

# New Times New Call

## A Manual for Pastoral Options For Small Churches

*Revised edition: 2003*

Produced by the Presbyterian Small Church Network  
Evangelism and Church Development  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
a ministry of the General Assembly Council



## PREFACE

We are delighted to offer you a new edition of *New Times New Call: A Manual of Pastoral Options for Small Churches*. Since its publication in 1991, many presbyteries and congregations have used this resource as they explored different options for pastoral leadership. They have discovered that often new calls bring new life to the membership of a smaller congregation. Their explorations have become pilgrimages of faithful witness to Jesus Christ and sharing the Good News.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a denomination of small churches. A small church is defined as one where the average worship attendance is 100 or fewer persons. Approximately 73 percent of our churches fall within this category. Among these churches, the presbytery and the congregations depend upon each other and in many places create vibrant ministries.

Our prayer is that this up-dated resource will continue to guide presbyteries and small membership churches as they explore together ways of stepping out in faith and being open to various kinds of leadership.

The primary questions asked in this resource are

- What is the nature of God's call to your congregation today and in the foreseeable future?
- What opportunities for ministry and mission are your church members called to consider?
- What pastoral leadership option is the most effective in allowing your congregation to fulfill its vision for ministry and mission?

Others have discovered that in answering these questions a fresh vision emerges that opens the congregation to consider new ways of having effective pastoral leadership. And in so doing both the congregation and the candidate for leadership welcome the possibility of an exciting new venture of sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Appreciation is extended to everyone who participated in this revision: the congregations who risked new forms of leadership, the presbyteries who provided congregational models, colleagues in Churchwide Personnel Services who offered advice and colleagues in Evangelism and Church Development who advised and supported the revision and production of this resource. Finally, appreciation is extended to Barbara Roche, Louisville, KY, for editing the manuscript and to John Bailey, Louisville, KY, for his graphic designs.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction .....	3
Purpose of the booklet .....	4
Needs and Directions: Problems or Opportunities? .....	5
Discerning ministry in preparation for a call .....	6

### CHAPTER TWO: THE NATURE OF CALL AND SMALL CHURCH MINISTRY

Assumptions about the small church .....	8
Biblical and theological considerations .....	8
The nature of call .....	9

### CHAPTER THREE: CREATING A CLIMATE

Principles.....	12
Case Studies—Presbyteries in Process .....	16

### CHAPTER FOUR: PASTORAL MINISTRY: A VARIETY OF MODELS

Solo Pastor – Full-Time .....	19
Solo Pastor – Part-Time .....	20
Solo Pastor – Yoked Field .....	20
Clergy Couple – Shared Field .....	21
Clergy Couple – Separate Fields .....	22
Designated Pastor .....	22
Tentmaker Pastor .....	23
Area Minister .....	24
Minister-at-Large .....	25
Pastor Shared with Presbytery or Synod or General Assembly .....	25
Shared Associate .....	26
Ministers from other denominations .....	26
Commissioned Lay Pastor .....	27
Seminary Student Pastor .....	28
Seminary Student Intern.....	28

Cooperative Parish .....	29
Ecumenical Parish .....	30

## **CHAPTER FIVE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

How might presbytery build support for new forms of pastoral leadership?.....	32
How might effective communication between the congregation and presbytery be maximized during this process? .....	33
When two or more congregations are to be served by a pastor, what special concerns need to be addressed? .....	33
What are the important concerns to be included in the Church Information Form (CIF)? .....	35
Who recruits the candidates? .....	35
Is a covenant agreement between pastor(s) and congregations(s) helpful? .....	36
What do we need to know about Board of Pensions requirements for the different pastoral options? .....	37

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Blessing and charge .....	39
---------------------------	----

### **APPENDIX I.**

Examples of Ministry .....	41
----------------------------	----

### **APPENDIX II.**

Examples of Presbytery Workshops .....	44
--	----

### **APPENDIX III.**

A Note on Prayer and Openness .....	47
-------------------------------------	----

### **APPENDIX IV.**

Resources .....	48
-----------------	----

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Imagine that First Presbyterian Church is a congregation of 62 members. In recent years, it has been yoked with Bethel Presbyterian Church, but the congregations have not gotten along very well. There are three other churches within a 25-mile radius of First Church. At one time or another over the years, First Church has been yoked with these other churches.

The congregation recently lost its pastor and has requested that presbytery break its yoke with the Bethel Church. Today, two representatives from the presbytery and church development committee are meeting with the session of First Church to discuss possible alternatives for pastoral leadership. The conversation goes something like this:

Elder: This time we want our own pastor.

Presbytery Rep: But the church doesn't have the financial base to meet the presbytery minimum.

Elder: If you folks at presbytery wouldn't set such a high minimum, we could afford a pastor.

Presbytery Rep: Do you really think you could get someone to serve this church with what you are able to pay?

Elder: We could, if the person was truly called by God.

Presbytery Rep: Well, the committee on ministry has discussed the situation, and we think you should consider another yoke with one of the other churches.

Elder: We've done that before, and it didn't work.

Although fictitious, this scene is repeated many times each year in various settings across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). What's wrong with this picture? First of all, pastoral leadership has been reduced to an argument that contrasts finances with call. Secondly, the presbytery representatives have arrived with a solution to sell. Thirdly, history is preventing the church lay folk from looking at alternatives. But more important, all parties are locked into a myth about pastoral leadership: to be a "successful church", every congregation must have its own, full-

time minister of the Word and Sacrament.

This myth emerges from what can be termed the “church professional model” of pastoral leadership. It is based upon cultural values of upward mobility and success. It views the church as an organization oriented toward programs of ministry. It assumes that the church pastor is the “religious professional” hired to lead and administer the ministry of a particular congregation.

This model of ministry has never fit well within the context of small churches that focus more on relationships than on programs. The upwardly mobile success orientation of the “church professional model” has contributed to frustration for both pastors and churches as they search for satisfaction in ministry.

### **PURPOSE OF THE BOOKLET**

The purpose of this booklet is to provide a resource that will help presbyteries and smaller congregations explore fresh, new, sensible ways to be faithful to Christ’s ministry in their communities. And to consider the kinds of pastoral leadership options that are available for carrying out this ministry. The underlying question can be framed in this way: What is the nature of God’s call to your congregation today and in the foreseeable future? All those involved in thinking about this important question are asked to discern God’s guidance through prayer and patient deliberation.

This booklet is meant to be a useful tool for:

- Small church pastors, elders and lay leaders
- Presbytery committees (committee on ministry, church transformation and small church committee, committee on preparation for ministry)
- Presbytery staff
- Candidates preparing for ministry

This booklet will help congregations and presbyteries to:

- Explore and define new options for pastoral leadership.
- Create a planning process to support such explorations.
- Network with other presbyteries where pastoral leadership options are working effectively.
- Identify and use print and electronic resources.

This booklet is offered with a prayer that God’s love and wisdom will guide you in these explorations so that your congregation may continue to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ with joy and vigor.

## NEEDS AND DIRECTIONS: PROBLEMS OR OPPORTUNITIES?

One of the most important challenges for smaller congregations is attracting faithful and effective pastoral leadership.

On the one hand, many presbyteries in the PC(U.S.A.) are experiencing a pastoral leadership shortage. Some presbyteries report one-third of their churches to be without pastors. Committees on ministry spend an increasing amount of time helping churches find suitable pastoral leadership. Pastor nominating committees of small churches often find the search for a new leader to be a discouraging experience, and some small churches find pastoral vacancies to last longer than pastoral relationships.

On the other hand, recent research conducted by Churchwide Personnel Services reveals that there is no shortage of available candidates for pastoral ministry at the present time. Nor is one predicted for the future. The “pastoral leadership shortage” experienced by presbyteries is a result of the lack of candidates available to serve in smaller membership churches, especially in urban and rural communities.

