

VITAL CHURCHES

Building Vital Churches Through Bivocational Ministry

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TURNING THE TIDE ON BIVOCATIONAL MINISTRY

By Kate Harvey

Executive Director, The Ministers Council, ABC/USA

Bivocational ministry: A necessary accommodation to financial dilemmas, or a healthy option for churches and clergy? During my twenty years in ministerial leadership, the pendulum has slowly shifted from the perception that a clergyperson who shares time between two or more places of employment compromises her or his vocational identity in order to make ends meet to the conviction that sometimes, and perhaps often, bivocationalism is a healthy option for both the church or other religious institution and the ministerial leader.

An ABC task force document from more than a decade ago indicates that being full-time needs to be the goal, and toward that end the denomination ought to direct our collective energies for the encouragement of stewardship in order to make that goal happen. Ministerial leaders with college and seminary preparation at that time tended to express dissatisfaction with bivocational ministry because of its dissonance with their expectations, while persons who were originally lay leaders and who were called to pastor congregations tended to express satisfaction with their lot as beyond their expectations. Both found satisfaction in the variety of exposures to tasks and relationships offered, and both felt concern with time constraints.

A more recent multi-denominational survey

discovered that full-time and bivocational ministerial leaders share the sense of time crunch, but bivocational persons are frequently unable to avail themselves of collegial networking because the schedule of their non-ministerial employment conflicts with collegial meetings. Both United Presbyterian Church USA and the Southern Baptist Convention have consequently developed networks for bivocational persons, just as Jimmy Reader, working in partnership with the Ministers Council and the Board of National Ministries, is doing within the ABC.

Increasingly, as I meet with regional Ministers Councils, I hear an openness to transform meeting and retreat schedules to accommodate colleagues who cannot participate during traditional daytime hours. Increasingly, there is awareness that bivocationalism has much to commend it beyond an additional source of income, in terms of a broader life horizon and relationships in the world outside the church. At the same time, I am hearing everywhere the cry of loneliness as we all yearn for deeper relationships with those who share the calling to serve God in ministerial leadership.

If you have not recently met with nearby colleagues, why not take the initiative to pick up

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the phone and call one or two to schedule a date to get together? Then spend that time not doing business or telling jokes or even doing Bible study, but simply beginning to share how life is

for you, and praying together. For reasons both exciting and terrifying, we share a unique calling, and we need each other to be whole in the doing of it.

In the Spirit of Jubilee,
Kate Harvey

ISSUES FOR BIVOCATIONAL MINISTERS

TIME MANAGEMENT

By Jimmy Reader

In the many discussions with bivocational ministers I have had over the past couple of years, one issue stands out as one of the most important and urgent. Time Management is of concern to all persons in ministry (as it is to most people in our country today), but it can be of special concern to bivocational ministers because **of the** complexity of their lives in working at least two jobs, **responding** to important family needs, and trying to **find** time for their personal health and well-being.

We all need to ask ourselves, first of all, whether all that we are doing needs to be done. Or whether it needs to be done by us. How **often** are we caught in responding to the urgent but not important rather than giving more of our time to the not so urgent but very important matters of life? And how much of what we do in our ministry, especially as pastors, perhaps should be done by other persons in the church? There is a real danger for pastors to think that the success of the church depends on them, and they should therefore give more and more time to working toward that goal. Does not the success of the church depend on God? Is it not by God's grace? Are not all of God's people called to do the work of ministry together? And are not all pastors limited in what they can, and should, do by their calling, their gifts, and their human limitations of time and energy?

Still, the issue of time management is important.

Every study of bivocational ministry I have read says that effectiveness in being bivocational requires a combined **55-65** hours per week between the two or more pieces of our work. Balancing those work demands with a good family life and healthy personal habits means that we must learn how to consistently use our **time** wisely and well. One of the best books I **have read** on time management is by Stephen Covey: **First Things First**. (Covey is author of the best-selling *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.) I encourage you to get a copy and read all of what he says, but let me highlight some of it.

