown, single response, required]

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$124,999
- \$125,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$174,999
- \$175,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 to \$224,999
- \$225,000 to \$249,999
- \$250,000 to \$274,999
- \$275,000 to \$299,999
- \$300,000 or more
- Don't know / Refused

finhealth. Currently, how would you describe your congregation's financial health? [Single response, required]

- Excellent
- Good
- Tight but manageable
- Some difficulty
- Serious difficulty
- Don't know / Refused

Significant Church

growth. Thinking of your congregation right now, would you say that numerically it is growing, plateaued or declining? [Single response, required]

- Growing
- Plateaued
- Declining
- Don't know / Refused

ppastor1. To the best of your knowledge, how long did the previous lead pastor serve this congregation (in years)? [Dropdown, from 0 to 50, include "Don't know" and "Not applicable" as first options, required]

ppastor2. To the best of your knowledge, how long did the second last lead pastor to serve this congregation (in years)? [Dropdown, from 0 to 50, include "Don't know" and "Not applicable" as first options, required]

Please tell us about yourself. [Page 3]

gender. What is your gender? [Single response, required]

- Male
- Female
- Other

age. What is your age? [Dropdown, range from 18 to 120, required]

ethresp. To which of the following ethnicities do you belong? (Select all that apply) [Multiple responses, one response required]

- European (e.g., English, French, Irish, German, Russian)
- Indigenous (e.g., Inuit, Métis, North American Indian)
- Caribbean (e.g., Jamaican, Barbadian, Cuban, West Indian)
- Latin, Central and South American (e.g., Mexican, Argentinian, Guatemalan, Peruvian)
- African (e.g., South African, Ethiopian, Nigerian, Zimbabwean)
- Arab/West Asian (e.g., Lebanese, Moroccan, Iranian, Turk)
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Goan, Sri Lankan)
- Chinese
- Other East and Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese)
- Oceania (e.g., Australian, New Zealander, Fijian, Samoan)
- Jewish
- Other
- Don't know / Refused [Exclusive of other answers]

Significant Church

imm. Were you born **outside** of Canada? [Single response, required]

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / Refused

marital. What is your current marital status? [Single response, required]

- Single
- Common-law
- Civil partnership
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Refused

residence. Which best describes your current residence? [Single response, required]

- Owned residence
- Rented residence
- Church owned parsonage / manse
- Other
- Refused

incomeother. Excluding government transfers, in which of the following ways is your pastoral salary supplemented (if any)? (Check all that apply) [Multiple responses, required]

- Other regular, secular work
- Other regular, ministry work
- Other occasional, secular work
- Other occasional, ministry work
- Support raised outside the congregation
- My spouse's income
- Denominational grant
- Refused / Not applicable [Exclusive of other responses]

seccareer. Did you enter pastoral ministry as a second career? [Single response, required]

- Yes
- No

Significant Church

edusec. What is the highest level of ***formal non-theological*** education you've completed? [Single response, required]

- Elementary school
- High school
- Certificate / Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate
- Other

edutheo. What is the highest level of ***formal theological*** education you've completed? [Single response, required]

- Denominational courses / Ministry Training
- Certificate / Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree (i.e., MA, MDiv, ThM etc.)
- Doctorate (i.e., PhD, DMin)
- None / Not applicable

prep. Thinking of your ***formal theological education***, how well did it prepare you for the following aspects of small church ministry? [Single response per row, randomize rows, required]

[ROWS]

- Preaching
- Teaching
- Evangelism
- Performing weddings
- Performing funerals
- Pastoral visitation
- Prayer
- Leading boards
- Leading change
- Church administration
- Building maintenance
- Managing church politics
- Leading worship

[COLUMNS]

- Very well prepared
- Somewhat prepared

Significant Church

- Somewhat unprepared
- Not at all prepared
- Don't know / Not applicable

role. Which of the following best captures what you understand to be your primary responsibility as a small church pastor? [Single response, randomize, required]

- To provide leadership casting vision and leading change for growth
- To help the congregation discern what God is doing in the community around us so we can join him.
- To help the congregation understand and use their giftings for ministry.
- To preach the word of God and administer the sacraments or ordinances
- To care for the people in the congregation and look after their needs.
- To create a leadership team of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers.
- To facilitate an atmosphere of listening and welcome.
- None of the above

compegal. On the question of whether women should serve as pastors, would you say you're more **complementarian** believing that women and men have equal but different roles in the home and in church meaning women should not serve as pastors, or **egalitarian**, believing that women and men are equally called to serve in all ministry offices? [Single response, required, randomize]

- Complementarian
- Egalitarian
- Don't know [Anchor at end]

Next, would you please tell us about your work as a small church pastor? [Page 4]

pasrole. Which of the following best describes your current role at your church? [Single response, single response, required]

- Senior, lead or sole pastor
- Other pastor
- Lay leader

pasroletype. Which of the following best describes your pastoral position? [Single response, required]

- Paid, full-time
- Paid, part-time
- Unpaid, full-time

Significant Church

- Unpaid, part-time
- Refused / Not applicable

passpouse. Which best describes your spouse or partner's role in your local church (if applicable)? [\[Single response, required\]](#)

- Paid, pastoral staff
- Volunteer pastoral staff
- Paid, non-pastoral staff
- Volunteer non-pastoral staff
- Mother or father to the congregation
- Congregant like any other
- Refused
- Not applicable

multipoint. Are you currently the pastor of more than one congregation? [\[Single response, required\]](#)

- Yes
- No

experall. How many years have you served in full- or part-time pastoral ministry? [\[Dropdown, numeric from 0 to 80, required\]](#)

expercurrent. How many years have you served in your current pastoral position? [\[Dropdown, numeric, from 0 to 50, required\]](#)

positions. Prior to your current pastoral position, how many other pastoral or other vocational ministry positions have you held? [\[Dropdown, range 0 to 40, required\]](#)

switch. Have you ever pastored a congregation affiliated with a denomination other than the one your current congregation is affiliated with? [\[Single response, required\]](#)

- Yes
- No

strengths. Which of the following areas would you consider **strengths** (areas of satisfaction and enjoyment), and which would you consider **weaknesses** (areas you find draining)? [\[Single response per row, randomize rows, required\]](#)

[\[ROWS\]](#)

- Sermon preparation and preaching
- Pastoral visitation

Significant Church

- Counselling
- Prayer
- Administrative work
- Managing church technological infrastructure
- Developing a vision and goals for this church
- Meeting and connecting with newcomers
- Working with youth
- Working with children
- Teaching adults, like in Sunday school classes
- Leading small groups
- Worship leading

[COLUMNS]

- Strength
- Weakness
- Neither

weaktme. Roughly what percentage of your work time do you spend on areas of weakness (areas you find draining)? [Slider, 0 to 100, label = “Percent of time spent on areas of weakness”, required]

vac1. Apart from annual, scheduled, vacation time, in a typical month about how many days off from pastoral work do you take? [Dropdown, first item “There is no typical month” then from 0 to 31]

vac2. Which of the following best describes your approach to days off? [Single response, required, randomize]