While there are approximately 14,000 active ordained ministers and approximately 11,000 churches, matching the gifts of the ministers and congregations is often challenging. Factors that affect pastoral searches in small churches include:

- Congregations that are unable to provide adequate compensation for a minister to serve them full-time
- Ministers who are concerned about repaying educational debts and providing adequately for their families
- Ministers who are not attracted to what they perceive to be the stresses of small church ministry
- Ministers who prefer to serve in or near metropolitan areas resulting in additional challenges for rural churches seeking a pastor
- Ministers who are geographically bound by a spouse’s work or family needs

At first glance these facts appear to pose an overwhelming problem! Take another look, perhaps through a different lens, and it becomes clearer that small churches have a unique opportunity to lead the whole denomination at this time. In the face of this daunting situation, small churches may choose to explore and implement different forms of pastoral leadership. No longer do small churches and presbyteries need to see the lack of available full-time ministers of the Word and Sacrament as an insurmountable problem. God is offering an opportunity to trod new paths, to try something new. Churches can begin to say, “We’ve never done it this way! But it’s a new time and we’re ready to try a new call.”



History demonstrates that church expansion or renewal often occurs in times of crisis. Perhaps with the current challenge to call pastors to smaller membership churches, God is calling the church to renewed faithfulness, creativity, and life.

A congregation will welcome the news that a large number of options for pastoral leadership are possible. What needs to be decided is what kind is the most appropriate one for its particular setting. Presbytery resource persons who work with small churches should devote time to understand the history of each particular church and why certain approaches have or have not worked well in the past. Then, presbytery staff/committees will be in a position to intelligently work with churches as they choose the option that best fits the situation.

### **DISCERNING MINISTRY IN PREPARATION FOR A CALL**

By asking some very basic questions about its ministry, a congregation will be able to focus more clearly on what kind of call for pastoral leadership it is able to offer.

The great ends of the church, as set forth in the *Book of Order* (G-1.0200), provide the foundation for any discussion about ministry. The great ends are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

As your congregation asks itself how it is engaged in carrying out these great ends, the shape and substance of its ministry will be clarified. Consider asking these questions:

- How does your congregation proclaim the Gospel?
- In what ways does your congregation nurture its members?
- In what ways does it provide shelter and spiritual fellowship for all of God's children?
- When and how does your congregation maintain divine worship?
- How does your congregation safeguard the truth of the Gospel?
- In what ways does your congregation promote social righteousness?
- How does your congregation exhibit the realm of God in this world?

After taking time to delve deeply into what is essential for your congregation to be truly a church ask:

- In carrying out your ministry what can members do?
- What can deacons do?
- What can elders do?
- What can pastors do?
- What can elders, deacons, members and pastors do together?
- What can your congregation do with other congregations either within the presbytery or with other denominations?
- What old norms for pastoral leadership no longer apply?
- What new kinds of models for pastoral leadership emerge?
- What might presbytery leaders do to support new kinds of leadership?

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NATURE OF CALL AND SMALL CHURCH MINISTRY

A good place to begin to explore options for pastoral leadership in small membership congregations is to understand some of the dynamics of small church life and how they affect the nature of call. This entails examining basic assumptions about small church ministry, theological considerations and the nature of call.

#### ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE SMALL CHURCH

Each small membership congregation is unique. Therefore, we are cautious in offering assumptions about the nature of small churches. Some small churches have always been small. Others were larger congregations in which membership declined. The history of each congregation is significant and influences its attitude and structure. There are some general assumptions about small church ministry, however, that greatly affect the nature of pastoral leadership in many small churches.

- What is a small church? The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) considers a small church as one with an average worship attendance of 100 or fewer persons. Worship attendance has proven to be a more useful measure rather than total membership statistics.
- Vital small church ministry is based on healthy relationships rather than programs; being is more important than doing. "A small church is a church in which everybody knows everybody else and wants to," according to Dr. Carl Dudley, a leader in small church ministry and director of the Hartford Institute for Religious Research, Hartford, Connecticut.
- The vitality of a small church is related to the strength of its connection and involvement with the community in which it exists and its willingness to discover God's unique call to the congregation within that particular context.
- Size, locale, culture and history determine the particular identity of a small church. Yet as different as small churches are, they often struggle with similar issues: energizing lay leadership, effective pastoral leadership, and financial viability.

#### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Vital small churches minister out of a sense of God's blessing and abundance.

Sometimes a congregation begins to explore options for pastoral

ministry during times of despair and fear of not surviving. A good exploration process seeks to discern God's will. Bible study, theological reflection and prayer are essential nourishment for a congregation during this time of sorting out its reason for being. And it is hoped that this process also will open the way for a congregation that might be suffering from despair to move into a ministry of gratitude for the gifts God has bestowed upon it.

The story of Jesus feeding the five thousand is always helpful in reflecting on the meaning of scarcity and abundance (Mark 6:35-44).

The crowds were gathered to hear Jesus. After many hours, it was late and people were hungry. Jesus directed the disciples to go and find food to feed the people. Alarmed by the perceived enormity of the task, the disciples countered with the suggestion that they take time to allow the people to go and get their own food. Jesus, however, persisted and taught the disciples how to make the task manageable. First, get the people into small groups, then assess what is available "on site," and share it among the people. Was there enough to go around? Not only was everyone fed, but there was much left over.

Consider these questions:

- How often has your congregation, like the disciples, been overwhelmed by the tasks of ministry and mission?
- Have you, like the disciples, reacted by declaring that you couldn't carry out the task and suggesting that others do it?
- Have you taken time to assess the resources available within your congregation, community, presbytery, synod and General Assembly? (Remember that resources include people, property, materials, as well as finances.)
- Have you matched your resources with what God is calling you to be and do?
- Have you taken time to be thankful for the abundance of resources available to you?
- Have you chosen to use the resources that you have as you engage in ministry and mission?

Smaller churches have resources—gifted pastors and members, the community, church building and site, finances, and a connectional denomination. Opportunities for discernment and exploring new paths—for doing things differently—are, in fact, blessings from God.

## **THE NATURE OF CALL**

Numerous small churches are in need of gifted and passionate pas-

tors who recognize the uniqueness and challenge of small church ministry and who are called to patiently lead the congregation to expand its vision for ministry and mission. This need places a particular burden on presbyteries and congregations that scramble to find any person who might be open to serving small churches.

From the standpoint of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the *Book of Order* provides important biblical/theological affirmations about the nature of call to ministry. It may be helpful to rediscover and affirm these basic understandings:

- “All ministry in the Church is a gift from Jesus Christ. Members and officers alike serve mutually under the mandate of Christ who is the chief minister of all. His ministry is the basis of all ministries; the standard for all offices is the pattern of the one who came ‘not to be served but to serve.’ (Matt.20:28)” (*Book of Order*: G:6.0101).
- Some persons are elected and ordained to particular types of ministry. Election and ordination, however, is not to special rank or privilege, but to particular service. As the *Book of Order* states, “One responsibility of membership in the church is the election of officers who are ordained to fulfill particular functions. The existence of these offices in no way diminishes the importance of the commitment of all members to the total ministry of the church. These ordained officers differ from other members in function only” (*Book of Order* G-6.0102).

The *Book of Order* ensures that at every governing body level lay persons will have at least equal authority and status with ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

The *Book of Order*, however, is quite clear on the particular responsibilities of ministers of the Word and Sacrament who serve as pastors of congregations:

- “The pastor is responsible for studying, teaching and preaching the Word, for administering Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for praying with and for the congregation...(and for) sharing in the ministry of the church in the governing bodies above the session and in ecumenical relationships” (*Book of Order* G-6.0202a). Other specified functions are to be carried out with the elders and deacons:
- “With the elders, the pastor is to encourage the people in the worship and service of God; to equip and enable them for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world; to exercise pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the

troubled, and the dying; to participate in the governing responsibilities, including leadership of the congregation in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness in the decision making of the church, and its task of reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole" (*Book of Order* G-6.0202a).

- "With the deacons the pastor is to share in the ministries of sympathy, witness and service" (*Book of Order* G-6.0202a).

In summary, the *Book of Order* clearly intends that ministers of the Word and Sacrament are to be engaged in ministry with the elders and deacons of the church. It is often described as a shared ministry. If taken seriously, this style of ministry has major implications for every aspect of a congregation's ministry and mission.

Vital and effective ministry is dependent upon the development of a shared team ministry among the minister of the Word and Sacrament, the elders and the deacons of the congregation. It is not dependent upon having a full-time ordained minister. Encouraging this view of the nature of call can lay the groundwork for the exploration of various options for pastoral leadership in small churches.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What is your congregation's/presbytery's understanding of call?
- What is your understanding of ministry? Of mission?
- What unique role have the pastor, elders, deacons, and members played in your congregation in carrying out ministry and mission?
- In what ways have the pastor, elders, deacons and members shared in the ministry and mission of your congregation?