Covey has developed a chart with four quadrants describing how people spend their time, from the important and urgent to the not important and not urgent. Everyone has to do the Quadrant I stuff, such as dealing with crises, pressing problems and deadline-driven projects. Many of us spend much of our time in Quadrant III: Interruptions, some phone calls, mail, and reports, some meetings, many pressing matters and other popular activities. Some people spend too much time in Quadrant IV: trivia, busywork, time wasters, irrelevant mail, excessive TV. What Covey urges us to do is give priority to Quadrant II activities as we plan our time ~ things such as preparation, prevention, values clarification, planning, relationship building, true re-creation, and empowerment.

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“First Things First” has to do with giving priority to what is most important, but not necessarily urgent, as we decide how to use our time. Covey says that we need to begin with **clarifying** the VISION of our life. What is our life, and our work (or the different pieces of work), all about? He suggests three questions to ask: “What’s most important? What gives your life meaning? What do you want to be and to do in your life?” Then we need to identify the important ROLES we have in life, especially seeing those roles in terms of our relationships to people. When we have clarified our vision and identified our roles, then we are ready to begin setting GOALS for what we will do with this week: “What is the most important thing I could do in each role this week to have the greatest positive impact?” Covey recommends using a weekly planning calendar so that we can see how we use our time in a broader perspective and not get caught up in the routine of our daily tasks.

Covey and Roger and Rebecca Merrill, his co-authors, go into great detail explaining their approach to time management. Perhaps it really should be called Life Management because how we

use our time is about how we spend our lives. They drive that point home toward the end of the book where they talk about our PERSONAL LEADERSHIP. Time Management is not just about getting things done on our own. It is about our relationships in all that we do, and how we can positively influence other people. This is especially true for pastors. Our pastoral work is about influencing other people, about giving leadership to the church, about our relationships with other people.

First Things First is written from a business perspective, but it is uniquely appropriate to pastoral work. What we do comes out of the Vision/Mission of God. Our work as pastors, especially, is rooted in our Roles/Relationships with the people of our church and community. Our Goals do fit into the weekly activities of worship, sermon preparation, and other church activities, and we do need to set goals in a broader context of the Vision and Roles of pastoral Leadership within the church.

Jimmy Reader is a bivocational pastor and project director for BivoNet.

“REAL PASTORS”

By Dennis Bickers

“Real pastors are full-time pastors.” – “If God had truly called you to the ministry He would have opened up a larger church for you by now.” – “Why are you still working in that factory? If God wants you to be a minister, you need to step out in faith, go to seminary, and get a real church.” – “No part-time preacher is going to accomplish much for the kingdom of God.”

Anyone who has served as a bivocational minister for very long has heard these, or similar, statements. As a result, many bivocational pastors struggle with issues of identity. We have allowed others to define us as “part-time preachers” so often that even we are not sure of the validity of

our calling. After serving nearly 17 years as a bivocational pastor, I was recently asked how I saw myself. Do I see myself as a part-time or full-time pastor? My response may help others answer the same question about their ministry.

I responded that we need to get away from the terms “part-time” and “full-time.” I do not know any part-time pastors. I am on call 24 hours a day for anyone needing my help. I have just as many Sunday sermons to prepare as any other pastor. I work with the various committees in the church. I perform weddings and conduct funerals. Our folks

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expect me to visit them in the hospital and in their homes. I handle many **of the** administrative tasks of the church. Each month I write and mail a church newsletter to our mailing list.

The follow-up question then focused on the number of hours I did “church work” each week. How many hours per week should a pastor work to be considered full-time? The person who asks such a question does not understand the nature of pastoral work, but that may be more the fault of those of us in ministry. How often do we educate our churches about what we do? The fact is that most believers really have no idea what their pastors do each week. We need to take the time to educate them.

My response to the question was that my hours vary each week depending on what is happening in our church. Some churches have stated an expectation that their bivocational pastor should work 20 or 30 hours per week on the church field.

I believe that is wrong. If someone calls me on Thursday evening telling me that her husband was just taken to the hospital, I am not going to say, “Well, I’ve got my 20 hours in this week. If he is still there on Monday I’ll stop by and see him.” No pastor I know would do that. Pastoral ministry is not about hours; it is about providing ministry.