- I take no work-related emails or phone calls.
- I might address some-work related things.
- I check work-related email and take work-related phone calls.

success. In your ministry, how important are the following as measures of ministry success? [Single answer per row, randomize rows, required]

[ROWS]

- Growth in year-over-year average worship service attendance
- Congregants’ growth in spiritual maturity
- Congregational impact on the local community
- Number of congregants being trained and released into ministry
- How positively our community views our church
- Number of salvations, conversions, or re-dedications
- Congregational openness to the pastor’s vision for change
- Faithfulness to our founding vision

Significant Church

[COLUMNS]

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

congchar. Which of the following would you say describe your current congregation? (Check all that apply) [Check all that apply, randomize, required]

- Family-like
- Insular
- Rural
- Welcoming
- Toxic
- Faithful
- Needy
- Cliques
- Community-minded
- None of the above [Exclusive of other responses, anchor at end]

change. Which of the following best describes how important decisions about changes in congregational direction and mission are made in your congregation? [Single response, randomize, required]

- I cast vision for the congregation and lead them through change.
- Conversations about change start with the board before being brought to the congregation to be ratified.
- We talk things through until the church comes to a consensus.
- We will not change until we're facing an existential crisis.

changepop. Thinking of the population centre where your congregation is located, how much would you say it has changed in the past 20 years? [Single response, required]

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- Don't know

changecong. Thinking generally of the congregation you serve, how much would you say it has changed in the past 20 years? [Single response, required]

Significant Church

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- Don't know

stay. Thinking of how you feel right now, how likely are you to still be in pastoral ministry a year from now? [\[Single response, required\]](#)

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Refused

Please tell us about your connections to different ministry networks. [\[Page 5\]](#)

ntw01. Thinking of the relationship between your local church and the denomination, please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following: [\[Single response per row, required\]](#)
[\[ROWS\]](#)

- I feel my denominational leader does not understand the unique challenges facing my congregation
- My denomination leader calls me at least once a month to see how I'm doing and to pray with me.
- My denominational leader is not very accessible to me (e.g., accessible only in a crisis).
- Most of the people in my congregation know what denomination our congregation belongs to.
- I have someone in our denominational office that I consider a good friend.
- I have other ministry networks that give me more reliable support than my denomination.

[\[COLUMNS\]](#)

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / Not applicable

ntw02. Besides your pastoral role, do you currently serve in an official capacity with your denomination (i.e., serve on a committee?) [\[Single response, required\]](#)

Significant Church

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

ntw03. In the last 12 months, which of the following kinds of ministry networks or activities have you participated in either in-person or online? (Check all that apply) [Multiple responses, randomize, required]

- A local trans-denominational ministerial
- A regional gathering of pastors from your denomination
- A continuing education class at a Bible college or seminary
- A leadership network conference such as the Global Leadership Summit
- A trans-denominational network of apostolic (pioneering) ministry leaders
- A network of small church pastors
- Spiritual direction / Counselling
- None of the above [Exclusive of other responses, anchor at end]

Please tell us about your experience as a woman in pastoral ministry. [Page 6]

wom01. [If dem01 = Female] Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements about being a woman in ministry: [Single response, randomize rows, randomize]

[ROWS]

- I am often ignored or talked over by the men in a room of my ministry peers.
- I find it difficult to access female ministry mentors.
- I feel I am asked to serve on denominational committees to be the token female voice.
- I feel only female denominational leaders will truly understand the challenges I face as a woman in ministry.
- My male ministry peers are more likely to accept me in my pastoral role than my congregation.

[COLUMNS]

- Strongly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Moderately Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know / Not applicable

Please tell us about your congregation's response to the COVID-19 (COVID) pandemic. [Page 7]

cvd01. Did your congregation move its worship services online during the COVID-19 pandemic in compliance with public health restrictions on worship gatherings? [Single response, required]

Significant Church

- Yes
- No
- Refused

cvd02. [If **cvd01** = "Yes"] How did your congregants respond to your local church's decisions about complying with public health restrictions on worship service gatherings during COVID-19? (Check all the apply) [Multiple responses, randomize, required]

- Most were very supportive and worked to make the best of a difficult and changing situation
- Some people left the church over our COVID-19 decisions
- I frequently field telephone calls from congregants unhappy about our COVID-19 decisions
- I frequently receive email or social media messages from congregants unhappy about our COVID-19 decisions
- Our congregation experienced a split over our COVID-19 decisions
- None of the above [Exclusive of other responses, anchor at end]

cvd03. During the past 12 months, which of the following have been a regular part of your congregation's worship services? (Check all that apply) [Multiple responses, randomize, required]

- A time of testimonies from the congregation
- A time of prayer requests from the congregation
- YouTube worship videos
- Responding to questions and comments during the sermon
- None of the above [Exclusive of other responses, anchor at end]

COVID response continued. [Page 8]

cvd04. [If **cvd01** = "Yes"] During COVID-19, what type(s) of online platforms did your congregation use (or does it still use) for its online worship services? (Check all that apply) [Multiple responses, randomize, required]

- Livestreamed services (i.e., Facebook Live etc.)
- Pre-recorded and posted worship services (i.e., YouTube)
- Virtual meetings (i.e., Zoom)
- Other (please specify) [Write-in]
- Not applicable [Anchor at end]

cvd05. [If **cvd01** = "Yes"] Do you plan to continue offering online worship services after all COVID-19 pandemic restrictions have been lifted? [Single response, required]

Significant Church

- Yes
- No
- Don't know yet

Please tell us about your congregation's engagement with its community. [Page 9]

clt01. Which of the following best describes how you think your community (the population centre that you're in) regards your congregation? [Single response, required]

- The community really doesn't know much about us at all.
- The community thinks we're a toxic and intolerant bunch.
- The community thinks we're good people but there is not a lot of interaction between us and them.
- The community appreciates how we serve and support them.
- I don't know what the community thinks about our church.

clt02. In the past 5 years, in which of the following ways did your congregation engage with the community (the population centre that they're in) around them? (Check all that apply) [Multiple responses, randomize, required]

- Held fun neighbourhood events for the community (i.e., barbeque, carnival, fun day)
- Packed and delivered food hampers (i.e., at Christmas or Thanksgiving)
- Went door-to-door inviting people to church or sharing a Christian message.
- Held a public, outdoor Christian music concert or worship service.
- Held a public reading of the Bible
- Held a Vacation Bible School open to the community
- Put on a free meal for the community
- Operated a thrift store, food cupboard, or soup kitchen
- Sent individuals or teams from the church to support other charities or ministries
- Provided disaster relief for the local community
- Surveyed your neighbours to find out what they think of your church
- None of the above [Exclusive of other responses, anchor at end]

clt03. In the next 12 months, which of the following is your preaching or teaching likely to address? (Check all that apply) [Multiple response, randomize rows, at least one required]

- COVID-19 vaccine mandates
- LGBTQ+ and gender identity issues
- Residential school graves
- Abortion
- Women in ministry leadership
- Euthanasia (MAID)
- Racial injustice

Significant Church

- Climate change
- None of the above [Exclusive of others, anchor at end]

A few things before we finish up ... [Page 10]

This study's final report will be available at www.theEFC.ca within 6 months of the close of this survey. You can either find the report there, or we can send you an email notice when it is released.

adm01. Would you like to receive an email notice about the release of this study's public, final report? [Single response, required]

- Yes
- No

Contact Information – Final Report [Page 11]

adm02. Where can we send you a notice of the final report's release? (This information will only be used for this purpose.)