## CHAPTER THREE

### CREATING A CLIMATE

How can presbytery leaders create a climate in which congregations are able to explore new forms of pastoral leadership with a sense of excitement rather than fear? How can a mission strategy committee, a small church task force or the committee on ministry help people explore different options for pastoral leadership as the positive opportunities they really are? Though these questions may not be easy to answer, they do have answers. Indeed, when a presbytery lays careful groundwork, small communities of faith can explore new options for pastoral leadership and can do so freely, thoughtfully and with a real sense of exploring God's call into the future.

#### PRINCIPLES

The following ten principles will help to create a climate for the faithful, positive exploration of new forms of pastoral leadership:

##### **1. Discovering New Forms of Ministry Is A Pilgrimage**

The journey to discover fresh ways of expressing the faith is a pilgrimage. The resulting new forms of ministry are the bold markers along the way of the pilgrimage. And these new forms of ministry may require new kinds of pastoral leadership. Those who participate in the journey are pilgrims—the elders, deacons and church members. They are the persons who are open both to new forms of cooperative ministry and to a variety of pastoral leaders. They are the ones who would consider pastoral leadership in such forms as tentmaker pastors, clergy couples, part-time pastors, commissioned lay pastors and others. New forms of ministry requiring new forms of leadership can become grace-filled opportunities for communities of faith to grow and blossom.

Unfortunately, if the exploration of new forms of pastoral leadership evolves out of desperation and presbytery and congregational leaders see new forms of ministry as a last ditch effort to "keep our churches going," it will be nothing more than that: a last ditch effort. If they see new forms of ministry as "all we can manage right now," again, they will be exactly that: a downbeat attempt to scrape by for a little longer. Openness to discernment of God's call to the congregation is essential in this process. Creativity is a matter of attitude. A pilgrimage can transform a congregation in its witness to Jesus Christ and living out the Good News.

## **2. Explore a Variety of Options**

Presbytery leaders and committees are cautioned against making the mistake of focusing on just one option. “We need a yoked field here,” or “We need a retired pastor over there.” Such an approach may cause conflict and stymie vital input from the congregation, severely limiting the possibilities of what may eventually develop in a given situation. The presbytery group charged with developing strategies for pastoral leadership should become familiar with the wide range of possibilities for leadership. When working with a congregation or a cluster of churches to sort out and assess options, it is wise to introduce not one possibility but several. This will stimulate healthy discussion between the presbytery and congregation that, in turn, may yield insights and possibilities which neither the presbytery nor the congregation would have seen on its own.

## **3. Use Living Examples**

When a church is considering new forms of pastoral leadership such as a tentmaking ministry or a cooperative parish, it is helpful to bring in lay and clergy leaders who are experiencing this form of ministry first-hand. What do they find exciting about it? What adjustments have they needed to make? How is this form of ministry helping them to fulfill their calling? Living examples can do a great deal to help people sense, “It’s working for them. Maybe it can work for us too.” Most presbyteries now have several different pastoral leadership styles within their bounds. If they do not, such styles often can be found in neighboring presbyteries.

## **4. Build Openness Presbytery-wide**

Presbytery-wide events designed to affirm or introduce a variety of forms of pastoral leadership can do a great deal to create broad-based awareness of new possibilities. Invite persons who have led congregations in different ways and ask them to share their experiences. Such persons might include those who have served as tentmakers, commissioned lay pastors, seminary interns, clergy couples, and others. Design the events to be educational and non-threatening. Most importantly, hope that they may pique curiosity about new forms of parish ministry and pastoral leadership. (See Appendix II.)

## **5. Finances Cannot Be Ignored**

While effective mission is primary, the question about finances must be asked: “Will a particular form of pastoral leadership be compatible with the church’s budgetary capabilities?” Congregational and presbytery leaders together need to weigh carefully the financial issues. Too



often, however, finances become the only consideration. When this happens the focus narrows to, "How can we save money?" and the far deeper issue of a people's calling to ministry is lost. The first consideration should be "What form of leadership can help us to fulfill our mission as a part of the people of God?" This is not a simple question to answer. By asking it, however, persons begin to think creatively about new kinds of leadership options and move them away from opining about money saving devices.

Stewardship is especially important in a small church. For many small churches, more than 75 percent of the budget is expended for pastoral leadership. Questions such as these need to be asked: Are the church's resources being used to the maximum? Are endowment funds being used for mission or are they being held for "a rainy day"? Is the congregation's giving at a maximum?

Stewardship should be a part of the essence of the congregation's life. A pastoral vacancy presents a particular opportunity to ask these important questions.

## **6. Be Responsive to Questions**

Being open and responsive to questions is crucial for both congregation and presbytery. When a congregation starts to hear about new options for pastoral leadership, it is bound to have questions such as: "How do we know this is going to work?" "Has anybody ever tried it?" "The Methodists tried a clergy couple and it didn't work out. How do we know it won't be the same for us?" The questions may seem negative, and often they are. Change is frightening and some changes in the past may not have worked at all. Too often persons from presbytery and the congregation react defensively to questions or treat them with impatience. When this happens, communication deteriorates and conflict arises. The chances for nurturing a positive climate decrease.

It is essential to give honest questions the time they deserve. Don't rush the answer. A good response gives high regard to the feelings of the inquirer and invites exploration: "You've raised a thoughtful point there, let's learn more about it." "That's a good question. Maybe we should talk further with some others who have had experience with this type of ministry." Continue to prayerfully explore concerns until people feel ready to move on to the next step.

## **7. Keep Presbytery Roles Clear**

The *Book of Order* (G-11.0502) assigns broad responsibilities to the committee on ministry for the encouragement and oversight of ministry in congregations. It also assigns to this committee specific responsibility for counseling churches with regard to a variety of forms of pastoral

leadership (G-11.0502d,e,f). At the same time, in many presbyteries the mission strategy committee or small church task force finds itself dealing with closely related issues pertaining to such things as geographic proximity of congregations, the alignment of fields, the building of cooperative parishes, and the introduction of new forms of pastoral leadership. It is crucial that the committee on ministry and other presbytery committees/task forces establish dialogue to clarify their roles in the whole process of developing new forms of parish leadership. Where this does not happen, conflict is inevitable, and the climate for change clouds over with confusion. Where roles are clear, presbytery committees function in support of one another. Churches sense that support, and the entire process moves ahead with maximum mutual understanding and efficiency.

### **8. Work for Clarity in Relationships and Expectations**

What is true for all pastoral arrangements is certainly true for all new forms of pastoral leadership: clarity is essential. What precisely are the expectations of the pastoral leader? Of lay leaders? Of the congregation as a whole? If more than one church is sharing in the new venture, what is expected of each congregation? And, fully as important, how will the churches be mutually supportive of the pastor, one another, and the ministry and mission in which they will engage cooperatively? Mutually agreed upon answers to these questions not only will help to avoid conflict, but also will give all participants ideas that they can test, reflect on and sharpen as they together move further into mission. Clarifying these expectations will be helpful toward the development of formal covenants. (See Section 10 following and Chapter 5.)

### **9. Decide Carefully, Prayerfully and in Community**

The decision to support a new form of pastoral leadership takes time. It involves defining ministry needs and weighing options. It involves elders and presbytery leaders alike praying for openness and discernment throughout the process. It involves ownership by the congregation(s). Ultimately, it takes the session and the presbytery deciding together, "This is the way we are called to follow."

### **10. Covenant for Mutual, Ongoing Support**

When churches enter into a new form of pastoral leadership, they need the ongoing care and concern of presbytery. Further, if the climate for change is to grow in a presbytery, it is essential for presbytery to maintain a close, learning relationship with those congregations where the change is possible. A covenant for mutual support between the congregation and presbytery will help clarify the expectations of churches

moving in new directions. It will give those churches a sense of presbytery's continued care. It will affirm, "We are in mission together." A covenant for mutual support can be informal: a presbytery committee member is assigned to call every three months and ask, "How are things going?" and "You've got some things to teach us. What do you think would be helpful in other situations like yours?" The covenant can be lifted up in worship and lived through by regular visits, reports, and times of sharing. The ways of sharing a covenant for mutual support will vary according to the needs of the congregation and the presbytery. The important thing is that this journey of change be an on-going process not something that ends when the new pastoral call is issued. An ongoing period of support and learning will benefit the pastor, congregation, and presbytery.

