

Appendix G

Bi-Vocational Ministry Positions

The calling of a DCE, especially for smaller congregations with less financial resources, can and is a challenging prospect. While it is not recommended to take on the support of a called worker without adequate financial resources, it is acceptable to explore creative means of funding. One such means would be to call a DCE in an intentionally Bi-Vocational capacity.

Bi-Vocational Ministry exists where a rightly called worker works either part or full time in another non-ministry position while fulfilling his/her called ministry in the church. Bi-Vocational Ministry can be a viable alternative for congregations who: 1) with a modest budget; 2) in a smaller community; 3) in an urban setting; or 4) in a church-plant. Many denominations make great use of Bi-Vocational Ministry. A good number of LC-MS pastors serve in Bi-Vocational Ministry as worker-priests.

There are many advantages to Bi-vocational ministry:

1. It enables some churches to have a staff that they would not otherwise be able to afford.
2. It enables new churches and ministries to be launched with qualified leaders.
3. It enables bi-vocational ministers to be able to relate to church people and understand what it's like to work in a secular workplace.
4. It enables ministers to remain more connected with unchurched people and have unique outreach opportunities.
5. It enables church workers to serve with a greater level of commitment and sacrifice.

With the vast numbers of smaller LC-MS congregations in financial situations where the calling of a full-time DCE would not be feasible, the Pacific Southwest District Youth &

Family Ministry office supports the responsible and intentional calling of Bi-Vocational DCE's.

What do we mean by responsible and intentional?

By responsible, we mean that just as with any call that proper considerations are made to find not only the right candidate for your congregation but also the right candidate for the unique challenges of Bi-Vocational Ministry. The congregation should be prepared to assist the Bi-Vocational DCE (B-V DCE) through the careful design of a ministry position description in line with the expected hours of ministry. The spiritual and mental health of the B-V DCE should be carefully attended to noting that there will likely exist additional challenges in balancing ones time and maintaining a healthy margin for family time and personal restoration.

By intentional, we mean that congregations are to seek to develop intentional partnerships with local employers on behalf of the B-V DCE rather than merely extending a part-time call and hoping the candidate is able to find enough work to secure an adequate combination of salaries. Church leaders are encouraged to seek business owners within their own congregations to partner with in order to help secure employment with an employer more likely to understand and work with the needs of a B-V DCE. Congregations and partner employers are encouraged to work together to provide adequate benefits including medical, dental, as well as retirement, as is considered standard for all called workers in the LC-MS.

Pastors and church leaders who work with B-V DCE's are encouraged to support the "secular" work of the B-V DCE as an outreach. Seeing this as a strategic partnership rather than merely a part-time employee will go a long way toward not only supporting the spiritual, emotional, and mental health of the B-V DCE. This will also help the congregation to strategically connect with the community.