- Name: [Write-in, not required]
- Email Address: [Write-in, validate as email address, not required]

Amazon Gift Card Draw [Page 12]

adm03. Would you like to be entered in the draw for one of three \$250 Amazon gift cards? [Single response, required]

- Yes
- No

Contact Information – Amazon Gift Card Draw [Page 13]

adm04. Where can we notify you about the winners of the three \$250 Amazon gift cards. (This contact information will only be used for this purpose).

- Name: [Write-in, not required]
- Email Address: [Write-in, validate as email address, not required]

Thank you [Page 14]

Thank you for your participation in the Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study (CESCS). Your participation will help us understand the ministry issues facing small.

Significant Church

We recognize that some people have second thoughts about their participation in surveys after they've completed them. If you would like to withdraw your interview from our study, please contact the lead investigator (information below) by April 15, 2022 and we would be happy to remove it.

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, please contact the Tyndale Research Ethics Board. [<mailto:reb@tyndale.edu>]

Sincerely,

Rick Hiemstra
Lead Investigator
Canadian Evangelical Small Church Study
research@theEFC.ca

[Exit to CESCS Page:
<https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Communications/Research/Canadian-Evangelical-Small-Church-Study>]

Thank you for considering this survey [[Page 15](#)]

You can learn more about the study at www.theEFC.ca/CESCS or you can contact the researchers at research@theEFC.ca.

[Exit to CESCS Page:
<https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Communications/Research/Canadian-Evangelical-Small-Church-Study>]

B2. French Survey Questionnaire

Introduction [Page 1]

Onze confessions religieuses et ministères canadiens se sont associés pour étudier les besoins des petites églises évangéliques au Canada. Les partenaires de cette étude sur les petites églises évangéliques canadiennes sont :

- The Apostolic Church of Pentecost (Église apostolique de la Pentecôte)
- The Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (Églises baptistes du Canada atlantique),
- The Canadian Baptists of Ontario & Quebec (Églises baptistes de l'Ontario et du Québec)
- The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (l'Association des églises des frères mennonites du Québec)
- L'Alliance chrétienne et missionnaire
- L'Alliance évangélique du Canada (AEC)
- The Evangelical Free Church (Église évangélique libre)
- Small Church Connections (Connexions des petites églises)
- Tyndale University (l'Université Tyndale)
- Vision Ministries Canada et Pinewoods Chapel
- The Wesleyan Church of Canada (Église Wesleyan du Canada).

Si vous êtes actuellement pasteur d'une petite église canadienne, nous aimerions connaître votre point de vue. Vos réponses nous aideront à comprendre les besoins contemporains des petites églises. Peut-être tout aussi important, elles aideront les dirigeants confessionnels, les collèges bibliques et les séminaires, ainsi que ceux qui appuient le ministère des petites églises à mieux comprendre comment soutenir les petites églises et former leurs dirigeants.

Cette enquête prendra environ 20 minutes de votre temps. On vous posera des questions sur l'église locale dans laquelle vous travaillez, sur vous-même et votre rôle pastoral, sur la vie de l'assemblée et le culte de votre église, ainsi que sur sa relation avec la communauté environnante.

Toute information obtenue dans le cadre de cette enquête et pouvant vous identifier restera confidentielle et ne sera divulguée qu'avec votre permission ou si la loi l'exige. Toutes les données seront conservées sur un serveur sécurisé. Vous ne serez pas identifié par votre nom dans les rapports de l'étude terminée. Vous êtes libre d'arrêter l'enquête à tout moment sans pénalité. Les données provenant d'enquêtes incomplètes ne seront pas incluses dans l'ensemble des données. En participant à cette étude, vous ne renoncez à aucun droit légal. Votre participation à cette étude ne vous exposera pas à plus de risques que ceux auxquels vous seriez exposé dans le cadre de vos activités habituelles.

Afin de minimiser le risque de violation de la sécurité et de garantir votre confidentialité, nous vous recommandons de prendre des mesures de sécurité standard, telles que vous déconnecter de votre compte, fermer votre navigateur et verrouiller votre écran ou votre appareil lorsque vous avez terminé l'enquête.

L'analyse de l'enquête se fera à un niveau agrégé et les réponses ne seront pas reliées à vous à un niveau individuel. Les responsables des confessions participantes recevront des rapports d'enquête agrégés pour les réponses associées à leurs églises affiliées respectives lorsque la taille de l'échantillon est suffisamment importante pour garantir l'anonymat.

À la fin de l'enquête, nous vous donnerons la possibilité de participer au tirage au sort d'une des trois cartes-cadeaux Amazon de 250 \$. Vous aurez également la possibilité de demander une copie du rapport public final qui sera publié à l'adresse www.theEFC.ca dans les 6 mois suivant la clôture de cette enquête.

Si, après avoir répondu à l'enquête, vous changez d'avis et souhaitez retirer vos réponses - et que nous sommes en mesure de les identifier grâce aux coordonnées que vous avez fournies - veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse research@theEFC.ca avant le 15 avril 2022 et nous nous ferons un plaisir de les retirer.

Cette étude a été examinée et a reçu l'approbation éthique du comité d'éthique de la recherche de l'université Tyndale.

consent : Consentez-vous à participer à cette enquête ? [Une seule réponse, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non [Quittez l'enquête]

Assemblée et communauté [Page 2]

Veuillez nous parler de l'assemblée (congrégation) et de la communauté que vous servez actuellement.

prov. Dans quelle province ou territoire votre congrégation est-elle située ? [liste déroulante, une seule réponse, obligatoire]

- Colombie-Britannique
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Québec
- Nouveau-Brunswick

Significant Church

- Nouvelle-Écosse
- Île-du-Prince-Édouard
- Terre-Neuve et Labrador
- Territoires du Nord-Ouest
- Yukon
- Nunavut
- Hors du Canada

pop. Quelle est la population de l'agglomération (c.-à-d. village, ville, cité) où se trouve le lieu de culte de votre église ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire, afficher en une seule colonne]