### **CASE STUDIES—PRESBYTERIES IN PROCESS**

In a very real sense, the case studies for creating a climate for change are being written right now. No one approach by a presbytery touches on all the points noted above, nor is it necessary that this happen. Each presbytery is different. Each needs to fashion an approach that most directly fits the needs of its member churches. What is essential is that presbytery encourages openness and shared discernment in its particular setting. Here are examples of presbyteries creating a climate for change:

- Kendall Presbytery serves southeastern Idaho, a region where churches are separated by great distances. Two hundred miles separate two "neighboring" congregations. The presbytery went through a discernment process and concluded that the development of lay leadership was essential to the continuing vitality of its churches. A pastor-at-large was called to coordinate the ministry of three congregations that are elder-led. Continuing education for the lay leaders is critical to this ministry venture. As the skills of lay leaders increase, additional congregations may become part of this regional ministry.
- Utica Presbytery, in central New York State, recognized the need for leadership and direction in numerous small churches—both urban and rural—that could not support a full-time pastor. After careful consultation and consideration of alternatives, the presbytery developed a strategy for small church ministry. First it created a lay preacher program using a two-year training program originally developed by a neighboring presbytery, Susquehanna Valley. Subsequently, Utica Presbytery broadened its strategy to reach out to smaller membership churches by:

- Working cooperatively with an Evangelical Lutheran Church of America nursing home and a clinical pastoral education program that provided seminary graduates a year for discernment through the experience of serving both the nursing home and a smaller membership church
- Sponsoring annual lay leadership events that focused on the nature of leadership in a post-modern, post-Christian, post-denominational world
- Joining five central New York presbyteries in sponsoring an annual training event related to the transformation of small churches, bringing together presbytery committee members responsible for transformation
- Developing a commissioned lay pastor program in a tent-making context
- Developing an ecumenical cooperative parish.

- Partnerships with Overseas Churches:

Presbyteries are calling pastors from partner churches overseas to serve in a variety of ways:

- Elizabeth Presbytery in New Jersey worked with the Worldwide Ministries Division's Mission to the USA project and invited a pastor from India to serve the presbytery's outreach to a large Indian immigrant population. In another instance, a pastor from Indonesia was called to serve as an evangelist to a new Indonesian fellowship group.
- Mackinac Presbytery in Michigan has called a pastor from India to serve one of the presbytery's smaller membership churches. Creative ministry is anticipated from this unique arrangement.
- Mid Kentucky Presbytery in the central area of the state has developed a training program for commissioned lay pastor candidates in collaboration with Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary as a result of discerning the need to support congregations. While the presbytery has many minister members, due to the presence of the General Assembly and Seminary, there are numerous small rural congregations and racial ethnic congregations that are challenged in finding pastoral leadership. Commissioned lay pastors help to fill that gap and strengthen these congregations.

The above presbyteries differ from one another. Yet, they share a commitment to serve their congregations and offer resources that will contribute to the strength and vitality of even the smallest congregation.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Describe your presbytery's strategy for small church ministry?
2. How is your presbytery addressing the possibility of different forms of pastoral leadership?
3. Describe how these possibilities will be a valuable path to effective small church ministry within your presbytery.
4. How is your presbytery preparing its congregations and ministers for the possibility of different forms of pastoral leadership?

- Clear communication between the co-pastors is essential in all matters related to the congregations.
- Congregations need to understand that if both spouses are part-time pastors, doing tasks together, such as visiting, is a poor use of time.
- The pressures of pastoring in a shared situation can place added stress on a marriage.
- The couple is called as a unit. If one leaves ordinarily both leave.
- Churches may tend to assume that they are getting two full-time pastors for the price of one.

Cost:

- Congregations must provide adequate financial support for the clergy couple. (To do so may help sustain longer-term pastoral leadership for the participating churches.)

## 5. CLERGY COUPLE – SEPARATE FIELDS

A clergy-couple who serve separate churches with independent calls. Again, varied arrangements are possible, with one or both serving in full or part-time positions.

Advantages:

- When both are in satisfactory situations, longer-term pastoral leadership may result and may benefit each congregation.
- A smaller congregation may obtain services of one pastor who is seeking a part-time call while the other pastor is serving another congregation full-time.

Concerns:

- Synchronization of calls. For instance, difficulty in one pastoral/congregational relationship may lead to difficulty or separation in the other.
- The financial needs of many clergy couples may be greater than simply two half-time calls.

Cost:

- Will vary according to the separately developed calls. Presbytery may need to ascertain that the clergy couple is not “used” by churches seeking to obtain more services for less cost.

## 6. DESIGNATED PASTOR

A pastor who serves a church (either full-time or part-time) and who is chosen from possible candidates “pre-approved” by the committee

on ministry. On occasion a designated pastor may be recommended to intervene in issues and concerns affecting the congregation and to lead the congregation to wholeness.

Advantages:

- Shortens the amount of time involved in the call process.
- Helps congregations move from looking for the "perfect" pastor to seeking a "partner in Christ".
- Increases sense of presbytery support in the call process.
- Person called as designated pastor for the specified period of time (2-4 years) may subsequently be eligible for a call as pastor.

Concerns:

- There is a need to be up front about evaluation and succession issues.

Cost:

- Same as for solo-pastor except that the designated arrangement allows for testing a pastoral relationship without committing financial resources indefinitely.

## 7. TENTMAKER PASTOR

A pastor who serves a church part-time and works in appropriate secular employment. This is a natural model for some second career pastors.

Advantages:

- Parishioners often feel "our pastor understands us better" because of the pastor's participation in secular employment.
- Adherence to the biblical model of Paul, who supported himself by making tents while he preached, can be exciting for both pastor and congregation.
- Tentmaking can lend itself to the development of stronger lay leadership.
- Secular work of the Tentmaker pastor often provides a key entry-point for the pastor to connect with non-church goers and to provide community leadership. This model has special strengths for a small church seeking to transform its outreach to the community.
- Tentmaking may provide a higher income for a pastor and family than a full-time pastoral salary at presbytery minimum.

Concerns:

- Tentmaking depends upon the availability of appropriate secular

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PASTORAL MINISTRY: A VARIETY OF MODELS

“What are the options for pastoral leadership?” An important beginning for any answer to that question is, “The list is a long one, and it is growing!” This is a hopeful sign because it means that churches have an expanding range of options to consider. It also means that there is no single answer to the question.

Descriptions of pastoral leadership options now available for smaller congregations follow. The descriptions are meant to be suggestive and helpful. It is hoped they will stimulate further reflection and discussion. There may be additional options that you want to consider. Similarly, persons looking at the “advantages” and “concerns” of each option may wish to add to these lists. All of this is positive, and congregations and presbyteries should feel free to adapt these definitions to their context.

As you consider these options, keep in mind that:

- Congregations and pastoral leaders experiencing a particular form of ministry have expressed their “advantages” and “concerns.”
- The “concerns” require careful consideration in the development and implementation of a particular option. They are not intended to discourage consideration of the particular form of ministry.
- While no single option is perfect, parishioners and pastoral leaders alike have found positive elements in every form described here. Indeed, each of these forms can provide satisfactory, exciting leadership for congregations seeking to rediscover a vital witness of faith.

#### 1. SOLO PASTOR – FULL-TIME

One pastor who serves a single congregation full-time.

Advantages:

- Pastor is focused on one congregation and provides full-time attention to the congregation’s opportunities and challenges.
- Pastor is available to lay leaders as together they lead the congregation in ministry and mission.
- Pastor is available for counseling, services, needs of the shut-ins, the sick and bereaved.

Concerns:

- Meeting the church’s budget may be a challenge



- A large portion of the church's budget may be used for pastoral support, thus, limiting opportunities for other mission efforts.
- Availability of satisfactory housing for pastor and family
- Some pastors may feel under-utilized and not sufficiently challenged by a single, small congregation.
- Some pastors may be more program-directed than is appropriate for the life style of a smaller membership church.

Cost:

- High: church must meet minimum terms for support of a full-time pastor, including housing, pension, study leave and health insurance.