Rather than defining ministers as “part-time” or “full-time,” I prefer the terms “bivocational” and “fully-funded.” Both are legitimate types of ministry that God is using to provide pastoral leadership to His church. God has called me to bivocational ministry to meet the needs of a local church. I count it an honor to have this call on my life.

Dennis Bickers is a bivocational pastor at Hebron Baptist Church in Madison, Indiana, where he has served for over 16 years, and is active in encouraging bivocational ministry in his region.

*The Ministers Council ABC/USA has published a booklet entitled
Another Look at Bivocational Ministry*

By Jimmy Reader

It is available at cost for \$3.00 each. Contact the office at 1-800-ABC3USA, ext. 2334. |

THE QUESTION OF ORDINATION

Many people in bivocational ministry, perhaps the majority, have a seminary education and often other college and graduate degrees. The level of education is not always an issue. But many people who are engaged in ministry bivocationally do not have college or seminary degrees, and the Recommended Procedures’ for ABC Ordination have generally required that level of education. In 1996 the Ministerial Leadership Commission ABC/USA approved revised procedures which

includes Track III. Here is part of what it says –

Under Track III procedures, candidates may qualify for ordination if they have satisfactorily completed a lay pastor program **from** a U.S. seminary or an ABC Region or if they have completed at least seven years of pastoral service (deemed satisfactory by the region) as a pastor/lay

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minister of a church with at least three of those years in the region of the ordaining church. As with the first two tracks toward ordination, which have been in place for years, other requirements for ordination include a knowledge of American Baptist history and polity, candidacy assessment through the Career Development Center, completion of a course on professional ethics, and the ordination examination. (A copy of the booklet, "Recommended Procedures for Ordination, Commissioning and Recognition for the Christian Ministry in the American Baptist Churches" is

available from your region office or from The Ministerial Leadership Commission office at The Mission Center in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.)

The decisions of who will be ordained are made by each region's department of ministry, with the local churches, and Track III specifically gives the freedom and responsibility to the region's department of ministry to determine a person's readiness for ordination under these procedures. Anyone who wants to explore the possibility of ordination under the guidelines given above should contact their region office.

ALTERNATIVE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

American Baptist Regions, Seminaries, and Churches offer a variety of training programs which prepare lay and pastoral leaders for basic ministry. A recent publication entitled "Alternative Theological Education" is a helpful resource for locating programs near you. It was prepared by a task force of the Eastern Ministerial Leadership Commission and is available by contacting David Ludeker in Educational Ministries at Valley Forge. (1-800-ABC3USA, ext. 2061)

COMING IN FEBRUARY 1999

Jimmy Reader, author of The Ministers Council publication, "Another Look at Bivocational Ministry," is preparing a more detailed workbook for church leaders to look at the question of whether bivocational ministry is for their church and pastor. It will be called *Healthy Churches: Choosing Bivocational Ministry For Your Church*, and will be published in a looseleaf notebook format. It will be available in February, 1999, and can be ordered by contacting him at: Jimmy Reader, 22 1 S. 1 4th St., Kansas City, KS 66102 - 913-32 1-2980 - or email: jreader828@aol.com.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION (TEE) AND BIVOCATIONAL MINISTRY

Since 1964 TEE has grown into a primary means of theological education for both lay and ordained persons in many countries. Ross Kinsler has written extensively on the subject. He says that "TEE has a unique opportunity to recognize and strengthen local congregations and their leaders as the primary agents of mission, unity, and renewal" and that "the growing extension networks are able to include all kinds of people, whether they hope to be ordained or not, whatever their social, ethnic, racial, and educational background." (F. Ross Kinsler, ed. *Ministry by the People: Theological Education by Extension*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis

Books, 1983, pp. 3-4)

In a book edited by Ralph Winter, other writers connect extension education directly to bivocational ministry* -

James Emery says "it is expected that at this time the student will be encouraged to learn a basic trade as well. Believing that a man is intended to benefit his fellow man as well as provide for himself, we want students to enter into occupations not only adequate to support themselves but also

