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# **PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE**

## **TRAINING NOTEBOOK**

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# Pastor Search Committee Workbook

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## Introduction

So you are on your church's pastor search committee? A hearty welcome to you-- and about 360 other Baptist churches in our state that will be seeking a pastor within the next twelve months!

One thing that the average church can depend on is the constant return, again and again, of the interim period between permanent pastors. This is a definite occurrence that churches can always anticipate -- the departure of one pastor and the arrival of another. Without doubt, pastoral changes are a recurring phenomenon in Baptist churches today.

While prayerfully considering all the needs in every church, it must be stated that when a congregation finds and calls the right pastor -- the one God wills to be there -- so many other needs will be met. So much depends on the right pastor being in the right place at the right time.

Every church can use help in searching for a minister. This workbook is designed to assist churches in discovering and doing God's will as they seek to call a new primary spiritual leader through the Holy Spirit and pastor search committee. The material is presented as suggestions and does not propose to be a definitive work. Recognizing the autonomy of Baptist churches, one cannot say that there is a certain way that is exactly right or exactly wrong in an effort to find a pastor.

It must be stated, however, that research and experience have taught us much and that there are some procedures that work better than others. Having learned from inadequacies in some search efforts, we know to circumvent those pitfalls. Experiencing the positive and productive reaffirms approaches to consider using in the future.

The manual is generic in nature. Churches of all sizes, styles, located in various parts of South Carolina and, perhaps, other states as well will use the work. One size or type does not fit all. The contents in this workbook are ideas intended to serve as a starter piece for the consideration of respective search committees. It is understandable that search teams will customized their own strategy to seek God's mind in terms of whom He wants to serve as the next pastor of their church.

Your church family is on the verge of making the most significant and far-reaching decision that it has made in several years. You are more likely to accomplish your mission with joy and purpose by using some time proven strategies in your search process that are found in this workbook. May God grant this for your committee and church.

### **Article #1 "God Is At Work In Pastoral Changes"**

(An article that might be printed in your church's newsletter or bulletin)

At times church members interpret their pastor's leaving as an interruption in the church's life and ministry. Even when the departure is positive, a few may contend it is actually a disruption. If the pastor acknowledges his move to be the will of God for his life, then it is also the will of God for the congregation as well. God doesn't work at two ends of the same situation with different purposes. Instead of an interruption in the church's ministry, the change should be viewed as an intervention—God's intervention. God is at work in pastoral changes.

Is God more concerned about the church to which the pastor moves than the church he leaves? Of course the answer is "no." God has equal concern for all churches. As difficult as it is to lose a pastor, a

congregation should begin looking with eager and positive anticipation at what God is about to do in the church's life. God always prepares us for what He is preparing for us. Again, He works at both ends.

Occasionally, a church will be gripped by fear thinking that if the church doesn't get a new pastor within two months, things will literally fall apart. We need to remember that God was there first. After all, He is the One who is supposed to be in control. When a church that loses its pastor is obedient to the Holy Spirit's leadership, it can be assured God is preparing another primary spiritual leader to send to the church that allows Him to prepare them.

A "pastorless" church must not place a disproportionate emphasis on the search effort at the expense of the congregation's preparation process. When is a church really ready to call a new pastor? The answer needs to be considered not so much in terms of time, but in the matter of the church's readiness.

When a church is without a pastor, there is a tendency for members to think more reflectively about the status and future of their congregation. The basic question the church and search committee must consider is not "who is he going to be?" but "who are we and where are we going?" If you don't know where you are going, it doesn't make much difference what direction you take.

When a church knows the direction it feels led of God to pursue, it is better prepared to call that person who can lead them productively to that end.

## Chapter One

### **Forming The Committee**

A church family trusts God's providential leadership to bring a competent and committed group of people together as His agents to search for and recommend a pastor for the congregation. Such trust does not negate the responsibility of human decisions on who will serve on such a significant group. Much care must be given to the selection process and people who are selected.

#### *A. Selecting The Members*

Experience has shown that there are several ways to select a pastor search committee. The method varies from one Baptist church to another. Without question, committee members should be presented to the church family for final election, regardless of the procedure used to nominate the people. When the congregation elects the committee, this gives church members a larger measure of ownership and responsibility in the search effort.

The following are three basic ways of nominating members to serve on this significant committee.

