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Calvin Grads Dominate 2006 Pastors Draft

COLORADO SPRINGS — Big names and big surprises converged before a nationwide audience at the 2006 Pastors Draft on April 27.

"I've been waiting a long time for this," said Alvin DeWalt, 26, of Fuller Seminary, pacing his apartment in Pasadena and watching the draft on the Daystar network. His wife had made guacamole, and thirty friends were on hand to see which church picked DeWalt, one of this year's top ranked prospects.

In the first round, Geoff Parsons and Rick Benson, of Westminster and Calvin seminaries respectively, went first, as scouts had predicted they would. Parsons heads to a struggling mid-sized Methodist church in Memphis, Tenn., which had the top pick this year. Benson was drafted by a mega-church in Casper, Wyo., which had traded two mid-career pastors for a higher pick. Both draftees say they are ready to "help their teams."

Calvin Seminary overall showed surprising strength, placing two dozen graduates at leading churches around the country, plus sending many more to minor league ministries. Of the Big 10 schools, last year's leaders, Dallas and Asbury, showed less strength. Both call this a "building year" and say their classes of 2007 will be much stronger. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Westminster say they were "pleased" with how many grads they placed in respectable positions.



The mammoth North Shore Christian Church of Reston, Va., selected wildcard rookie Pat Jameson, who has struggled with morality issues, but is still considered a major league talent. Jameson, speaking at a press conference wearing a North Shore polo shirt and cap, told reporters he was "ready to make a clean start."

Church on the Rock (Houston, Texas), known for scooping up mid- and late-career pastors at low salaries and getting impressive results, traded a first-round pick for two associate pastors with "executive pastor potential" according to a widely respected scouting report.

A number of pastors near retirement entered the free agent market, having been traded for early-career pastors.

"They'll miss my experience in the pulpit," says one elderly pastor who was traded for two rookies and a youth pastor.

One highly watched rookie, David Humphreys of Luther Seminary, went lower than expected, due to what many consider unreasonable demands including an outsized automobile budget and eight weeks of "sabbatical" per year.

DeWalt of Fuller Seminary was picked even higher than he expected by a Florida church which is "transitioning to a purpose-driven model" after years of stagnation. He slumped on the couch, smiling as friends congratulated him.

"I'm just happy it's over," he said.

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