## 2. SOLO PASTOR – PART-TIME

One pastor who serves a congregation part-time. The needs of the minister are met by having a less than full-time workload and the needs of the church are met by getting leadership at an affordable cost. The pastor may be a retired minister or a minister in need of time to fulfill personal and/or family responsibilities.

Advantages:

- Pastoral needs are met and the church receives services of a well-qualified pastor for a manageable cost.
- There is a regular pastoral presence in the pulpit.
- Part-time pastor can develop and nurture lay leadership for events in the life of the congregation.

Concerns:

- Recruitment may be difficult because of a limited number of ministers available for part-time service.
- The pastor may be expected to do full-time work for part-time pay. A mutually agreed upon covenant between the pastor and the session may be helpful in describing expectations (See Section 10 of Chapter 3, and Chapter 5 regarding covenant agreements).

Cost:

- Salary compensation package is negotiated on a pro-rata basis based on agreed upon definition of pastoral services. The amount will vary in accordance with degree of service needed.

## 3. SOLO PASTOR – YOKED FIELD

A pastor who serves at least two churches. The churches contribute to the pastor's financial support providing a stronger financial base for

securing full-time pastoral leadership.

Advantages:

- Stronger terms of call are possible for attracting and holding vital pastoral leadership.
- Cooperation between churches may lead to stronger ministry offerings in areas such as youth, adult study, and leadership development.

Concerns:

- Serving congregations with different personalities and expectations can be stressful for the pastor and congregations.
- Limitations on time that the pastor is able to devote to each congregation, its ministry, and special events.
- Scheduling of events and activities in the churches may be challenging or a source of conflict.
- Differences in size and strength of the congregations may create tensions.
- Limited numbers of pastors are willing to consider a yoked field.

Cost:

- Costs are shared among participating churches.
- Financial concerns may be eased in a yoked field since at least two churches contribute to the pastor's support.

#### **4. CLERGY COUPLE – SHARED FIELD**

A clergy couple who serve more than one church. Varied arrangements are possible for full-time or part-time ministry among the participating churches.

Advantages:

- Congregations may benefit from differing styles of pastoral ministry, counseling and leadership.
- Individuals may relate particularly well to one person or the other.
- Plans for the congregation may benefit from being thought through by two people before they are presented for consideration.
- Couple may offer differing and complementary gifts for preaching, counseling and program development.

Concerns:

- Clarification of responsibility is essential to avoid confusion and unfair expectations.

employment for the pastor.

- Both the congregation and pastor must work to maintain clarity about expectations of pastoral service.
- Tentmaker pastors may be limited in their ability to participate in presbytery and in other events because of the demands of both church and appropriate secular work.
- Issues of time management and self care for the pastor.

Cost:

- Same as part-time pastor.

Note: For more information, contact the Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers. The Board of Pensions can provide information about the unique compensation and benefit issues related to tentmakers. (See Appendix IV.)

## 8. AREA MINISTER

A pastor—usually a stated supply—called by presbytery or individual churches—who serves several churches in a specific region and who may supervise the ministry of commissioned lay pastors or seminary interns serving participating churches.

Advantages:

- Regular worship and programming for even very small churches.
- Christian witness is sustained in areas where this is much needed.
- Members feel enriched by exposure to a variety of pastoral leadership styles provided by the area minister, lay preachers, seminary interns.
- Support by presbytery can help secure experienced, long-term pastoral leadership.
- Sense of partnership and shared mission can develop through the years among area churches.

Concerns:

- Area minister may be spread quite thin.
- Lack of continuity in the pulpit may be troubling to some.
- Care must be taken to provide presbytery support while still encouraging the churches to do all they can.

Cost:

- Presbytery may become involved in long-term, financial commitment to partnership with churches in areas needing a continuous Christian witness.

## 9. MINISTER-AT-LARGE

A pastor who serves on presbytery staff, and who contracts with a particular church for a specified period of time to provide pastoral services and to help resolve issues such as exploring new pastoral leadership options or achieving particular goals.

### Advantages:

- Church or parish has services of an experienced leader at a critical time in its development.
- Continuity of pastoral leadership.
- Pastoral leadership is carefully tailored to specific needs of the congregation.
- May be used for the revitalization and/or redevelopment of a number of churches on a rotation basis.

### Concerns:

- The minister must be able to adjust to a move every one or two years or be able to live in a place within commuting distance of the church.
- Must deal with the grief of the congregation on a continuing basis.

### Cost:

- Cost to presbytery and participating churches will vary according to the terms of the contract. In some situations, costs may be shared with the presbytery.

## 10. PASTOR SHARED WITH PRESBYTERY OR SYNOD OR GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A pastor who serves a congregation on a part-time basis and also serves as staff of a presbytery/synod/General Assembly. The congregation and presbytery/synod/GA share in the financial support of the pastor.

### Advantages

- Stronger financial base helps secure qualified pastoral leadership.
- Pastor is able to give energy in developing the life and program of a single congregation.
- Pastor is available for Sunday School and other key events.
- Strength of financial base and satisfaction of presbytery work can contribute to a longer-term pastorate.
- Pastor may strengthen the relationship of the church and presbytery/synod/General Assembly.

**Concerns:**

- Part of the pastor's time must be spent away from the parish.
- Clarity is needed for all parties regarding time allocation between the presbytery/synod/General Assembly and the congregation.

**Cost:**

- Will vary according to the proportion agreed upon by church and presbytery/synod/General Assembly.

**11. SHARED ASSOCIATE**

A pastor who serves both a small church and a large church. Ordinarily the minister is pastor of the small church and associate pastor of the larger congregation.

**Advantages:**

- Smaller congregation has regular pastoral leadership.
- Spirit of cooperation can develop between the participating congregations.
- Adequate support can sustain continued leadership in both churches.
- Both congregations can benefit from the addition of staff that they could not afford alone.

**Concerns:**

- Person called to position must be able to minister effectively in both small and larger church settings.
- Careful job description needed for all parties with reasonable time allocations.
- Distance between the churches may be a challenge.

**Cost:**

- Combined terms of call may be above minimum, but actual cost will be pro-rated according to a formula agreed upon by both churches.

**12. MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS**

A pastor, called to serve congregation(s), who is a member of one of the denominations in Full Communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ), may be installed in a PC(U.S.A.) church without relinquishing his/her denominational membership.

**Advantages:**

- Calling a pastor is eased through these reciprocal agreements.

- One resident pastor in a community may serve both a PC(U.S.A.) and a congregation of a partner denomination.

Disadvantage:

- The process requires involvement in the governing body having oversight for the church and the governing body having oversight for the minister.

Cost:

- Same as full-time or part-time Solo Pastor.
- The calling congregation pays pension and medical dues to the plan of the minister's member denomination.

### 13. COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR (CLP)

A Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) is an elder trained and commissioned by a presbytery to provide pastoral services to a particular congregation(s) for a specified period of time. The CLP works under the supervision of the presbytery through either the moderator of the session of the church being served or through the committee on ministry. A minister of the Word and Sacrament is assigned as a mentor and supervisor (*Book of Order* G-14.0800).

A CLP is commissioned by presbytery and authorized to carry out specific responsibilities that may include:

- Administering the Lord's Supper
- Administering the Sacrament of Baptism
- Moderating the session under the supervision of the minister appointed moderator by the presbytery
- Having voice in meetings of presbytery
- Having a vote in the meetings of the presbytery
- Performing marriages if allowed by the state

Advantages:

- A well functioning team of lay preacher/mentor may strengthen the life of the congregation
- Regular presence in the pulpit
- Steady leadership for session and congregation.

Concerns:

- A written mission strategy for the church and the clearly defined expectations of the commissioned lay pastor are essential.

Cost:

- Compensation for the CLP is governed by presbytery guidelines.

#### 14. SEMINARY STUDENT PASTOR

A seminary student assigned to lead worship and perform other pastoral functions on weekends. During this period, the presbytery will appoint a minister of the Word and Sacrament to moderate the session.

Advantages:

- Consistency of weekly worship leadership.
- Pastoral care may be available for the sick, the hospitalized, family needs or emergencies.
- Church becomes a teaching congregation by providing practical experience for a student pastor.

Concerns:

- The student's time is limited to 15-20 hours per week.
- Duration of the relationship is usually limited to 9-18 months.
- Baptisms and communion must be scheduled and administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament.
- Quality supervision by presbytery is essential for support and guidance of the student pastor and the teaching congregation.