- Open voting "from the floor" of a business meeting
- The Regular Nominating Committee
- A Special Nominating Committee

When the election of a search committee is opened to the floor of a church conference and each person present selects several names, the process might border on becoming a popularity contest. This does not mean that the church's judgment in such an effort is not to be trusted. It does mean that there is less likelihood of a truly representative committee being elected by choosing the members through an open floor ballot.

When a small group is assigned the task of nominating the search committee, much more deliberation about the qualifications of potential members can be considered. This method ensures that a more representative group will be elected while slowly and carefully reviewing church members with varied backgrounds, church involvement, age categories, and special expertise. Then, the positive mix of males and females will likely occur under a nominating committee's direction.

One should not expect this to happen, but the nominating committee procedure reduces the possibility of any "politicking" before the election process begins.

At times, a church uses the regular nominating committee that enlists and offers names for respective committees throughout the church. This group might be assigned the task of nominating search committee members for the church's consideration. Some churches have a standing committee called the "committee on committees." This group is assigned the duty of electing all church committees during the regular course of the church year.

The church's purposes will be served well when the search committee is representative of the congregation's membership. It is not the better part of wisdom for a church to choose all the members who are "exactly alike." The following criteria should assist a church family to realize some diversity among the committee.

- Age
- Varying commitments and interests
- Length of membership in the church (long and short term)
- Male and female
- Level of involvement
- Knowledge of the church's life and ministry
- Spiritual gifts

All members must exhibit and act with spiritual maturity while being thoroughly committed to the Lord and the work of the church. Each member is required to spend the time, energy, and effort the task requires. Of course, no one should be nominated who is not interested or willing to serve.

How many members should a search committee have? Based on the size of the church's membership, the adequate number is usually from five to nine. A smaller number will not likely be representative of the church. A larger group would probably make the work too cumbersome. These committee sizes enhance the communication process, facilitate the interview efforts, and make for efficient travel plans, as well as simplifying the decision-making.

Occasionally, someone will suggest an odd number in the event of a tie vote within the search committee and the odd numbered person ensures this will not happen. Such should not be a matter of concern because all the committee members should be unanimous in their recommendation. If you are unable to get a small number of people to agree, how does one expect the entire church family to achieve agreement?

Using "alternate" search committee members has no value and often creates confusion within the committee and among church members. One is hard pressed to define their role and describe their function. When some members do not make visits or participate in the interview sessions, it is most difficult for them to get the same sense of God's guidance in the decision-making process. Seldom does a committee member miss a trip to hear a particular candidate, and even if this does happen, other arrangements can be made for that member to visit on another occasion.

On occasions, the question arises about presenting more names on the ballot than is actually needed to serve in order to give the congregation a wider choice. One example of this selection procedure is to place ten names on the ballot and ask the church family to select five to serve. Some congregations are accustomed to using this plan in electing other church leaders. In reality, however, it can become a competitive process creating a win/lose experience. A better strategy is to simply recommend only the number of members needed to serve.

## ***B. Praying For The Committee***

*(Before Electing The Committee)*

1. Request each Sunday School class to have special prayer every time the class meets.
2. Request all ministry groups, councils, committees, and task forces to pray every time that they meet.
3. Have special prayer during the worship services specifically for the election process. This would be a separate segment other than the regular prayer times of the worship service.



4. Encourage members to include the election process in their family devotions and during their thanks at meals in their homes.
5. Consider having a special prayer breakfast or lunch for the particular purpose of praying for God's will to be realized in selecting those who should serve on the search committee.

*(After Electing The Committee)*

1. Have each search committee member enlist three prayer partners within the church membership.
2. Consider having a special commissioning service for the search committee.
3. During the special service, ask all the search committee members to stand at the front of the sanctuary before the pulpit area. Request all members present to select one search committee member to pray for specifically. The congregation might be divided by the alphabet and each member assigned a particular search committee member.

Example:

If there are seven people on the search committee, the worshipers might be divided by their last names into alphabet groupings. The members could be divided in the following groups: A-C; D-F; G-I; J-L; M-O; P-S; T-Z. Each group would be assigned a particular search committee member to remember daily in special prayer.

4. Items one through five in the "Before The Election Process" above might also be used in support of the committee members after they are elected.

### ***C. Choosing Committee Officers***

A simple organizational structure for a search committee will suffice. As a rule, three officers are used: a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The committee should be allowed to elect its own officers.

