



Findings Relevant to Pastors and Churches

A summary of research conducted at the Co-Vocational Symposium on February 5th, 2025.

- CoVo is becoming more common across denominations in Canada (though at different paces and for different reasons).
- Immigrant/multi-ethnic churches seem to embrace CoVo more naturally and commonly.
- CoVo is often a reality because of financial need or as a mission (e.g., to build relationships with the community).
- Some of the many benefits of CoVo include freeing-up resources to the church, giving the pastor the lived experience of the congregation (someone who understands their “9 to 5”), giving pastors a sense of autonomy for not being dependent on the offerings, enhancing the collective decision making and sense-making at the church, and allowing greater opportunities for the congregation to serve and take responsibility for different areas of need.
- CoVo requires changing the idea that the pastor has to do everything. Rather it requires identifying and training lay people who are gifted to serve in different areas, even preaching.
- Address misunderstandings about the role of the CoVo pastors among the congregation, especially as it relates to expecting the CoVo pastor to be available as a full-time pastor.

Findings Relevant to Denominational Leaders

A summary of research conducted at the Co-Vocational Symposium on February 5th, 2025.

- While some have shifted to CoVo after a while, others have intentionally been CoVo from the very beginning, whether by necessity or by choice.
- Look to immigrant/multi-ethnic churches to learn about CoVo from them.
- Church planting and small churches are contexts that can specially benefit from CoVo due to their limited budget.
- It is necessary to recognize and address the stigma faced by CoVo pastors, as if being CoVo were an indicative of failure.
- Determine to remove barriers for CoVo pastors in credentialling and attending denominational events, such as by offering online meetings and at non-business hours times, and offering them a stipend to cover the costs incurred by their participation.
- A CoVo “framework” is urgently needed – clarifying job description, expectations, and compensation.



Findings Relevant to Theological Educators

A summary of research conducted at the Co-Vocational Symposium on February 5th, 2025.

- Importance and need of greater flexibility in seminary education, especially as it relates to offering online and modular education.
- Changes needed to seminary education include:
 - a. Tailored evaluation of student learning (e.g., competency-based instead of solely credit-based evaluation).
 - b. Teaching about money management, retirement planning, administration and time management skills.