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helpful for the community of believers and society in general.” (19)

Ralph Winter asks: “Can we envision to some extent a substantial ministerial category which will be that of a tentmaking ministry (i.e. partially or fully self-supporting)? Will this foster Christian insight into the holiness of the secular, especially in the cities?” (25)

And James F. Hopewell says that “it is increasingly apparent that any large numbers of ‘tentmaking’ ministers cannot be trained by

traditional methods of theological education....Should a man already established in a secular profession (a characteristic which may mark the most promising of candidates for tent-making ministries) be removed by his long period in seminary **from** the very occupation he will resume **after** graduation?” (72-73)

(* *This book was written in 1969, before inclusive language, so we do acknowledge the need to read it in a more inclusive way. – Ralph D. Winter, ed. Theological Education by Extension, Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1969.*)

FOR FURTHER READING ON BIVOCATIONAL MINISTRY

(Some of these resources will be available only through a seminary library or inter-library loan)

- Baelz, Peter and William Jacob, eds. *Ministers of the Kingdom: Exploration in Non-Stipendiary Ministry*. (London: CIO Publishing, 1985)
- “*Brethren Life and Thought*,” Volume XXXVI, Summer 1991, Norman Harsh, “Financial Resources for Church Planting,” pp.22 I-226.
- “*Brethren Life and Thought*,” Volume XX, Winter 1975, pp.39-44, James F. Myer, “Benefits of the Plural Non-Salaried Ministry.”
- Elliott, John Y. *Our Pastor Has An Outside Job: New Strength for the Church Through Dual Role Ministry*. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1980)
- Lower, James L. Jr, ed. *Case Histories of Tentmakers*. (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow Co, Inc., 1976)
- Messer, Donald E. *Calling Church and Seminary Into the 21st Century*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995)
- Niebuhr, H. Richard and Daniel D. Williams, eds. *The Ministry in Historical Perspective*. (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1956)
- Niquette, Alan R. *Bi-Vocational Ministry: A Manual for Tentmakers*. (D.Min. Thesis, Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1987)
- “*The Christian Ministry*”, May 1970, Donald H. Gustafson, “Why Not Make Tents?“, pp. 15-16.
- Yamasaki, April Nora Chiu. *New Testament Tentmaking: Making a Living and Leading the Church*. (Thesis at University of British Columbia, 1979)

Ministers Council is for Bivocational Ministers.

Join today.

For information, call the Ministers Council office

at 1-800-ABC3USA, ext. 2334

BIVOPASTORS ON THE INTERNET

Many bivocational pastors participate in regular discussions by **email**. You don't have to be on the internet, as long as you have **email**. Almost daily discussions on a variety of subjects go on in this way. You can join the group simply by contacting Philip Yang at the following **email** address: **bivopastor@aol.com**.

One participant, *Ray Mann*, sent this message: "Bivocational ministers are not simply on the opposite side of the scale from fully-funded ministers, but are rather somewhere on a spectrum. At one end is the fully-funded pastor who draws no support from outside sources, at the other end is the bivocational who takes no support whatever from any church source. In the middle are those pastors whose expenses are paid to one degree or another, those who take a part-time salary supplemented by church budget sources, and probably even to those pastors who receive full-time salaries from the church but for one reason or another have to work a part-time job on the side. In this last category I know a **fully-funded** pastor who owns and manages rental properties on the side. At that, we haven't even touched the subject of those pastors who are officially full-time, but whose ministry is made financially possible only by the jobs that their wives or husbands hold outside the church. That's an entirely different issue. For some inexplicable reason, even though I knew better, my mental image of the bivocational minister was of a pastor who drew no support from the church at all, and worked at another job for financial support. Duh!"