The chairman keeps the group on target by helping to orchestrate the work in a fashion that gives the members a sense of direction. This individual must demonstrate leadership skills to serve in this capacity. The chairman should be the committee's official spokesperson, handling substantive announcements or information distributed by the committee.

The vice-chairman serves as the group's leader in the absence of or at the pleasure of the chairman.

The secretary performs necessary administrative details such as taking minutes of committee meetings and developing any written correspondence.

A time-tested conclusion shows that it is best for the committee secretary to serve as the custodian of all resumes from the time of their sealed reception to the copying and distribution for committee participants. This method ensures confidentiality for all prospective candidates and prevents any untimely disclosure of those under the committee's consideration.

A committee organizational form can be found at the end of this chapter.

### ***D. Understanding The Assignment***

Your election to serve on the search committee demonstrates enormous confidence and trust placed in you by your church family. You are already conscious of the monumental task assigned you. Again, your most significant resource will be the Holy Spirit; your most crucial activity will be prayer. You will, of course, use spiritual discernment and practical wisdom in seeking to determine God's direction.

The search committee has been given the responsibility of aiding the congregation in finding and calling a pastor. The word *aiding*, or *assisting*, is crucial; the search committee represents the church family in the calling process. The congregation actually issues the call or elects the person.

The committee members must know the directives of the congregation in calling a pastor. Provisions for the election of a pastor are usually set forth in the constitution and bylaws. Some bylaws give specific steps in the election of the committee, the meeting notice in which the vote on the committee's recommendation is considered, as well as the affirmative vote percentage required for the call. There are pastors who might require a higher percentage to accept the call.

The committee must study carefully the bylaws to make certain that the proper protocol is being adhered to. Should any change or alternative procedures be required, those matters must be settled before the conference when the pastor is being considered for a call.

The committee negotiates with the prospective candidate within the parameters approved by the congregation. Care should be taken that no promises or commitments are made without the knowledge and full consent of the church body. For example, compensation offers must be in compliance with the adopted budget or have the approval of the church. At times, the church may give some latitude to the committee for the proposed salary and benefit package. Negotiating on such matters is considered later in this workbook.

How are the existing church staff members related to the search process? How will the calling of a new primary spiritual leader affect them? A meeting by the committee with existing staff could prove beneficial in dealing with apprehension about the calling process as well as including them and their perspectives. Referencing this item is a bit early in the discussion, but it is not imperative that the candidate who is finally recommended by the search committee has to have the approval of any one or all of the existing staff members.

Committee members must represent the church family with integrity. Always be candid and forthright in communicating a picture of your congregation. You should have nothing to hide from a prospective candidate. Tell all, even if it hurts.

Be discreet in referring to, or comparing with, former pastors.

### ***E. Training The Committee***

Participating in a thorough training session on the work of a search committee can be an enormous asset. Regardless of prior experience on a search committee by one or a few members, engaging a consultant to lead a training session will be indispensable. Every person hears the same thing together and has a better opportunity to reach agreement about the search process activities.

Your local Baptist association is available to provide training for your pastor search committee. They are always glad to be in your first meeting to help you get started off right. The training takes approximately 2 hours and they will explain the entire step-by-step you process.

### ***F. Establishing A Schedule***

Once the officers have been chosen, the group needs to decide on the frequency of its meetings. Consistency will benefit the productivity of the committee's work. Some committees commit to assembling once a week. One might wonder if there would be enough activity to warrant meeting so often. It would be worthwhile to come together with this kind of regularity just for the purpose of praying for the Holy Spirit's leadership in the search process.

Some committees meet after the evening worship service on Sundays, others choose Sunday afternoons, while many find it best to attend a week night session.

Be careful to select a time when your primary concern will not involve having "to finish in a hurry."

### ***G. Commissioning The Committee***

Some congregations plan a special commissioning service for the search committee. This group will be engaged in the most significant endeavor the church has experienced for the past several years. A timely message by the interim pastor might address the impact the efforts of this committee will have on the church family. A testimony by one or two committee members can also include a special appeal for the prayer support of the entire congregation.

Encircling the committee at an appropriate point in the service for prayer and affirmation would be symbolic of the membership's unity and support of the committee's divine assignment. The committee might remain at the front of the sanctuary to allow church members to come by and offer individual expressions of support.