- Moins de 1 000 habitants
- 1 000 à 29 999 habitants
- 30 000 à 99 999 habitants
- 100 000 à 499 999 habitants
- 500 000 et plus habitants
- Ne sait pas
- Ne s'applique pas

econ. Quand vous pensez à l'agglomération dans laquelle votre congrégation est située, quelle est, selon vous, la meilleure description de l'économie locale ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- En plein essor : Des emplois sont créés, de nouvelles personnes s'installent.
- Stable : La plupart des gens peuvent trouver du travail; l'économie ne connaît ni croissance ni contraction.
- Déclin lent : La communauté s'est adaptée au fait que les emplois perdus ne sont pas remplacés.
- Pauvre : les emplois disparaissent et les gens s'en vont.

attdpre. QUAND VOUS PENSEZ AUX 12 MOIS PRÉCÉDANT LA COVID-19, à votre connaissance, quelle était l'assistance hebdomadaire moyenne aux services religieux de votre congrégation ? [Menu déroulant, premier élément « Ne sait pas », puis fourchette de 0 à 199 ou plus]

attdin. QUAND VOUS PENSEZ UNIQUEMENT À CEUX QUI ONT ASSISTÉ EN PERSONNE À VOS CULTES AU COURS DES 4 DERNIÈRES SEMAINES, à votre connaissance, quelle était l'assistance hebdomadaire moyenne à ces services par votre congrégation ? [Menu déroulant, premier élément « Ne sait pas », puis fourchette de 0 à 199 ou plus]

attdvirt. QUAND VOUS PENSEZ UNIQUEMENT À CEUX QUI ONT ASSISTÉ OU PARTICIPÉ À VOS SERVICES D'ADORATION VIRTUELLE OU EN LIGNE AU COURS DES 4 DERNIÈRES SEMAINES, à votre connaissance, quelle était l'assistance hebdomadaire moyenne de votre congrégation ? [Menu déroulant, premier élément « Ne sait pas », puis fourchette de 0 à 199 ou plus]

founded. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, en quelle année votre congrégation a-t-elle été créée ou fondée ? **Réponse unique, menu déroulant, obligatoire]**

- 2020 à aujourd'hui
- 2010 à 2019
- 2000 à 2009
- 1990 à 1999
- 1980 à 1989
- 1970 à 1979
- 1960 à 1969
- 1950 à 1959
- 1940 à 1949
- 1930 à 1939
- 1920 à 1929
- 1910 à 1919
- 1900 à 1909
- Avant 1900
- Ne sait pas

occupy. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, quand votre congrégation a-t-elle occupé pour la première fois son lieu de culte actuel ? **Réponse unique, menu déroulant, obligatoire]**

- 2020 à aujourd'hui
- 2010 à 2019
- 2000 à 2009
- 1990 à 1999
- 1980 à 1989
- 1970 à 1979
- 1960 à 1969
- 1950 à 1959
- 1940 à 1949
- 1930 à 1939
- 1920 à 1929
- 1910 à 1919
- 1900 à 1909
- Avant 1900
- Ne sait pas

denom. À quelle(s) confession(s) votre assemblée est-elle affiliée (le cas échéant) ? (Choisissez jusqu'à trois) **[Jusqu'à trois choix, un choix requis, sur une page distincte de l'enquête]**

- Adventiste – Église Adventiste du Septième Jour au Canada

Significant Church

- Anglican – Anglican Catholic Church of Canada (Église anglicane catholique du Canada)
- Anglican – Église anglicane du Canada
- Anglican – Anglican Network in Canada (Réseau anglican au Canada)
- Apostolic Church of Pentecost (Église apostolique de la Pentecôte)
- Associated Gospel Church (Association des églises évangéliques)
- Baptiste – Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (Baptistes canadiens Ontario et Québec)
- Baptiste – Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (Baptistes canadiens Ouest du Canada)
- Baptiste – Canadian National Baptist Convention (Convention nationale)
- Baptiste – Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches (Convention Atlantique)
- Baptiste – Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches (Fraternité des églises baptiste évangéliques)
- Baptiste – General Conference (Conférence générale)
- Baptiste – North American (Nord-américain)
- Baptiste – Union d'Églises Baptistes Francophones du Canada
- Be in Christ (auparavant Brethren in Christ)
- Brethren - Plymouth Brethren (Fraternité Plymouth)
- Canadian Assemblies of God (Assemblées de Dieu du Canada)
- Church of God in Eastern Canada, General Assembly of the (Assemblée générale des assemblées de Dieu de l'Est du Canada)
- Church of God in Western Canada (Assemblées de Dieu de l'Ouest du Canada)
- Church of God – Canadian Church of God Ministries (Église de Dieu – Église canadienne des ministères de Dieu)
- Church of the Nazarene (Église du Nazaréen)
- Canadian Reformed Church (Église réformée du Canada)
- Christian Reformed Church in North America (Église chrétienne réformée d'Amérique du Nord)
- Alliance chrétienne et missionnaire au Canada
- Congregational Christian Churches in Canada (Églises chrétiennes congrégationnelles au Canada)
- Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples) (Église chrétienne évangélique Disciples chrétiens)
- Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada (Église de l'alliance évangélique)
- Evangelical Free Church of Canada (Église évangélique libre du Canada)
- Evangelical Mennonite Conference (Conférence évangélique mennonite)
- Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (Conférence missionnaire évangélique mennonite)

Significant Church

- Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (Église missionnaire évangélique du Canada)
- Fellowship of Christian Assemblies of Canada (Fraternité des assemblées chrétiennes du Canada)
- Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches (Fraternité des églises bibliques évangéliques)
- Foursquare Gospel Churches of Canada (Églises évangéliques Foursquare du Canada)
- Free Methodist Church in Canada (Église méthodiste libre au Canada)
- General Assembly of the Church of God in Eastern Canada (Assemblée générale de l'église de Dieu de l'Est du Canada)
- Grace Communion International Canada (Communion de la grâce internationale)
- Grace Fellowship Canada (Fraternité de la grâce du Canada)
- Independent Assemblies of God International, Canada (Assemblées de Dieu indépendantes internationale, Canada)
- Témoins de Jéhovah
- Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad (Église coréenne presbytérienne à l'étranger)
- Latter Day Saints (Mormons) (Saints des derniers jours - Mormons)
- Mennonite Church Canada (Église mennonite du Canada)
- Mennonite Brethren Churches (Églises mennonites Brethren)
- Lutheran – Lutheran Church Canada/Missouri Synod (Église luthérienne du Canada/Synode du Missouri)
- Lutheran – Evangelical Lutheran (ELCC) (Église luthérienne évangélique)
- Orthodox – Canadian (par ex. canadienne, copte, éthiopienne, grecque, russe, ukrainienne)
- Assemblées de la Pentecôte du Canada (APDC)
- Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador (Assemblées de la Pentecôte de Terre-Neuve et Labrador)
- Presbyterian – Presbyterian Church in Canada (Église presbytérienne au Canada)
- Presbyterian – Reformed Presbyterian (Église presbytérienne réformée)
- Redeemed Christian Church of God (Église chrétienne rédemptée de Dieu)
- Reformed Church in America (Regional Synod of Canada) (Église réformée d'Amérique – Synode régional du Canada)
- Armée du salut, territoire Canada/Bermudes
- United Brethren Church in Canada (Frères unis en Christ)
- Église unie du Canada
- United Pentecostal Church of Canada (Église pentecôtiste unie du Canada)
- Victory Churches of Canada (Églises de la victoire du Canada)
- Vineyard Resource Canada (Ressources du vignoble Canada)
- Vision Ministries Canada (Ministères de la vision Canada)