Another participant, Winston Skinner, tells something of his story which might be helpful and encouraging to others. He speaks about "positives for families in bivocational ministry":

"I. We live in our own house. My full-time pastor friends who live in a parsonage seem to have perpetual anxiety over where they live. A committee doesn't want them to paint over the wallpaper given in memory of Miss **Effie** Vanlangingham's sister even though the wallpaper is green and red paisley and the pastor family's living room furniture is

orange and blue plaid. There are the usual 'renter's' problems such as 'too many holes in the walls' **from** hanging pictures and big pieces of unwanted furniture that can't be moved. Sometimes parsonage arrangements also come with some utilities as part of the deal – yet another bone of contention. Our electric bill may be astronomical, and our gas bill may be the size of Albania's budget, but it's ours, ours, ours. I don't have to explain to a committee when I leave my floodlights on for my teenager to come home from a date, and I can set the thermostat where I want it.

"2. The expectations on families in bivocational churches seem to be quite different than in full-time churches. My family is very active in the church. My wife has often taught Sunday School. Our younger daughter, 13, has for several years **team-**taught the young children's class with an adult lady in the church with whom she has a special friendship. Our older daughter, 17, has been playing the piano for services since she was 11. Yet, I must say that all three have pretty much done what they felt they wanted to do in the church. Both our kids are pretty normal. My wife and children do not particularly care for Southern gospel music. When the church has gospel singing (four times a year), they rarely attend. I've never heard it mentioned. Our older daughter is a flashy dresser. When she showed up one morning to play the piano wearing a lime green dress with a multi-colored scarf, I wondered how the older ladies would take it. The two oldest and most faithful told her how beautiful she was and what great fashion sense she has. In short, my wife and children have been accepted as who they are. In full-time churches, it seems that spouses and children are often expected to dress and behave in a way different from other people in the same age group. They are always on display, always the example, expected to fit into a preconceived mold, etc. It is nice for your family to be able to be normal.

"3. In my bivocational church, at least, there is

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an understanding of how busy I am. I believe this is true at least in part because I have a busy secular job (newspaper reporter) and really enjoy my pastoral duties. One of my deacons, prior to our last revival, told me that he thought some visiting needed to be done before the revival, but that I was too busy. He wanted to know if it would be all right with me if he and some of the other men took on the project! The lady who has been an active member longer than anyone in the church has told me more than once as she **left** the church that I looked tired, was working too hard and needed to take it easy for awhile. When I **need** to be away on Wednesday night because of my newspaper job or a family event or when we go on vacation, people just seem to accept that this is my time. Again, I have never heard a complaint. I do hear from full-time folk about being called because of minor illnesses of peripheral church members while on vacation or of hurt feelings because the pastor has some outside interest that occasionally takes him somewhere other than church when there is an activity at the church

building.

“4. I feel that I am doing what God wants me to do. I am sure that God gives full-time pastors the grace they need to cope with the stresses of each day. He does the same for me as a bivocational. I feel strongly that God has called me to do what I am doing where I am doing it. I tend to do my best at the task at hand and then turn it over to God. That task may involve family, church or newspaper. I find that He helps me do what I must. For example, in my 12 years as pastor I have never had to miss a funeral because of my newspaper schedule which does have some duties each month which cannot be rescheduled. Since I feel comfortable and fulfilled within the will of God, my family is happier, too.

“I don’t want to make you think that my wife never complains that I am gone from home too much or that my daughters never ask for some extra attention. I just want to make it **clear** that I believe, in our situation at least, that bivocational is better. I am sure that the dynamics of our family, our church and my secular job all play into this equation.”

THE SEARCH PROCESS –

IDEAS FROM AMERICAN BAPTIST PERSONNEL SERVICES

One of the dilemmas of bivocational ministry is in the search process. How do pastors and churches find each other when the pastor also needs to have other work? Mary Mild, director of ABPS, has some suggestions. The Narrative section of the profile is a good place for ministers to describe their other vocational interest(s) so that search committees will know if the person might be able to find such work in their community. In the section on Work Experience, individuals can list any licenses they hold such as teacher, social work, nursing, real estate, and the like. There is already a lot of information present in the profile by looking at past work history, work experience, and reading the narrative, and thereby gaining a good idea of what other vocational opportunities might be appropriate for the candidate and within the community. ABPS

is considering some revisions in the profile to make this process easier. Anyone who has questions when updating their profile – or who needs to create a profile with ABPS – should contact their **office**.