Cost:

- Less than presbytery's minimum terms of call for a full-time pastor. The congregation must provide adequate compensation to assist with the cost of the student's seminary education.

#### 15. SEMINARY STUDENT INTERN

A seminary student who serves, during an intern year, as full-time pastor and who is supervised by a pastor, appointed by presbytery, to moderate the session. Internships may occur prior to or immediately following completion of the M.Div. degree.

A cluster of small churches may offer a "small church residency". An experienced mentor/supervisor (perhaps a retired pastor with small church experience) and a team ministry approach would provide a candidate/resident good preparation toward becoming a small church pastor.

Advantages:

- Full pastoral leadership in all areas of a church's worship and program life
- Enthusiasm of the student
- Congregation finds sense of purpose in providing practical experience for student pastor.
- Intern benefits from the gifts and wisdom of small church lay lead-

ers through experiential learning.

- Provides a variety of experiences for a candidate/resident who is making the transition from seminary to a first call as a small church pastor.
- A ministry support team of congregational leaders is required to provide feedback to and care of the intern. The team will also be required to provide reports to the seminary and/or the intern's committee on preparation for ministry.

Concerns:

- Quality supervision by presbytery is essential for the support and guidance of the intern.
- Leadership available for only one year.
- It is important to be clear about the shared responsibility between the presbytery with jurisdiction of the church and the presbytery with jurisdiction of the intern/candidate/inquirer. A candidate/inquirer should be appointed with communication and concurrence of both presbyteries.
- Baptisms and communion must be scheduled and administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

Cost:

- Church needs to meet seminary financial guidelines for the intern's salary, housing, pension and medical benefits.

## 16. COOPERATIVE PARISH

Two or more churches, established by presbytery as a larger parish, cooperate in planning a joint ministry for a defined parish area. A ministry team that may be comprised of two or more ministers, educators, commissioned lay pastors, leads them. The team serves the whole parish.

With the approval of presbytery, a parish council may be formed to act on behalf of the larger parish, providing that the individual churches approve the call, and payment of a total salary is made from a common parish treasury (*Book of Order* G:14.0504).

Advantages:

- Participating churches benefit from the diversity of skills of the ministry team.
- Mutual support among pastors can lead to greater satisfaction in their ministry and to longer-term pastorates.
- Cooperation can result in shared ministry with the community.
- Collaborative programs such as education, youth, and leadership development may strengthen the vitality of the participating



churches.

- Experiencing the shared ministry model of pastor(s) and staff may enhance church members' personal and spiritual lives.
- Collaboration strengthens the financial base for program and mission.

Concerns:

- Pastor(s) must be committed to cooperative parish model of ministry.
- An authentic spirit of cooperation among churches, pastors, and staff is essential.

Cost:

- Costs vary. In some instances, the parish shares support with another governing body of the church. In others, the churches are responsible for the full support of the parish staff and program.

## 17. ECUMENICAL PARISH

Two or more congregations from different denominations share a pastor. The call may be to either a yoked field (see section 3), or to a federated church (sharing a common ministry but maintaining individual denominational roles), or to a cooperative parish.

Advantages:

- Two or more congregations can form a strong united witness in their community / region.
- Congregations have steady pastoral leadership.
- An enlivened program life is possible in ministry areas such as youth ministry, Christian education, and community outreach.
- Sharing different faith traditions is enriching to all members of the parish.

Concerns:

- Dual denominational responsibilities can place extra time demands on both pastors and laity.
- Different call processes may cause stress.

Cost:

- Costs are eased when shared by two or more churches.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Describe and discuss your congregation's vision for ministry and mission.
2. Which models of pastoral leadership have the potential of matching the ministry and mission vision of your congregation?
3. Discuss the potential of a parish model for your congregation(s) to enhance ministry and mission.
4. With the presbytery staff or committee person, prayerfully consider a possible "match" between your ministry vision and a pastoral leadership option. Take time for discerning and refining your choices.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As presbytery committees, presbytery staff and small churches journey and work together in exploring various options for pastoral leadership, there are many issues that need to be addressed. Developing and working with new forms of pastoral leadership is different from preparing for a solo pastor, but it is not difficult. A series of questions and answers is offered in this chapter that may enhance the relationship between the congregation and presbytery and make the journey effective. Remember that each presbytery and each small church is unique so this journey toward new options will be distinct for each situation. Feel free to add your own questions to this list.

#### **HOW MIGHT PRESBYTERY BUILD SUPPORT FOR NEW FORMS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP?**

Raising the visibility of effective pastoral leadership models is essential to insure that the presbytery as a whole will support these models as viable pastoral options and smaller congregations will be affirmed in their choices.

- Presbyteries may take the opportunity during one of its meetings to highlight vital and effective small church ministries, especially those with new forms of pastoral leadership. The Celebration of Small Church Ministry is an emphasis in the PC(U.S.A.) "Program and Planning Calendar" and is ordinarily observed in July. A presbytery meeting near that time may provide an occasion for highlighting small church ministry.
- Regularly print featured articles in presbytery publications describing various options for pastoral leadership. The article may describe the exploratory process that led to the new option or it may feature the story of a congregation and pastor who are living out one of the new models.
- Schedule time at presbytery-sponsored small church events for lifting up examples of new forms of pastoral leadership. Pastors and/or lay people might describe their experiences. An invited speaker from outside the presbytery might share a story. A video could be shown that presents either one story in detail or a series of vignettes.
- Presbytery staff and/or committee members who know how various models work can be "on call" to visit sessions or participate in retreats, adult classes and church suppers for the purpose of

sharing experiences and answering questions.

- Ministers serving in new pastoral leadership styles need to be visible in the presbytery through ongoing committee work, leading presbytery worship, leading workshops or serving on administrative commissions.

### **HOW MIGHT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CONGREGATION AND PRESBYTERY BE MAXIMIZED DURING THIS PROCESS?**

The opportunity for exploring new options for pastoral leadership that leads to vital and effective congregational life has the potential of being a blessing in the life of each governing body. Clear and open communication, patience and respect for one another, and affirmation of common mission goals will strengthen this unique experience. Several factors are essential for effective communication:

- Exchange of information between the presbytery and congregation(s) needs to be honest, clear and concise.
- Confidentiality must be respected.
- Questions should be respected and given clear responses.
- Clear definitions of new options for pastoral leadership need to be presented to the session and congregation.
- Each leadership option should be presented to the congregation with information as to the affect that each option will have on the church's vision for ministry and mission.
- Stories of other churches that are engaged in different forms of pastoral leadership—in print or video—may be useful to the congregation, session, and/or pastor nominating committee.
- A written summary of meetings should be shared with congregation and presbytery.
- After the pastor nominating committee has made its choice and the committee on ministry has approved the recommendation, the pastoral leadership model and the candidate's unique gifts in leading the congregation's vision for ministry and mission need to be presented to the congregation prior to the congregation's vote on the candidate. (Check with the presbytery for policy on this sequence.)

### **WHEN TWO OR MORE CONGREGATIONS ARE TO BE SERVED BY A PASTOR, WHAT SPECIAL CONCERNS NEED TO BE ADDRESSED?**

Calling a pastor to serve two or more congregations is a unique opportunity for all concerned. Clear and open communication is essen-

tial between the pastor and the congregations. Each congregation must be committed to sharing a pastor. Prior to considering candidates for a shared field, the congregations with the help of presbytery need to assess ministry needs in order that reasonable time allocations can be considered.

In preparing for a shared ministry, begin by describing expectations for pastoral duties including but not limited to:

- Essential parish responsibilities for worship leadership, pastoral care, and moderating the session
- Spiritual development of members
- Leading educational events
- Developing lay leaders and on-going education for lay leaders
- Visiting members of congregation
- Planning local mission programs
- Involvement with the community

Does the list of pastoral duties match the ministry and mission vision of the congregations? Here are additional questions to consider:

- What are the congregations' ministry needs?
- Which needs are the responsibility of the pastor? Which needs are the responsibility of lay leaders?
- Are there ministry / mission needs that can be done cooperatively between the congregations?
- Which needs are essential? Are there any that can be postponed or set aside without damaging the vitality and effectiveness of the congregations?
- What is a fair and reasonable allocation of the pastor's time? Will a simple 50:50 division of time between the congregations be effective or is there need for a different formula?
- How will the time be allocated to assure that the pastor will have time for activities beyond the congregation, such as involvement with the other governing bodies of the church, continuing education, family; and self-care and renewal?