Significant Church

- Wesleyan Church of Canada (Église Wesleyan du Canada)
- Non confessionnelle [Ancrer à la fin]
- Interconfessionnelle [Ancrer à la fin]
- Autre (veuillez préciser) [Ancrer à la fin]
- Préfère ne pas l'indiquer [Ancrer à la fin]

ethcong_a. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, parmi les ethnies suivantes, lesquelles sont représentées dans votre congrégation ? (Sélectionnez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, sélectionnez au moins une réponse, obligatoire]

- Europe (par ex., Anglais, Français, Irlandais, Allemand, Russe)
- Autochtone (par ex., Inuit, Métis, Indien d'Amérique du Nord)
- Caraïbes (par ex., Jamaïcain, Barbadien, Cubain, Antillais)
- Amérique latine, centrale et du Sud (par ex., Mexicain, Argentin, Guatémaltèque, Péruvien)
- Africain (par ex., Sud Africain, Ethiopien, Nigérien, Zimbabwéen)
- Arabe/Asie de l'Ouest (par ex., Libanais, Marocain, Iranien, Turc)
- Asie du Sud (par ex., Indien de l'Est, Pakistanais, Goan, Sri Lankais)
- Chinois
- Autre Est et Sud-est de l'Asie (par ex., Philippin, Vietnamien, Coréen, Japonais)
- Océanie (par ex., Australien, Néo-Zélandais, Fidjien, Samoan)
- Juif
- Autre
- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre [Exclusif d'autres réponses]

ethcong_b. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, lequel des groupes suivants constitue *le plus grand* groupe ethnique de votre congrégation ? (Sélectionnez-en un seul) [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Europe (par ex., Anglais, Français, Irlandais, Allemand, Russe)
- Autochtone (par ex., Inuit, Métis, Indien d'Amérique du Nord)
- Caraïbes (par ex., Jamaïcain, Barbadien, Cubain, Antillais)
- Amérique latine, centrale et du Sud (par ex., Mexicain, Argentin, Guatémaltèque, Péruvien)
- Africain (par ex., Sud Africain, Ethiopien, Nigérien, Zimbabwéen)
- Arabe/Asie de l'Ouest (par ex., Libanais, Marocain, Iranien, Turc)
- Asie du Sud (par ex., Indien de l'Est, Pakistanais, Goan, Sri Lankais)
- Chinois
- Autre Est et Sud-est de l'Asie (par ex., Philippin, Vietnamien, Coréen, Japonais)
- Océanie (par ex., Australien, Néo-Zélandais, Fidjien, Samoan)
- Juif
- Autre

Significant Church

- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre [Exclusif d'autres réponses]

newcan. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, quel est le pourcentage des adultes de votre congrégation qui sont nés à l'extérieur du Canada ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Moins de 25 %
- 25 % à 49 %
- 50 % à 74 %
- 75 % ou plus
- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre

altlang. Votre congrégation organise-t-elle régulièrement des cultes dans une autre langue que le français ? [on the French version of the survey use French] [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non

missdem. Quand vous pensez à la situation avant la pandémie de COVID-19, quels groupes d'âges n'étaient **PAS** bien représentés dans votre congrégation ? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, pas obligatoire]

- Enfants (0 à 12 ans)
- Adolescents (13 à 17 ans)
- Jeunes adultes (18 à 29 ans)
- Adultes – célibataires (30 à 64 ans)
- Adultes – mariés (30 à 64 ans)
- Adultes - aînés (65 ans et plus)
- Ne sait pas [Exclusif d'autres réponses]

staff. Combien des types de personnel rémunéré suivants travaillent dans votre église locale ? [Une seule réponse par ligne, pas obligatoire]

[LIGNES]

- Pastoral, plein temps
- Pastoral, temps partiel
- Non pastoral, plein temps
- Non pastoral, temps partiel

[COLONNES]

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 ou plus

budget. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, quel était le budget annuel de votre congrégation en 2019, avant COVID ? [Menu déroulant, Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Moins de 25 000 \$
- 25,000 \$ à 49,999 \$
- 50,000 \$ à 74,999 \$
- 75,000 \$ à 99,999 \$
- 100,000 \$ à 124,999 \$
- 125,000 \$ à 149,999 \$
- 150,000 \$ à 174,999 \$
- 175,000 \$ à 199,999 \$
- 200,000 \$ à 224,999 \$
- 225,000 \$ à 249,999 \$
- 250,000 \$ à 274,999 \$
- 275,000 \$ à 299,999 \$
- 300,000 \$ ou plus
- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre

finhealth. Actuellement, comment décririez-vous la santé financière de votre congrégation ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Excellente
- Bonne
- Serrée mais gérable
- Quelques difficultés
- Graves difficultés
- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre

growth. En pensant à votre congrégation actuellement, diriez-vous que **numériquement**, elle est en croissance, en plateau ou en déclin ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- En croissance
- En plateau
- En déclin
- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre

ppastor1. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, combien de temps le précédent pasteur principal a-t-il servi cette congrégation (en années) ? [Menu déroulant, de 0 à 50, inclure « Ne sait pas » et « Ne s'applique pas » comme premières options, obligatoire]

ppastor2. Au meilleur de votre connaissance, combien de temps le pasteur qui a précédé le précédent pasteur principal a-t-il servi cette congrégation (en années) ? [Menu déroulant, de 0 à 50, inclure « Ne sait pas » et « Ne s'applique pas » comme premières options, obligatoire]

Quelques questions sur vous-même. [Page 3]

gender. Quel est votre genre ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Masculin
- Féminin
- Autre

age. Quel âge avez-vous ? [Menu déroulant, fourchette de 18 à 120 ans, obligatoire]

ethresp. À laquelle des ethnies suivantes appartenez-vous ? (Sélectionnez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, une réponse obligatoire]

- Europe (par ex., Anglais, Français, Irlandais, Allemand, Russe)
- Autochtone (par ex., Inuit, Métis, Indien d'Amérique du Nord)
- Caraïbes (par ex., Jamaïcain, Barbadien, Cubain, Antillais)
- Amérique latine, centrale et du Sud (par ex., Mexicain, Argentin, Guatémaltèque, Péruvien)
- Africain (par ex., Sud Africain, Ethiopien, Nigérien, Zimbabwéen)
- Arabe/Asie de l'Ouest (par ex., Libanais, Marocain, Iranien, Turc)
- Asie du Sud (par ex., Indien de l'Est, Pakistanais, Goan, Sri Lankais)
- Chinois
- Autre Est et Sud-est de l'Asie (par ex., Philippin, Vietnamien, Coréen, Japonais)
- Océanie (par ex., Australien, Néo-Zélandais, Fidjien, Samoan)
- Juif
- Autre
- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre [Exclusif d'autres réponses]

imm. Êtes-vous né à l'extérieur du Canada ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non
- Ne sait pas / Refuse de répondre

marital. Quel est votre état matrimonial actuel ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Célibataire
- Union libre
- Partenariat civil
- Marié(e)
- Séparé(e)
- Divorcé(e)