David Ludeker, of Educational Ministries, also has some suggestions for what might happen in the search process to prepare a church for bivocational ministry:

1. A congregation needs to be given positive stories of how bivocational ministry has been a positive experience in sister congregations. Area ministers might bring a layperson from such a congregation to share the story with a search committee; and
2. Use the time of transition as an opportunity to help the church look at its mission and purpose for its existence.

A PILOT PROJECT IN THE CENTRAL REGION

During 1998, the American Baptist Churches of the Central Region were partners with The Ministers Council and National Ministries in a pilot project on bivocational ministry, led by Jimmy Reader. The region staff discussed issues of bivocational ministry at two meetings. Two seminars on BivoMin were offered in the region, involving about 25 persons. Discussions were begun about how Bivocational ministry and New Church Planting might fit together. And a survey was completed of persons in the region identified as being in bivocational ministry. The results and analysis of that survey might be helpful to other leaders in the ABC, and so are presented here:

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ABCCR SURVEY ON BIVOCATIONAL MINISTRY

Twenty respondents to the survey represent about 40% of the bivocational ministers in the ABCCR, according to a list provided by the Staff. Nationally, the best estimates are that 20-25% of persons in ministry are bivocational; so 20 persons from the ABCCR would be about half the persons in the region who consider themselves to be bivocational. The survey, then, does represent a significant group of ministers within the ABCCR. I have attached a summary of results from the survey, and a complete listing of the survey responses are available in the region office.

Here is my analysis of the answers given to each question, followed by some recommendations for region and national staff.

ANALYSIS

Question 1

The second vocation or source of income is representative of the diverse occupations of people in this state. Most of them could realistically be available in most of the communities in Kansas or Oklahoma, especially within commuting distance of larger towns.

Question 2

Bivocational ministry was not the initial choice for most respondents, but several of them have found it to be a **satisfying** way of doing ministry. Most who are in BivoMin came to it because of their financial needs, usually because the church could not afford to pay them a fair and reasonable salary as their sole source of income. Some would prefer to be “full-time”, but also enjoy some of the benefits such as

more freedom, more interaction with others outside the congregation, and good use of gifts and resources.

Question 3

Most pastors define BivoMin as having two jobs or sources of income, with the emphasis on the financial need of doing this kind of ministry. Some, however, spoke of the opportunity to pursue two vocations and to cultivate other gifts and talents.

Question

Many reasons, other than financial need, were given for doing bivocational ministry, including involving more people in ministry, being more involved in “the world”, and finding balance both for the pastor and the congregation.

Question

Many benefits, both for the pastor and the church, were suggested. Among those benefits were: affirming the people’s gifts for ministry, more freedom to speak out as a pastor, ability to serve smaller congregations, less financial stress, and identification of the people with their pastor.

Question

Few of the respondents were aware of different models for this kind of ministry.

Question 7

Frustrations and difficulties of BivoMin were numerous, but they focused, especially, on issues of time management, availability for ministry, and lack

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of understanding of the nature of bivocational ministry (both for the pastor and the people).

Question 8

Suggestions for changes at the regional/national levels focused on the need to schedule more meetings at times when bivocational ministers could participate (not during weekdays). Some expressed a desire for more resources about BivoMin. One person mentioned the need for more options for retirement and medical benefits which would be open to bivocational pastors.

Question 9

Since there has been little denominational awareness of BivoMin as a positive option, few resources have been available until now. The only ones the respondents were aware of are the resources just now being created.

Question 10

Only a few persons suggested changes concerning ABC ordination. Those ideas included some type of certification/recognition for this ministry, a question on the ordination paper about ministry in a secular world, and enlarging the options for training/education (especially for second career ministers).

Question 11

A variety of options were suggested for making theological education more available to a wider group of persons. Those options included several models for distance learning, internet "classes", weekend seminars, and extension education. Several persons stressed the need for greater financial aid. One even suggested some form of "forgiving the debt" for a certain number of years in ministry or for numeric congregational growth. — Levels of education among the respondents ranged from 8th grade through a D.Min., with most of them having an M.Div. or other college/graduate degrees.