Finally, there are practical questions to be considered such as:

- Where will the pastor do office work?
- Is the environment safe for counseling sessions?
- If there is a manse, who is responsible for the manse—is it a shared responsibility between the congregations or does one congregation bear this completely?

If the congregations are part of a cooperative parish or larger parish, refer to the specific requirements in the *Book of Order* (G-14.0504).

The sessions or parish council need to regularly ascertain that requirements are being met such as: fulfillment of the congregations' time allocations, the support promised by each church, the set up of a common parish treasury, provision for an annual review of the pastor's salary and the obligation of each participating church to continue its financial support for the duration of the pastorate, unless excused.

### **WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT CONCERNS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CHURCH INFORMATION FORM (CIF)?**

The Church Information Form (CIF), though an administrative form, plays a key role in matching potential pastoral candidates and congregations seeking a pastor. Keep the following factors in mind as the congregation completes the form:

- Provide all of the requested information clearly and with an honest passion.
- Specify the "pastoral leadership model" you wish to pursue in the "Position To Be Filled" section. You will need to decide on your particular model prior to completing the CIF since you can choose only one category.
- Convey a sense of joy about your ministry and mission as you complete the narrative descriptions of your congregation.
- Convey your expectations about pastoral leadership that reflect the vitality of your congregation so that a potential candidate may begin to recognize that this church may be where God is calling her/him to serve.
- If the pastor is to serve on a part-time basis, describe the pastor's responsibilities within a part-time context.
- Complete the special section about "Yoked Congregations," if your congregation is officially yoked to one or more congregations.
- Be realistic with financial information.

The General Assembly's Churchwide Personnel Services will assist you if you are seeking a full-time or part-time pastor (including a tent-maker pastor). Note that forms are available through Church Leadership Connection online at: [www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc) (See Appendix IV: Resources for additional information.)

### **WHO RECRUITS THE CANDIDATES?**

The committee on ministry, presbytery staff, and the congregation's

pastor nominating committee (PNC) or search committee need to work cooperatively in recruiting candidates for pastoral leadership.

The Executive or General Presbyter will be helpful as you review information about potential candidates, including trained lay pastors who are seeking a commission. The Executive or General Presbyter knows your church and can use the Church Leadership Connection, a resource provided through General Assembly's Churchwide Personnel Services.

The presbytery will be your primary source of information regarding potential candidates if you are seeking a stated supply, designated pastor or Commissioned Lay Pastor.

The General Assembly's Churchwide Personnel Services will help with matching candidates for full-time or part-time pastoral requests. (See Appendix IV.)

If you are open to considering recent seminary graduates or students, seminary placement officers can guide you. Contact information is available through the web site of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org), under "Ministry and Vocations".

Professional networks like the Association for Presbyterian Tentmakers may also be helpful. (See Appendix IV.)

Paid advertisements through *Presbyterians Today* or *Presbyterian Outlook* are available. (See Appendix IV.)

## **IS A COVENANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN PASTOR(S) AND CONGREGATION(S) HELPFUL?**

A written covenant between the pastor(s) and congregation(s) and approved by the committee on ministry is essential to good relationships for most of the models described in this booklet. An effective covenant will record mutually agreed upon expectations.

The *Committee on Ministry Handbook*, (also called *COM Handbook*), produced by Churchwide Personnel Services, offers excellent examples of covenant agreements for:

- Commissioned Lay Pastor
- Designated Pastor
- Interim Pastor
- Stated Supply
- Shared Ministry

The *COM Handbook* is available through the Churchwide Personnel Services web site: <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers>

## **WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BOARD OF PENSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DIFFERENT PASTORAL OPTIONS?**

Call the Board of Pensions at 800-773-7752 and a member of the Board's staff will be available to answer any questions about the current requirements. You can also seek advice from your Presbytery Executive, your committee on ministry liaison or the Regional Representative of the Board. All of these individuals will be happy to assist you.

### **Installed Pastor:**

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament serving in installed positions must participate fully in the Benefits Plan. The *Book of Order* mandates participation in the Plan for all called and installed pastors.

If the church wishes to call a pastor who will be installed by the presbytery, then the church pays the Board of Pension dues at the current rate. The amount of dues to be paid is determined by the total "Effective Salary" paid to the pastor.

- The total Effective Salary will consist of, but is not limited to, cash salary plus housing allowance or value of the manse plus utilities if paid by the church. If a Social Security Offset is paid to the pastor any part of that payment above 50% of the Social Security obligation is considered part of the Effective Salary.
- If the total Effective Salary paid to the pastor is less than the Minimum Salary Participation Basis, which is determined by the Board, then dues would be calculated on the Minimum Salary Participation Basis. The dues are billed on a monthly basis and provide health benefits for the pastor and his/her family as well as pension, death and disability benefits for the pastor.

### **Retired Pastor:**

If a church wishes to seek the services of a pastor who has retired then the Post Retirement Service rules apply. If the pastor works 20 hours or more per week, the church is required to pay dues to the Board at 12% of the total Effective Salary paid to the pastor. The pastor is responsible for paying his/her own medical coverage to the Board.

### **Clergy Couple:**

If the church calls a Clergy Couple to share one full time position then dues are paid for each partner based on either the total Effective Salary received by each one or the Minimum Salary Participation Basis whichever is higher. One set of dues cannot be paid for a Clergy Couple serving the same congregation.



Churches are encouraged to consult the Board of Pensions' web site [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org) for a list of helpful publications produced by the Board some of which can be downloaded from the website. Others are available in printed form by calling 800-773-7752 and requesting them.

Note that the address of the Board of Pensions is 2000 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103-3298.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We are in a time in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) when pastoral calls are being approached in new and creative ways. Because our denomination is diverse and our communities are undergoing rapid change, ministry needs are different in different places. Each presbytery and congregation must continually consider its context and the kinds of ministry that are appropriate. Our Presbyterian polity provides flexibility so that ministry needs may be met in a variety of ways.

The myth that each congregation needs its own full-time, solo minister of the Word and Sacrament doesn't hold up in light of all the different options available today. Lay persons are acknowledging and fulfilling their call to ministry that begins with their baptism. They see ministry as both a responsibility and a privilege.

Pastors are questioning the "church professional" model for ministry. Theological institutions, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly are working together to build a new understanding of the role of the minister of Word and Sacrament.

Presbyteries are playing a critical and essential role in leading congregations on this journey toward new options for pastoral leadership. Presbyteries are developing strategies and styles of working with smaller congregations that affirm the gifts of the laity, acknowledging that there are no "vacant" churches and ministry does not have to "wait until the pastor gets here".

Once pastoral leadership is in place, presbytery must be in continuous communication with both the congregation and pastor in order to assure ongoing vitality and effectiveness.

Synods, presbytery clusters, and seminaries are supporting sessions and presbyteries by developing regional training programs for lay pastors and newly ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament. All PC(U.S.A.) entities are called to work together to develop and support new models for ministry in the 21st Century.

As you use this resource and develop or adapt models for pastoral ministry we encourage you to share your experiences and new models with others by sending them to the Presbyterian Small Church Network. (See Appendix IV.)

### BLESSING AND CHARGE

We are experiencing new times and discovering the value of new calls to pastoral ministry. Together we are pilgrims on a journey that requires us to prayerfully discern God's call to ministry and mission

and to discover unique and creative ways to respond to that call so that the vitality of the smaller membership congregations is enhanced. Go forward on this journey with the knowledge that God's wisdom and love will sustain and guide you.

## APPENDIX I

### EXAMPLES OF MINISTRY

Over the past ten years many presbyteries and congregations have moved to different options for pastoral leadership. Responses to a general communication sent to presbyteries revealed that many presbyteries have ministers serving small churches on a less than full time basis; a good number have ministers from partner denominations; a number have designated pastors. Based on responses from presbyteries the following is a list of presbyteries that are engaged in a variety of pastoral leadership options to serve vital small churches. Undoubtedly there are other presbyteries employing these various options.

Contact these presbyteries as part of your discernment process and learn from their experiences. Addresses can be found in The Presbyterian Planning Calendar, the Directory of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and on the web site [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) Printed material is available from Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS) at 1-800-524-2612.