Significant Church

- Veuf ou veuve
- Refuse de répondre

residence. Qu'est-ce qui décrit le mieux votre résidence actuelle ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Propriétaire
- Locataire
- Presbytère appartenant à l'église
- Autre
- Refuse de répondre

incomeother. A l'exclusion des transferts gouvernementaux, de quelle manière votre salaire pastoral est-il augmenté ? (Cochez toutes les cases pertinentes) [Réponses multiples, obligatoire]

- Autre travail régulier, séculier
- Autre travail régulier, travail ministériel
- Autre occasionnel, travail séculier
- Autre occasionnel, travail ministériel
- Soutien obtenu en dehors de la congrégation
- Revenu de mon conjoint
- Subvention confessionnelle
- Refuse de répondre / ne s'applique pas [Exclusif d'autres réponses]

seccareer. Êtes-vous entré dans le ministère pastoral en tant que seconde carrière ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non

edusec. Quel est le plus haut niveau de *scolarité formelle non théologique* que vous avez complété ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- École primaire
- École secondaire
- Certificat / Diplôme
- Baccalauréat
- Maîtrise
- Doctorat
- Autre

edutheo. Quel est le plus haut niveau de *scolarité théologique formelle* que vous avez complété ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

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- Cours confessionnels / Formation ministérielle
- Certificat / Diplôme
- Baccalauréat
- Maîtrise (c'est-à-dire MA, MDiv, ThM, etc.)
- Doctorat (i.e., PhD, DMin)
- Aucun / ne s'applique pas

prep. Quand vous pensez à votre *scolarité théologique formelle*, dans quelle mesure vous a-t-elle préparé aux aspects suivants du ministère des petites églises ? [Réponse unique per row, randomiser rows, obligatoire]

[RANGÉES]

- Prédication
- Enseignement
- Évangélisation
- Célébration de mariages
- Services funéraires
- Visites pastorales
- Prière
- Direction de conseils d'administration
- Direction de changement
- Administration de l'église
- Entretien des bâtiments

[COLONNES]

- Très bien préparé
- Assez bien préparé
- Assez peu préparé
- Pas du tout préparé
- Ne sait pas / Ne s'applique pas

role. Lequel des énoncés suivants décrit le mieux ce que vous considérez être votre principale responsabilité en tant que pasteur d'une petite église ? [Réponse unique, randomisée, obligatoire]

- Fournir un leadership en donnant une vision et en conduisant le changement vers la croissance.
- Aider l'assemblée à discerner ce que Dieu fait dans la communauté qui nous entoure afin que nous puissions l'atteindre.
- Aider les membres de l'assemblée à comprendre et à utiliser leurs dons pour le ministère.
- Prêcher la parole de Dieu et administrer les sacrements ou les ordonnances.
- Prendre soin des membres de la congrégation et répondre à leurs besoins.

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- Créer une équipe de direction composée d'apôtres, de prophètes, d'évangélistes, de bergers et d'enseignants.
- Faciliter un climat d'écoute et d'accueil.
- Aucune de ces réponses

compegal. Sur la question de savoir si les femmes devraient servir comme pasteurs, diriez-vous que vous êtes plutôt **complémentariste**, estimant que les femmes et les hommes ont des rôles égaux mais différents à la maison et dans l'église, ce qui signifie que les femmes ne devraient pas servir comme pasteurs, ou **égalitaire**, estimant que les femmes et les hommes sont également appelés à servir dans toutes les fonctions ministérielles ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire, randomiser]

- Complémentariste
- Égalitaire
- Ne sait pas [[Ancrer à la fin]

Parlez-nous maintenant de votre travail en tant que pasteur d'une petite église. [Page 4]

pasrole. Lequel des énoncés suivants décrit le mieux votre rôle actuel dans votre église ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Pasteur principal ou seul pasteur
- Autre pasteur
- Leader laïc

pasroletype. Lequel des énoncés suivants décrit le mieux votre position pastorale ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Rémunéré, à temps plein
- Rémunéré, à temps partiel
- Non rémunérée, à temps plein
- Non rémunéré, à temps partiel
- Refuse de répondre / Ne s'applique pas

PASSPouse. Lequel des énoncés suivants décrit le mieux le rôle de votre conjoint(e) ou partenaire dans votre église locale (si applicable) ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Personnel pastoral rémunéré
- Personnel pastoral bénévole
- Personnel non pastoral rémunéré
- Personnel non pastoral bénévole
- Mère ou père de la congrégation
- Membre de la congrégation comme les autres

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- Refuse de répondre
- Ne s'applique pas

multipoint. Êtes-vous actuellement le pasteur de plus d'une congrégation ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non

experall. Pendant combien d'années avez-vous exercé un ministère pastoral à temps plein ou à temps partiel ? [Menu déroulant, numérique de 0 à 80, obligatoire]

expercurrent. Depuis combien d'années occupez-vous votre poste pastoral actuel ? [Menu déroulant, numérique de 0 à 50, obligatoire]

positions. Avant votre poste pastoral actuel, combien d'autres postes pastoraux ou de ministères professionnels avez-vous occupés ? [Menu déroulant, fourchette de 0 à 40, obligatoire]

switch. Avez-vous déjà été pasteur d'une congrégation affiliée à une autre dénomination que celle à laquelle votre congrégation actuelle est affiliée ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non

strenghts. Parmi les domaines suivants, quels sont ceux que vous considérez comme des **forces** (domaines de satisfaction et de plaisir), et quels sont ceux que vous considérez comme des **faiblesses** (domaines que vous trouvez épuisants) ? [Réponse unique par rangée, randomiser les rangées, obligatoire]

[ROWS]

- Préparation de sermons et prédication
- Visites pastorales
- Counseling
- Prière
- Travail administratif
- Gestion de l'infrastructure technologique de l'église
- Élaboration d'une vision et des objectifs pour cette église
- Rencontre avec les nouveaux arrivants et établissement de liens avec eux
- Travail avec les jeunes
- Travail avec les enfants
- Enseignement aux adultes, par ex. dans le cadre de l'école du dimanche
- Animation de petits groupes

Significant Church

- Direction de la louange

[COLUMNS]