A suggestion about prayer assignments was referenced earlier in this chapter.

### ***H. Considering Group Dynamics***

Dependence upon the Holy Spirit and prayer do not preclude search committee members from recognizing and understanding the experience of human involvement in group dynamics. The way a search team relates to each other and functions together is a major component in a search group's work.

In all human interactions there are two major ingredients -- content and process. The first deals with the subject matter or the task upon which the group is working. In most interactions, the focus of attention of all persons is usually on the content. The second ingredient, process, is concerned with what is happening between and to the group members while the group is working.

Group process, or dynamics, deals with such matters as morale, feeling tone, atmosphere, influence, participation, styles of influence, leadership struggles, conflict, competition, cooperation, and other items as well. In most interactions, little attention is given to process, even when it is the major cause of ineffective group action. Sensitivity to group process will better enable you to diagnose group difficulties early, if any exist, and deal with them more effectively. Since these processes are present in all groups, awareness of them will enhance a person's worth to a group and enable him to be a more effective group participant.

A few principles of effective group dynamics are listed below. The search team would benefit from discussing these items and then developing its own covenant of relating and interacting among themselves.

- Sensible agreement about work procedures
- Openness and honesty among team members
- Confidentiality regarding the opinions and feelings expressed by all members
- Effective methods of decision-making
- Sound strategies of resolving differences and possible conflict
- Easy flow of communication among the members
- Maintaining a non-threatening environment
- Realistic group goals
- Joy and pride in the group's accomplishments
- A strong sense of purpose and unity
- Having a merry heart that produces good medicine

### ***I. Five Ways To Involve The Congregation In The Process***

1. Invite everyone and every group to pray for the committee members by name
2. Utilize the Church Member Survey
3. Invite members to share with others the church is seeking resumes
4. Ask the church to have a Commissioning Service for PSC
5. Share regular updates with the church members

*J. Committee Organization*

**PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE  
ORGANIZATION**

**Election of officers:**

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Members of the Pastor Search Committee**

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Association Director of Missions** \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Regularly Scheduled Meetings:**

Date of the Month \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the Day \_\_\_\_\_

Place of the Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

There will be other committee assignments. However, the other assignments will be for the purpose of doing short-term projects.

## Chapter Two

### INTERIM MINISTRY NEEDS Sustaining The Church

The material in this chapter is provided to assist churches find a sense of direction during the interim period. The pastor search committee may or may not be responsible for planning this segment of the church's life. These pieces could be passed along to the committees or groups that have this assignment. It should prove beneficial to combine these pages with the material in chapter two as an effort to provide guidance for the church during the pastoral vacancy. Also, this chapter could assist the search team in its understanding of the dynamics of interim ministry. The pastor search committee's work can be more productively implemented when the congregation has an effective interim pastor in place.

#### ***A. THE INTERIM MINISTRY NEEDS***

Some people contend that the presence of a permanent pastor is such an indispensable part of the church's framework that anything like a lengthy segment without a pastor in place would be costly to the vitality of the congregation. In many instances, the pastor's presence is a symbol of security for the membership. As a result of this view, many believers feel that being without a pastor for any lengthy period of time would be most detrimental to the church's well being.

One can readily see how crucial interim ministry is and will continue to become. When a church has the services of an effective interim pastor, the search committee and other leaders have a better opportunity to take adequate time to re-discover the reason for their church's being and find the person God would send to that pastorate.

It has been referenced on several occasions in this workbook that some churches have such a tendency to rush forward in collecting resumes and getting on the road to visit prospective candidates that they jeopardize the Holy Spirit's leadership in the search process. ***An effective interim pastor assists in alleviating this dilemma.***

With the obvious need in the life of churches during the interim period, along with the frequency of the phenomenon, interim ministry is becoming a specialty. The role of the interim pastor is rapidly becoming far more significant.

The term "interim ministry specialist" has emerged out of this obvious need and pressing demand, while viewing a myriad of church situations that call for a more specialized strategy in meeting the needs of "pastorless churches."

During the time between pastors, a church needs someone to be understanding, to help them look at themselves, to hold up a mirror so they can see themselves in a way that they cannot do by themselves. If churches do not do that first, then they will likely go through the process of trying to "hire a minister" without ever examining themselves. That is folly! Someone from "the outside" can come in and join in the process with the congregation in helping them look at themselves objectively.