#### **Area Minister:**

- Kendall

#### **Clergy Couple:**

- Coastal Carolina
- Des Moines
- Detroit
- Kendall
- Middle Tennessee
- New Harmony
- Tampa Bay
- Utica

#### **Commissioned Lay Pastors:**

- Abingdon
- Coastal Carolina
- Des Moines
- Grace
- Great Rivers
- Inland Northwest
- Mid-Kentucky
- Middle Tennessee
- Missouri Union
- New Harmony

- Northeast Georgia
- Northern New England
- Pines
- Plains and Peaks
- Salem
- Scioto Valley
- Seattle
- Sierra Mission Area
- South Dakota
- Washington
- Western Kentucky
- Whitewater Valley
- Winnebago

**Pastor Shared with Presbytery/General Assembly:**

- Cascades
- Donegal
- East Tennessee
- James
- Kendall
- Mid Kentucky
- New Brunswick
- West Virginia

**Seminary Student Intern:**

- Middle Tennessee
- Utica

**Seminary Student Pastor:**

- Detroit
- John Knox
- Mid Kentucky
- Northern Waters
- Philadelphia
- Transylvania

**Shared Associate:**

- Kendall

**Tentmaker Pastors:**

- Des Moines
- Eastern Oklahoma
- Indian Nations
- John Knox
- Long Island
- Mid Kentucky
- Middle Tennessee
- New Harmony
- Newton
- Philadelphia
- Savannah
- South Dakota
- Tampa Bay
- Transylvania
- Utica
- West Jersey

**Cooperative Parish:**

- Abingdon
- Coastal Carolina
- Eastern Oklahoma
- Indian Nations
- Northern New England
- Northern New York
- Northern Waters
- West Jersey

**Ecumenical Parish:**

- Abingdon
- Des Moines
- John Knox
- Scioto Valley
- Tampa Bay
- Utica

## APPENDIX IV

### RESOURCES

Your presbytery is your primary resource—its staff and committees. For future convenience write the name of your presbytery here:

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(Presbytery) (phone)

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(E-mail)

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Committees

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Contact persons:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s General Assembly offices are also sources for help. The address is

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
 100 Witherspoon Street  
 Louisville, KY 40202-1396  
<http://www.pcusa.org>

Evangelism and Church Development is a key office, and within it are the offices that will be of help to you. Its web site is <http://www.pcusa.org/evangelism/churchdevelopment>

The offices are

- Presbyterian Small Church Network  
 Room M-046  
 Extension 5232 or 5244  
<http://www.pcusa.org/evangelism/churchdevelopment/scmn>

Presbyterian Small Church Network assists presbyteries as they develop strategies for small church ministry and as they guide congregations through the process of discerning their ministry. A more complete list of resources for small churches is available for the asking from this office.

- Congregational Transformation  
 Extension 5234 or 5242

- New Church Development  
Extension 5266
- Racial and Cultural Diversity  
Extension 5233
- Rural Ministry  
Extension 5232
- Presbyterian Evangelism  
Extension 5229
- Urban Ministry  
Extension 5845

Racial Ethnic Ministries is another important office that assists racial ethnic and/or new immigrant congregations and fellowships. Its web site is <http://www.pcusa.org/raciaethnic>

Offices within Racial Ethnic Ministries are

- Asian Congregational Enhancement  
Extension 5682
- Black Congregational Enhancement  
Extension 5697
- Hispanic Congregational Enhancement  
Extension 5700
- Korean Congregational Enhancement  
Extension 5683
- Native American Congregational Enhancement  
Extension 5684
- Immigrant Groups Ministries in the USA  
Extension 5135
- Evangelism with Middle Easterners  
Extension 8264

Presbyterian Churchwide Personnel Services is an office that provides primary resources for congregations and presbyteries as they go through the process of seeking pastoral leadership and improving the skills of committee members charged with guiding small churches in the pastoral search process.

Offices within Presbyterian Churchwide Personnel Services are

- Church Leadership Connection  
Extension 5730
- Committees on Ministry  
Extension 5381
- Commissioned Lay Pastors  
Extension 5381



Resources available from Presbyterian Churchwide Personnel Services that can be obtained by downloading the web site:

*Church Information Form:* <http://www.pcusa.org/cic>  
*On Calling a Pastor: A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors:*  
<http://www.pcusa.org/cic>  
*Committee on Ministry Handbook:*  
<http://www.pcusa.org/ministers>  
*Commissioned Lay Pastors:* <http://www.pcusa.org/clp>

Board of Pensions  
 2000 Market Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19103-3298  
 1-800-773-7752  
<http://www.pcusa.pensions.org>

*Presbyterians Today*  
 100 Witherspoon Street  
 Louisville, KY 40202-1396  
 1-888-728-7228, ext. 5637  
<http://www.pcusa.org/today>

Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS) distributes resources produced by General Assembly offices. They can be ordered in several ways: phone:

1-800-524-2612, fax: 502-569-8030, Internet: [pds@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:pds@ctr.pcusa.org).

Materials available through PDS pertaining to small churches:

*Commissioned Lay Pastors in the Presbyterian Church*, provided by Churchwide Personnel Services and the Office of Small Church Development, PDS No. 72-213-01-002.

*Cooperative Parish Manual*, produced by Evangelism and Church Development, National Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), PDS, No. 305-93-921.

Cushman, James E., *Beyond Survival: Revitalizing the Small Church*, Louisville, KY, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Evangelism and Church Development, (copyright: James E. Cushman, 1981), PDS, No. 305-90-110

Geores, Carl. *Building Church and Community Ministries*. Published by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), National Ministries Division, Louisville, KY, PDS No. 72-380-96-006.

Geores, Carl. *Building Your Own Model for Cooperative Ministry: A Bible Study Process*. Produced by Evangelism and Church Development, National Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), PDS No. 305-93-923.

*Living the Vision* series, published by Mission Interpretation and Promotion for Evangelism and Church Development Ministries of the General Assembly Council, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Boots, Steven. *Living the Vision: Congregational Transformation*, PDS No. 72-300-00-001.

Kim, Sun Bai. *Living the Vision: Developing Strategies and Guidelines for Korean New Church Development*, PDS No. 72-440-00-001.

*Living the Vision: Health, Vitality and Growth in African American Churches, from the Black Congregational Enhancement Office*, PDS No. 72-420-01-001.

Marks, Amal and Antonio J. Aja. *Living the Vision: Welcoming Immigrants and their Gifts*, PDS No. 72-307-00-001.

Potter, Rosalie. *Living the Vision: Preparing Members for Evangelism (Faith Sharing)*, PDS No. 72-300-00-002.

Snedeker-Meier, Susan. *Living the Vision: New Church Development*, PDS No. 72-306-01-001.

Stephen, Diana A. *Living the Vision: Rural Ministry, Church and Community*, PDS No. 72-309-00-001.

Stephen, Diana A. *Living the Vision: Small Church Ministry*, PDS No. 72-308-00-002.

Tom, Phil. *Living the Vision: Metro/Urban Ministry*, PDS No. 72-313-03-001.

Wilson, Douglas A. *Living the Vision: Commitment to Evangelism*, PDS No. 72-310-99-006.

"Partners in Small Church Strategy," a report approved by the 201st General Assembly (1989), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), available from PDS No. 305-89-100.

*Rising to the Risk: Stories of Small Congregations Embracing the 21st Century*, produced collaboratively by Evangelism and Church Development and the Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1998, PDS, No. 72308-98-001.

#### Other Print Resources:

Crandall, Ron. *Turn Around Strategies for the Small Church*. Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press, 1995.

Jung, Shannon and Mary Agria, *Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds*. Abingdon Press. 1997.

Steinke, Peter L. *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*. Alban Institute, 1993.

Waldkoenig, Gilson A. C. and William O. Avery. *Cooperating Congregations: Portraits of Mission Strategies*. Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, March 2000.

#### Related Resources:

The Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers  
c/o Fred Bunning  
1035 SW 20th Street  
Loveland, CO 80537  
303-667-4853  
fcvlbunning@juno.com

*Presbyterian Outlook*  
P.O. Box 85623  
Richmond, VA 23227  
1-800-446-6008  
<http://www.pres-outlook.com>  
Fax: 804-353-6369