- Force
- Faiblesse
- Ni l'un ni l'autre

weaktime. Quel pourcentage approximatif de votre temps de travail consacrez-vous à vos points faibles (domaines qui vous épuisent) ? [Défilement de 0 à 100, étiquette = « Pourcentage du temps consacré aux domaines de faiblesse », obligatoire]

vac1. A part les congés annuels prévus, au cours d'un mois typique, combien de jours de congé prenez-vous de votre travail pastoral ? [Menu déroulant, premier point « Il n'y a pas de mois typique » puis de 0 à 31]

vac2. Lequel des énoncés suivants décrit le mieux votre façon de voir les jours de congé ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire, randomiser]

- Je ne prends pas de courriels ou d'appels téléphoniques liés au travail.
- Je peux traiter certaines choses liées au travail.
- Je vérifie les courriels liés au travail et je prends les appels téléphoniques liés au travail.

success. Dans votre ministère, quelle est l'importance des éléments suivants comme mesures du succès du ministère ? [Réponse unique par rangée, rangées randomiser, obligatoire]

[ROWS]

- La croissance de l'assistance moyenne aux services de culte d'une année sur l'autre
- Croissance de la maturité spirituelle des fidèles
- Impact de la congrégation sur la communauté locale
- Nombre de fidèles formés et envoyés au ministère
- Comment notre communauté perçoit positivement notre église
- Nombre de saluts, de conversions ou de redédicaces.
- Ouverture de l'assemblée à la vision de changement du pasteur
- Fidélité à notre vision fondatrice

[COLUMNS]

- Extrêmement important
- Très important
- Moyennement important
- Légèrement important
- Pas du tout important

congchar. Lesquels des énoncés suivants décrivent, selon vous, votre congrégation actuelle ? (Cochez tous ceux qui s'appliquent) [Cochez tous ceux qui s'appliquent, randomiser, obligatoire]

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- Comme une famille
- Insulaire
- Rurale
- Accueillante
- Toxique
- Fidèle
- Nécessiteuse
- À cliques
- Axée sur la communauté
- Aucune de ces réponses [Exclusif d'autres réponses, ancrée à la fin]

change. Lequel des énoncés suivants décrit le mieux la manière dont les décisions importantes concernant les changements de direction et de mission de la congrégation sont prises dans votre congrégation ? [Réponse unique, randomiser, obligatoire]

- Je donne une vision à la congrégation et je la guide dans le changement.
- Les conversations sur le changement commencent avec le conseil avant d'être présentées à la congrégation pour être ratifiées.
- Nous discutons des choses jusqu'à ce que l'église parvienne à un consensus.
- Nous ne changerons pas tant que nous ne serons pas confrontés à une crise existentielle.

changepop. Quand vous pensez à l'agglomération où se trouve votre congrégation, dans quelle mesure diriez-vous qu'elle a changé au cours des 20 dernières années ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Énormément
- Beaucoup
- Passablement
- Un peu
- Pas du tout
- Ne sait pas
- Ne s'applique pas

changecong. En général, si vous pensez à la congrégation que vous servez, dans quelle mesure diriez-vous qu'elle a changé au cours des 20 dernières années ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Énormément
- Beaucoup
- Passablement
- Un peu
- Pas du tout
- Ne sait pas

- Ne s'applique pas

stay. Quand vous pensez à ce que vous ressentez maintenant, quelle est la probabilité que vous soyez encore dans le ministère pastoral dans un an ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Très probable
- Probable
- Ni probable ni improbable
- Peu probable
- Très peu probable
- Refuse de répondre

Parlez-nous de vos liens avec les différents réseaux ministériels. [Page 5]

ntw01. En ce qui concerne la relation entre votre église locale et la dénomination, veuillez nous dire si vous êtes d'accord ou non avec les énoncés suivants : [Réponse unique per row, obligatoire]
[ROWS]

- J'ai le sentiment que le dirigeant de ma dénomination ne comprend pas les défis uniques auxquels ma congrégation est confrontée.
- Le dirigeant de ma dénomination m'appelle au moins une fois par mois pour voir comment je vais et pour prier avec moi.
- Mon dirigeant de la dénomination n'est pas très accessible pour moi (par ex., accessible seulement en cas de crise).
- La plupart des personnes de ma congrégation savent à quelle dénomination appartient notre congrégation.
- J'ai quelqu'un dans notre bureau de dénomination que je considère comme un bon ami.
- J'ai d'autres réseaux ministériels qui m'apportent un soutien plus fiable que ma dénomination.

[COLUMNS]

- Tout à fait d'accord
- Modérément d'accord
- Modérément en désaccord
- Pas du tout d'accord
- Ne sait pas / Ne s'applique pas

ntw02. À part votre rôle pastoral, occupez-vous actuellement une fonction officielle au sein de votre dénomination (c'est-à-dire, faites-vous partie d'un comité) ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non
- Ne s'applique pas

ntw03. Au cours des 12 derniers mois, à quels types de réseaux ou d'activités ministériels suivants avez-vous participé, en personne ou en ligne ? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, randomiser, obligatoire]

- Une réunion ministérielle locale transconfessionnelle
- Un rassemblement régional de pasteurs de votre dénomination
- Un cours de formation continue dans un collège biblique ou un séminaire
- Une conférence de réseau de leadership telle que le Global Leadership Summit (Sommet mondial du leadership)
- Un réseau transconfessionnel de leaders de ministères apostoliques (pionniers)
- Un réseau de pasteurs de petites églises
- Direction spirituelle / conseil
- Aucune de ces réponses [Exclusif d'autres réponses, ancrer à la fin]

Parlez-nous de votre expérience en tant que femme dans le ministère pastoral. [Page 6]

wom01. [If dem01 = Female] Veuillez nous dire si vous êtes d'accord ou non avec les affirmations suivantes concernant le fait d'être une femme dans le ministère : [Réponse unique, randomiser les rangées, randomiser]

[ROWS]

- Je suis souvent ignorée ou écartée par les hommes dans une salle où se trouvent mes pairs dans le ministère.
- Je trouve difficile d'accéder à des mentors féminins dans le ministère.
- J'ai l'impression qu'on me demande de servir dans des comités confessionnels pour être la voix féminine symbolique.
- J'ai l'impression que seuls les leaders féminins de la dénomination comprendront vraiment les défis auxquels je suis confrontée en tant que femme dans le ministère.
- Mes pairs masculins dans le ministère sont plus susceptibles de m'accepter dans mon rôle pastoral que ma congrégation.

