

GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

What Pastors Actually Do

Pastor's only work one day a week. Right? Well, if you listen to some people, you would think that is correct. However, pastors do a lot of work beyond the view of the regular church participant. Here's just a short list of the many things pastors do each week.

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sermon preparation | Managing Conflict |
| Evangelism | Counseling |
| Planning/Thinking | Training leaders |
| Administration/Budget | Visitation and pastoral care |
| Prayer/Personal devotions | Leading/Attending services |
| Preparing for or teaching | Preparing/Attending meetings |

The list can go on and on, but these are some of the major activities that occupy the normal pastor's time in the USA.

Where the time goes

Not surprisingly, pastors spend most of their time on sermon preparation. The average is about 13 hours each week. Since most pastors work between 50 and 60 hours a week, they spend about 20% of their time in this activity.

Twice as much time is spent on preparing for meetings, attending meetings, administration, and budget issues. Most pastors spend 20 to 25 hours a week on these activities, or about 40% of their time simply managing the church.

According to the Gallup Poll, the average person works 47 hours per week in the USA. The 2014 poll found that 18% of those who work full time work 60+ hours a week, 21% work 50-59 hours, 11% work 41-49 hours, 42% work precisely 40 hours, and just 8% work less than 40 hours.

In comparison a special report in *YOUR CHURCH* magazine in 1995 noted that pastors work an average of 55 hours each week. A newer report in the July 2013 issue of *The Christian Report* stated the median work week for pastors was 50 hours, i.e., half of pastors work more and half work less than that each week. A 2008 study by Lifeway Research found a similar result.

For information on scheduling
Dr. Gary L. McIntosh

Write: PO Box 892589, Temecula, CA
92589

Email: cgnet@earthlink.net
Call toll free: 1-877-506-3086

There is no such thing as an "average" work week for pastors. The unpredictability of a pastor's schedule makes it difficult for many pastors to

correctly estimate how much time they spend in any particular church or ministry activity. Since pastors are on call 24/7, they may work 40 hours one week and 80 hours the next. Most pastors start their work day at 8:00am and end at 6:30pm. Yet, they usually average four evenings a week away from home, which increases the work day from 10 to 12 hours.

Three studies

According to a study conducted in 1995 by John C. LaRue, Jr. for *YOUR CHURCH*, pastors split their time according to the following weekly breakdown:

Sermon Prep: 10 hours
 Miscellaneous Activities: 9 hours
 Preparing and Attending Meetings: 6 hours
 Prayer/Personal Devotions: 6 hours
 Visitation/Pastoral Care: 5 hours
 Administration/Budget: 4 hours
 Leading/Attending Services: 4 hours
 Counseling: 3 hours
 Teaching Preparation: 3 hours
 Planning/Thinking: 2 hours
 Evangelism: 1 hour
 Training Leaders: 1 hour
 Mediating Conflict: 1 hour
 Total: 55 hours

In comparison a study by LifeWay Research, reported in *Christianity Today* in 2008, found that pastors invest the following hours per week in . . .

Sermon Prep: 12 hours
 Pastoral Care: 5 hours

Prayer/Devotions: 9 hours
 Administration/Meetings: 3 hours
 Counseling: 3 hours
 Emails: 3 hours

A more recent study by *Stewardship Advocates* (2015) found the following for Protestant pastors:

Sermon Prep: 18 hours
 Pastoral Care: 11 hours
 Administration/Meetings: 9 hours
 Training Leaders: 7 hours
 Denominational Affairs: 3 hours
 Prayer/Personal Devotions: 4 hours
 Reading/Personal Development: 3 hours
 Total: 55 hours

While these three studies differ slightly due to the questions asked of each pastor, they do provide a baseline for comparison.

Thinking it through

How many hours do you (or your pastor) work each week? Keep a record in 15 minute intervals for one week and then total the results. It may surprise you.

How does your average work week compare to the three studies mentioned above?

How many hours does your church board think a pastor should work each week? Ask them to make a list of activities and the time they feel a pastor should give for each activity. Discuss the results.

How does your work week reflect your priorities, goals, or life purpose? Take time to design a one-week schedule that represents the important elements of your life?

Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$20 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.
 Copyrighted 2016 ISSN 1520-5096

*New Doctor of Ministry
Cohort begins January 2018
Two-Week Residency on
May 7-18, 2018.
Growing and Multiplying
Churches in North America*

REQUIREMENTS Qualified applicants will have a Master of Divinity degree (or its academic equivalent) with a minimum 3.0 GPA from an accredited school as well as three years of full-time ministry experience since graduation. Give us a call if you have any questions. The cost of the program is reasonable and designed to fit your budget.

FOR MORE INFO AND TO APPLY Visit talbot.edu/dmin or call (562) 903-4822 for additional information.

WE LOVE TO SEE CHURCHES THRIVE AND REPRODUCE. NOTHING EXCITES US MORE THAN HELPING CHURCHES TO WIN PEOPLE TO CHRIST, CONNECTING THEM WITH FELLOW BELIEVERS AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO GROW TO MATURITY IN CHRIST. TALBOT CAN HELP.

This track will give you the tools necessary to spark growth in your church and beyond. From basic biblical principles to the unique challenges of applying those principles in 21st century American life, you will be equipped to take up your role in stimulating genuine church growth.

Cohort Schedule

FIRST RESIDENCY - UNDERSTANDING CHURCH GROWTH & OUTREACH

Since the best ministry flows out of sound theology, your first week will be spent learning what the Bible says about growing and multiplying churches. The second week will help you understand evangelism and assimilation and the leadership challenges of helping your church grow.

SECOND RESIDENCY - HOW TO BUILD AND REBUILD A CHURCH

Even churches experiencing a significant decline can find new life and a wonderful future. In this residency, you will explore and evaluate 'cutting edge' church planting strategies designed to encourage a thriving church, as well as ideas to turnaround a struggling church.

THIRD RESIDENCY - UNDERSTANDING AND ADAPTING TO CULTURE

North America has changed and is changing. This residency will help you adapt to these changes. It begins by helping you understand the complexities and possibilities of ministry in our increasingly multi-ethnic society. And since our culture is increasingly post-modern, you will learn how to evangelize and minister among people who are absolutely convinced that there are no absolutes.

FACULTY-MENTORS

DR. GARY MCINTOSH is Professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot. He has served as a consultant for hundreds of churches in North America. Dr. McIntosh is also the Founder and President of the Church Growth Network, which provides a wide range of professional consulting services in the areas of church growth analysis, strategic planning, and generational change. He is the editor of the Growth Points newsletter. Having published over 100 articles and written over 16 books, he is a prolific writer and church growth expert.

DR. ALAN MCMAHAN has served in churches in North America and on the Pacific Rim. He has also taught in the areas of missiology, church growth, leadership, organizational development and evangelism. He has been active in training undergraduate and graduate students including mid-career professionals, Bible school teachers, pastors, and denominational leaders through the U.S., Canada, and much of Southeast Asia in the effective means to develop leaders and grow churches. He has served as Vice President for the Alliance Theological Seminary and as the Academic Dean at the King's College in mid-town Manhattan. He and his wife, Terri, have two sons, Billy and Jonathan, and live in La Mirada, CA.

"As I look at the United States today, I see people who are receptive to spiritual things. We need to learn how to communicate to them in a way that draws them to Jesus Christ."

DR. GARY MCINTOSH PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
AND LEADERSHIP

APPLY TODAY!
TALBOT.EDU | (800)
652-4015 | 13800 BIOLA
AVENUE | LA MIRADA, CA
90639