The thoroughly experienced and well equipped minister, using spiritual resources, process skills, and maintaining a theological sensitivity to the mission of the church, can be instrumental in helping to move the congregation from one point to another, while aiding to relieve the pain of the interim experience itself. The interim pastor can assist the church in dealing with the overall dynamics of the vacancy period.

The results of a productive interim effort will be beneficial to the new pastor, if only providing an opportunity for a meaningful discussion about the future of the church. In short, planning well during the vacancy period can set the stage for the Holy Spirit to perform His indispensable work in leading the church family to affirm the Lord's will in selecting the new pastor.

One might grasp the total perspective of a pastoral vacancy by viewing the "in-between-times" in three basic areas of interim ministry, which are:

1. The unfolding life of the congregation
2. The leadership of the Holy Spirit
3. The work of the interim pastor

### ***B. THE INTERIM PASTOR'S ROLE***

What is an interim pastor? Everyone seems to know until someone asks. Usually, he is an ordained pastor, most often retired, and occasionally involved in other forms of ministry who begins work after the permanent minister leaves. He engages in the normal and confined pastoral duties such as leading in worship, making pastoral calls, and sharing in nominal administrative duties.

An interim pastor's ministry is specialized because it's more clearly defined as to the duration and scope of the work, and because it is more focused on particular tasks and must be completed in a limited time. Therefore, role clarification is crucial in performing a productive ministry.

Interim ministry is such a significant aspect of the Kingdom's work that it deserves more care and specificity than a mere "filling the void" mentality. A one step up perspective of this work defines an interim pastor as a minister with a defined and temporary agreement (covenant-contract) brought into the congregation when, for whatever reason, the regular pastoral position has become vacant. The interim pastor, in contrast to those who do Sunday supply and fill in during emergencies, does the things a permanent pastor does, but within a different framework of time, goals, and planning.

The interim pastor and the church family must have a clear understanding at the outset that the interim is not a candidate for the regular ministry position. The interim is temporarily located and, therefore, not eligible for the permanent pastorate. Otherwise, he is clearly not an interim pastor, but potentially something else. A more extensive discussion of the "no candidate rationale" will be presented later in this paper.

### ***C. THE INTERIM PASTOR'S POSITION DESCRIPTION***

The word “interim” implies certain boundaries. Unless the interim pastor is called as a full-time minister, the church needs to realize that there must be limitations on the interim pastor’s time. Each church will want to develop its own agreement. The following is offered only as suggestions or a starter piece.

#### **A. Duties:**

1. Lead in the Sunday morning and evening worship services; conduct the Wednesday evening prayer service.
2. Meet with the church council monthly to assist in the coordination and implementation of the church’s programs and activities.
3. Provide administrative supervision of the daily affairs of the church.
4. Visit church members who are hospitalized.
5. Provide counseling in crisis situations.
6. Attend the monthly deacon meetings upon request.
7. Participate in the local association as the church’s representative.
8. Conduct funerals for deceased church members upon request.
9. Conduct weddings for church members upon request.
10. Supervise (or coordinate the work of / or work with) the church staff.
11. Assist the pastor search committee upon request.
12. Engage the church in a self-study and goal-setting effort to plan for the church’s future.
13. Lead in all the church’s ordinances.

#### **B. Term of Office:**

1. It is clearly understood that **under no circumstance will the interim pastor become a candidate for the office of permanent pastor.** (Additional information on this subject accompanies this chapter.)
2. This agreement will be reviewed after six months of ministry; if re-negotiation is needed, the \_\_\_\_\_ committee will work with the interim pastor to consider needs, concerns, or changes.
3. Should either party choose to dissolve the relationship before a new pastor is called, the party requesting the termination will give a thirty-day notice.



4. The interim pastor will conclude his ministry with the church upon the call of the permanent pastor; the termination date will be the Sunday before the new pastor begins his ministry or a date determined by the \_\_\_\_\_ committee.
5. The interim pastor will be directly responsible to the \_\_\_\_\_ (personnel committee, deacons, interim ministry committee, transition team).
6. The interim pastor will not be present when the prospective permanent pastor visits for a trial sermon.

#### ***D. THE INTERIM PASTOR'S COMPENSATION***

Certain basic matters should be taken into consideration when deciding the worth of an interim minister. This is a specialty field. From eighty to ninety percent of what the interim specialist does is basically what the permanent pastor would do. