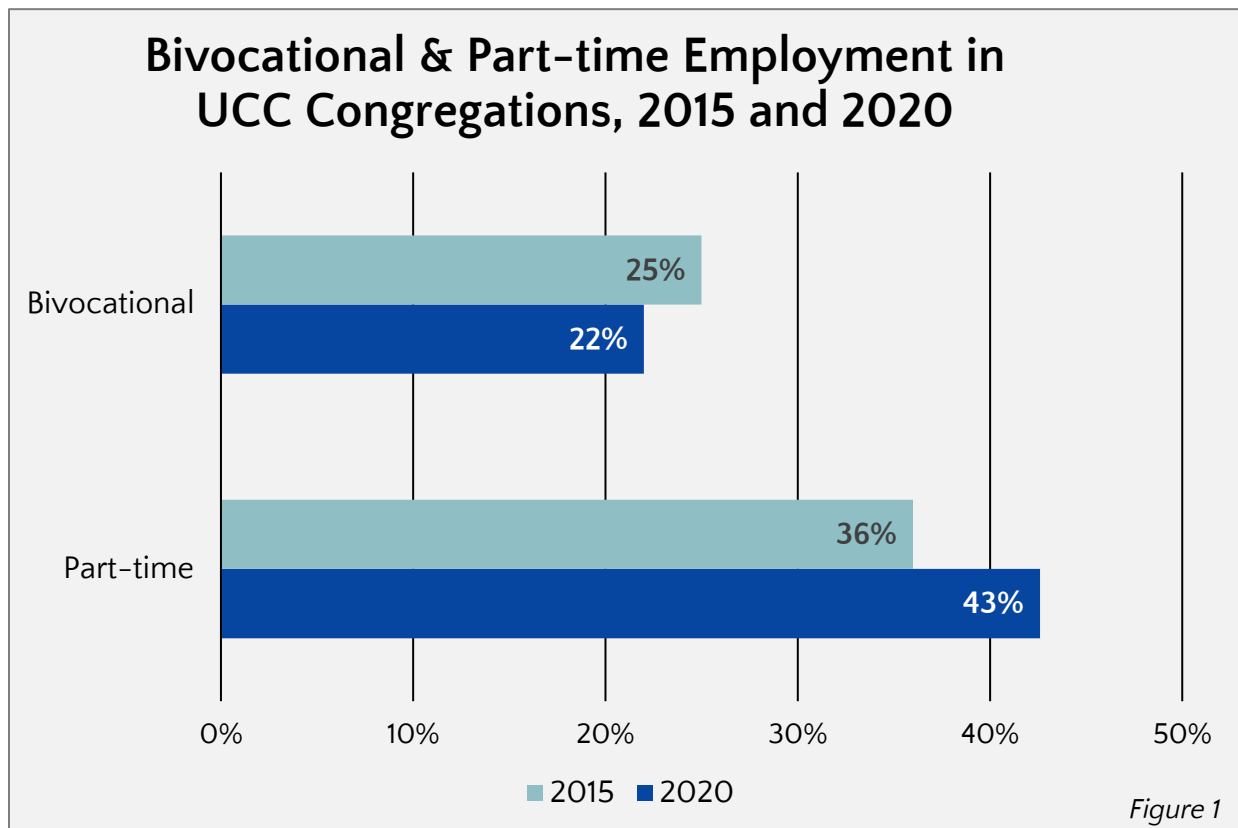


When The Pastor Has Another Job *Bivocationalism Among Clergy*

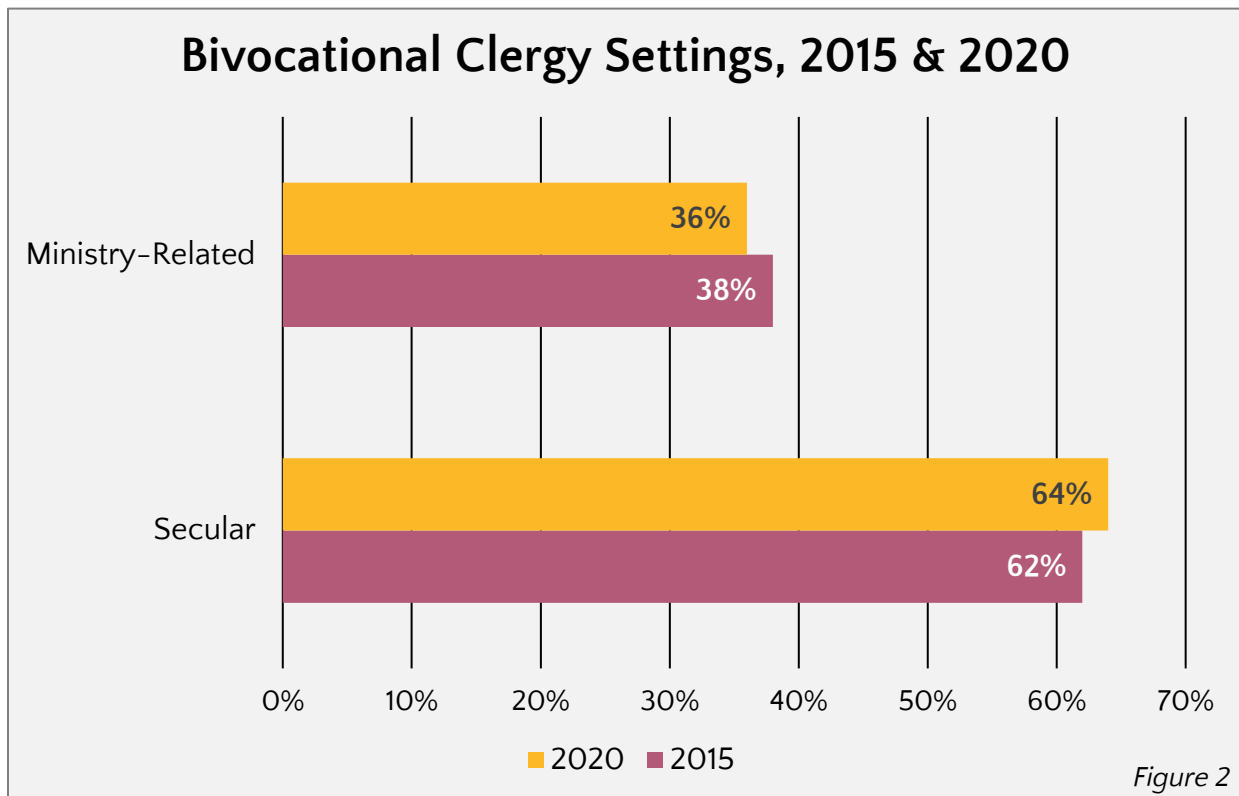
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The full-time paid clergy person is a relatively new phenomenon. “In fact, throughout church history, the full-time, fully funded pastor [was] the exception, and bivocational ministry [was] the norm,” writes D. Gustafson for *EFCA Today*,¹ referencing the Gospels (Mark 6:3 & Matt. 13:55) and Acts 18:3 as examples. Many of the rabbinical sages of history are known to have held secular employment,^a as well. That said, the 2020 Faith Communities Today (FACT) survey found that most clergypersons^b in the United States were in full-time (76%), paid (86%) positions, which other sources have found to be the case since at least 1996.^{2,3}

There has been some shifting, however, within the UCC’s clergy landscape. While the majority of UCC congregations continue to report employing full-time clergy since the first FACT survey in 2000,⁴ the proportion of congregations with full-time clergy has decreased while the proportion of congregations reporting part-time clergy has increased. The share of UCC congregations with full-time clergy declined from 83% in 2000 to 57% in 2020, whereas congregations with part-time clergy increased from 15% to 34% in the same time frame. Bivocational clergy^c served 25% of congregations in 2015 and 22% of the UCC congregations surveyed for 2020 FACT (Figure 1).



Of bivocational clergy serving congregations, approximately 62% and 64% had roles in a secular sector in 2015 and 2020, respectively; 38% and 36% worked in other ministry-related roles in 2015 and 2020 (Figure 2). In 2020, approximately 12% of the UCC FACT sample's clergy were actively serving more than one congregation; in 2015, 10% of the sample reported the same (data not shown). Most clergy (86%) who served more than one congregation in 2015 served a total of two; approximately 4% serving multiple congregations reported serving four or more.



In conclusion, though most UCC clergy remain full-time, paid congregational ministers, a sizeable minority have outside employment—a growing share of which is secular. As the landscapes of both the UCC and American faith communities continue to undergo demographic change, assessing the ways clergy employment evolves correspondingly will be an important consideration within the UCC and across faith communities.

References

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^a Specifically, the *Tanna'im* (תנאים), whose views comprise the Mishnah, as referenced by the Rambam in *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:9.

^b Including non-Christian clergy.

^c i.e., Authorized Ministers who have at least 1 other role outside their ministerial one.