[COLUMNS]

- Tout à fait d'accord
- Modérément d'accord
- Modérément en désaccord
- Pas du tout d'accord
- Ne sait pas / Ne s'applique pas

Parlez-nous de la réponse de votre congrégation à la pandémie de COVID-19 (COVID). [Page 7]

cvd01. Votre congrégation a-t-elle déplacé ses services religieux en ligne pendant la pandémie de COVID-19 afin de respecter les restrictions de santé publique sur les rassemblements religieux ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non
- Refuse de répondre

cvd02. [If cvd01 = "Yes"] Comment vos fidèles ont-ils réagi à la décision de votre église locale de se conformer aux restrictions de santé publique concernant les rassemblements pour les services religieux pendant la période COVID-19 ? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, randomiser, obligatoire]

- La plupart ont été d'un grand soutien et se sont efforcés de tirer le meilleur parti d'une situation difficile et changeante.
- Certaines personnes ont quitté l'église à cause de nos décisions concernant la COVID-19.
- Je reçois fréquemment des appels téléphoniques de fidèles mécontents de nos décisions en matière de COVID-19.
- Je reçois fréquemment des courriels ou des messages sur les médias sociaux de fidèles mécontents de nos décisions en matière de COVID-19.
- Notre congrégation a connu une scission à propos de nos décisions en matière de COVID-19.
- Aucune de ces réponses [Exclusif d'autres réponses, anchor at end]

cvd03. Au cours des 12 derniers mois, lesquels des éléments suivants ont fait partie intégrante des services de culte de votre congrégation ? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, randomiser, obligatoire]

- Un temps de témoignages de la part de la congrégation
- Un temps de prière de la part de la congrégation
- Vidéos de culte sur YouTube
- Répondre aux questions et aux commentaires pendant le sermon
- Aucune de ces réponses [Exclusif d'autres réponses, anchor at end]

Suite de la réponse COVID [Page 8]

cvd04. [If cvd01 = "Yes"] Votre congrégation a-t-elle déplacé ses services de culte en ligne pendant la pandémie de COVID-19 en conformité avec les restrictions de santé publique sur les rassemblements de culte ? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, randomiser, obligatoire]

- Services diffusés en direct (par ex., Facebook Live, etc.)
- Services de culte préenregistrés et affichés (par ex., YouTube)
- Réunions virtuelles (par ex., Zoom)
- Autre (veuillez préciser) [Write-in]
- Ne s'applique pas [Anchor at end]

cvd05. [If cvd01 = "Yes"] Prévoyez-vous de continuer à offrir des services de culte en ligne après la levée de toutes les restrictions liées à la pandémie COVID-19 ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non
- Ne sait pas encore

Parlez-nous de l'engagement de votre congrégation envers sa communauté. [Page 9]

clt01. Lequel des énoncés suivants décrit le mieux la façon dont vous pensez que votre communauté (l'agglomération dans laquelle vous vous trouvez) considère votre congrégation ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- La communauté ne sait pas grand-chose de nous.
- La communauté pense que nous sommes une bande toxique et intolérante.
- La communauté pense que nous sommes des gens bien mais il n'y a pas beaucoup d'interaction entre nous et eux.
- La communauté apprécie la façon dont nous la servons et la soutenons.
- Je ne sais pas ce que la communauté pense de notre église.

ctl02. Au cours des 5 dernières années, de quelles manières votre congrégation s'est-elle engagée avec la communauté (l'agglomération dans laquelle elle se trouve) qui l'entoure ? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent) [Réponses multiples, randomiser, obligatoire]

- Organisation d'événements de quartier amusants pour la communauté (par ex., barbecue, carnaval, journée de divertissement).
- Emballage et livraison de paniers de nourriture (par ex., à Noël ou à l'Action de grâces).
- Visites de porte-à-porte pour inviter les gens à l'église ou partager un message chrétien.
- Organisation d'un concert de musique chrétienne ou d'un service de culte en plein air.
- Organisation d'une lecture publique de la Bible.
- Organisation d'une école biblique de vacances ouverte à la communauté.
- Organisation d'un repas gratuit pour la communauté
- Gestion d'une friperie, d'un placard alimentaire ou d'une soupe populaire.
- Envoi de personnes ou d'équipes de l'église pour soutenir d'autres organisations caritatives ou ministères.
- Envoi de secours en cas de catastrophe à la communauté locale

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- Sondage auprès de vos voisins pour savoir ce qu'ils pensent de votre église.
- Aucune de ces réponses [Exclusif d'autres réponses, anchor at end]

clt03. Au cours des 12 prochains mois, quels sont les sujets suivants que votre prédication ou votre enseignement est susceptible d'aborder ? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent)
[Multiple response, randomiser rows, at least one obligatoire]

- Mandats de vaccination COVID-19
- Questions relatives aux LGBTQ+ et à l'identité de genre
- Les tombes des pensionnats
- L'avortement
- Les femmes dans le leadership ministériel
- Euthanasie (AMAM)
- Injustice raciale
- Changement climatique
- Aucune de ces réponses [Exclusive of others, anchor at end]

Quelques points avant de terminer ... [Page 10]

Le rapport final de cette étude sera disponible à l'adresse www.theEFC.ca dans les 6 mois suivant la clôture de cette enquête. Vous pouvez trouver le rapport à cet endroit, ou nous pouvons vous envoyer un avis par courriel lorsqu'il sera publié.

adm01. Souhaitez-vous recevoir un avis par courriel concernant la publication du rapport final de cette étude ? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

- Oui
- Non

Coordonnées – Rapport final [Page 11]

adm02. Où pouvons-nous vous envoyer un avis de publication du rapport final ? (Ces informations ne seront utilisées qu'à cette fin.)

- Nom : [Write-in, not obligatoire]
- Adresse courriel : [Write-in, validate as email address, not obligatoire]

Tirage d'une carte-cadeau d'Amazon [Page 12]

adm03. Souhaitez-vous participer au tirage au sort d'une des trois cartes-cadeaux Amazon d'une valeur de 250 \$? [Réponse unique, obligatoire]

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- Oui
- Non

Coordonnées – Carte-cadeau d'Amazon [Page 13]

adm04. Où pouvons-nous vous informer des gagnants des trois cartes-cadeaux d'Amazon d'une valeur de 250 \$? (Ces informations ne seront utilisées qu'à cette fin.)

- Nom : [Write-in, not obligatoire]
- Adresse courriel : [Write-in, validate as email address, not obligatoire]

Merci [Page 14]

Merci de votre participation à l'Étude sur les petites églises évangéliques canadiennes (EPEEC). Votre participation nous aidera à comprendre les enjeux ministériels auxquels font face les petites églises.

Nous reconnaissons que certaines personnes ont des doutes quant à leur participation à des enquêtes après y avoir répondu. Si vous souhaitez retirer votre interview de notre étude, veuillez contacter l'enquêteur principal (informations ci-dessous) avant le 15 avril 2022 et nous serons heureux de la retirer.

Si vous avez des inquiétudes concernant votre traitement ou vos droits en tant que participant à la recherche, veuillez contacter le comité d'éthique de la recherche de Tyndale.
[mailto:reb@tyndale.edu]

Cordialement,

Rick Hiemstra
Enquêteur principal
Étude sur les petites églises évangéliques canadiennes
research@theEFC.ca

[Exit to CESCS Page:
<https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Communications/Research/Canadian-Evangelical-Small-Church-Study>]

Merci d'avoir pris en considération cette enquête [Page 15]

Vous pouvez en apprendre davantage sur l'étude à www.theEFC.ca/CESCS ou vous pouvez contacter les chercheurs à research@theEFC.ca.

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