

WHY CAN'T CALVIN CHURCH FIND A PASTOR?

Calvin Presbyterian Church, a rural church of under 100 members in Louisiana, is searching for a pastor. After submitting a Church Information Form (CIF) with Church Leadership Connection (CLC) Calvin Church CIF was matched to Personal Information Forms (PIF) and the results were discouraging: only one PIF matched the Calvin Church CIF.

The selected and descriptive matching criteria for the church were:

CALVIN CHURCH (under 100 member rural church in Louisiana)

<u>Matching Criteria</u>	<u># of matched PIFs</u>
Solo pastor	548
Add rural	239
Add 4 or more years of experience	162
Add less than 100 members	81
Add preaching & administrative leadership requirement	19
Add evangelism requirement	7
Add maximum salary of \$38,000	1

Now compare Calvin Church to Knox Presbyterian Church, a suburban church of 251-400 members in North Carolina, also seeking a pastor. Knox Church CIF was matched to PIFs and the results were overwhelming: 308 PIFs matched with the Knox CIF.

The selected and descriptive matching criteria for the church were:

KNOX CHURCH (251-400 member suburban church in North Carolina)

<u>Matching Criteria</u>	<u># of matched PIFs</u>
Solo pastor	849
Add suburban	791
Add 4 or more years of experience	575
Add 251-400 members	522
Add preaching & pastoral care requirement	389
Add corporate worship & sacraments requirement	338
Add maximum salary of \$60,000	308

What is the difference? Why does Calvin Church receive only one PIF while Knox Church is awash in PIFs? In other words, why can't Calvin Church find a pastor? There are several answers to this question.

Location, Location, Location.

According to PIFs, there are particular community types and regions of the country considered more desirable.

56% of persons seeking a call through CLC limit their search geographically.

Most desired states: North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Georgia, California, Maryland, Florida, Tennessee and New York.

Least desired states: North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, Utah, Nebraska, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho.

Only 7% of pastors searching for a call through CLC will consider serving in a rural community.

34% of churches seeking a pastor through CLC limit their search geographically.

Experience Required.

Churches prefer to call a pastor with experience.

Only 24% of churches will consider those seeking their first ordained call. The rest want someone with at least some pastoral experience.

60% of PIFs have 8 or more years experience

17.8% of PIFs are individuals seeking their first call.

Size Counts.

Churches with under 100 members are at a particular disadvantage.

While almost 50% of PC(USA) churches have 100 members or less, only 9.5% of pastors seeking a call will consider serving a church of under 100 members.

Special Skills.

Churches with under 100 members want a pastor with Evangelism and Redevelopment skills.

Churches of under 100 members most often seek pastors with the general pastoral skills such as Preaching, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Development, and Corporate Worship/Sacraments, which are also skills listed on most PIFs.

However, an increasing number of churches with under 100 members are seeking pastors with additional skills in Evangelism and Congregational Redevelopment/Revitalization, while only 39% of PIFs list having either skill.

Money Matters.

The salary offered does matter.

Only 37% of pastors seeking a full-time call will consider a position that offers less than \$40,000. 20% of pastors have listed \$55,000 or more as the minimum salary they will consider.

The church wide average salary for 2008 is \$52,562.

The average Presbyterian gave about \$1,081 to his or her church in 2007. With almost 50% of our churches have 100 members or less, the largest of these congregations will have around \$108,100 (100 X \$1,081) to work with. A minimum salary/housing compensation package of \$35,000 (the average full-time salary for churches of this size in CLC), with the addition of benefits and expenses will cost a church around \$50,000, or about half the church budget.

PC(USA) Churches	1980	1990	2000	2007
Total Membership	3,272,518	2,856,713	2,525,330	2,209,546
Total number of churches	11,730	11,501	11,150	10,820
% of churches 100 members or less		39%	43.8%	49.6%
Median size congregation		137	120	103
Churches without installed pastoral leadership		3183	3897	4857

WHAT CAN CALVIN CHURCH DO?

Re-evaluate the CIF

Location and size.

Calvin can't move the church, but is it really "rural"? Don't mislead folks, but can Calvin be listed as a town or village or suburb instead of rural?

While churches cannot change the state or community in which they are located, they can expand their search for a pastor by not geographically limiting their search. There will be more candidates to choose from if a church is willing to search a bit wider than neighboring states.

In the narrative section of the CIF, highlight the advantages, gifts, and joys associated with being a church of under 100 members.

Experience

Be open to considering all candidates, regardless of previous experience. This means marking "First Ordained Call" under "Years of Experience".

Skills

It is understandable to want a pastor with skills in Preaching, Pastoral Care and Corporate Worship/Sacraments. However, the more specialized skills chosen as being required skills, the fewer PIFs will match those skills. Consider having your pastor along with a couple of session members get the desired specialized training after the new pastor has arrived.

Compensation

Offer as much compensation as possible to provide for the pastor and to be able to offer increases over the years.

Advertise that Calvin fits the criteria for the seminary debt assistance program through the Board of Pension. This provides an easy \$2,500 per year (\$10,000 total) to add to the overall compensation picture. This would be very attractive to new pastors with debt from their seminary education. More information can be found at: www.pensions.org

Be prepared to help spouses find satisfactory employment.

If adequate compensation for a full-time pastor is out of the congregation's reach, consider Tentmaking or bi-vocational pastors. More information can be found at: www.pcusatentmakers.org

Other Tips

Be Open to All Kinds of People

Consider women and men, and persons of all races. More than half of the people preparing for ministry are women. About 19% of persons preparing for ministry are racial ethnic. For assistance in considering women and racial ethnic persons call Jewel McRae at Church Leadership Connection at 888-728-7228 ext 5748.

Consider Retiring Military Chaplains

Contact Director of Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP) through their website at: www.pccmp.org

Consider “Orderly Exchange”

Find ministers available in your area from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), United Church of Christ (UCC), and Reformed Church in America (RCA). Contact your Committee on Ministry or Executive/General Presbyter to explore this option. More information can be found at: www.elca.org/ministry/pdf/formula.pdf

Make Connections

Make contact with neighboring presbyteries and with PC(USA) seminaries to let ministers and candidates be aware of your church and your presbytery.

Consider advertising in *Presbyterians Today*, *Presbyterian Outlook* and/or *Christian Century*.

Participate in General Assembly Face-to-Face events to meet, in one place, a number of ministers and candidates seeking calls.

Additional Help

Ask your Committee on Ministry or Executive/General Presbyter for suggestions and insights.

Check out the resources available through CLC:

Church Leadership Connection
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202
(888) 728-7228, extension 8550
www.pcusa.org/clc