Question 12

The experiences of the respondents differed widely

in their ministry. Some prefer full-time ministry, but accept BivoMin as a valid and helpful way of doing ministry in their situation. Some have come to appreciate the benefits of this kind of ministry after struggling with "having" to do it. Some could go either way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage bivocational ministry as a healthy option:
 - For pastors with specific job/career skills and experience
 - For churches with budgets of \$75,000 or less
2. Provide resources and training for bivocational ministry, for pastors and church leaders and for college/seminary students who are considering ministry as a vocation.
3. Provide continuing education events for bivocational ministers which would include practical help with issues such as time management.
4. Schedule more denominational events and meetings at times when more bivocational ministers could attend, such as evenings or weekends (beginning perhaps on Thursday evening or Friday).
5. Provide more flexible options for retirement and medical benefits, especially for BivoMin pastors who are also self-employed or employed by a company which does not provide such benefits.
6. At the region level, the process of ordination needs to be flexible enough to recognize this ministry as valid and needs to recognize more options for training and education.
7. Regions can be partners with ABC Seminaries to provide more flexible options for offering theological education to persons wanting to be better prepared for ministry.

Small Church Ministries and Bivocational Ministry

In October, 1998, the Small Church Ministries Team ABC/USA met in Oklahoma. Part of their agenda was to hear a presentation on and to discuss issues and concerns of bivocational ministry as it relates to smaller churches. The two are not synonymous. Bivocational ministry can be done in other contexts; and, certainly, small churches are not all bivocational. But there are some joint concerns. Here is a sampling of the some of the discussion and ideas coming from that meeting.

What do healthy churches look like? And what options do we have to accomplish that? Is BivoMin **oneof** those options?

More training would be helpful for Area Ministers as they seek to educate church leadership about BivoMin in the search process for new pastoral leadership.

For the M&M Board: More options are needed for what fair and reasonable compensation and benefits might be in the context of BivoMin.

An alternative compensation worksheet for churches considering BivoMin would be helpful.

In the New Church Planters' Institute, would a component for BivoMin be helpful?

For communities, often rural and isolated communities, where other employment for Bivo Pastors is limited, (such as among Native American churches in Western Oklahoma) could we develop teams of persons with specialized expertise to go in and help empower the **community** to develop its economy?

The vocational issue is important. What is the other vocation? Is it **satisfying** work? Is it meaningful? And is bivocational ministry truly "bivocational" if that is not true?

How do we address other ways in which pastoral families support themselves when the

pastor is "**full-time**" but the compensation is not? For instance, working spouses, two income families, or maybe a yoked parish or a denominational/local church combination?

- An important benefit of healthy bivocational ministry is the **freedom** from dependency for both the pastor and the church which it can generate.
- How can we help churches and pastors when the church has little money for compensation and the pastor has few marketable skills, or in an area where work opportunities are severely **limited**?
- What about the issue of Stewardship? Could not more churches be "full-time" if they are challenged and educated to give more and to be more generous toward their pastor?
- Empowering the laity for ministry is an important issue for bivocational ministry. More training needs to be done in that area.
- The issue of how theological education can be obtained by persons already involved in ministry who also need to continue their education is an important concern.
- What can Caucasian churches learn from the models of African-American and Hispanic churches in this area of bivocational ministry.

BROCHURES AVAILABLE

Two brochures are available for use by local churches. One is entitled "Bivocational Pastors and Small Churches." It was written in consultation with a group of area ministers in an effort to communicate the value of bivocational ministry. A second brochure is called "The Call to Bivocational Ministry." Master copies of both have been sent to region **offices** and area ministers, and the first is also available on disk. Or you can contact David Ludeker in Educational Ministries at The Mission Center in Valley Forge.

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**Please make copies and make this journal available to others,
inviting them to join BivoNet.**

**For more information about BivoNet, and to submit ideas or articles
for the next issue of “Vital Churches,”**

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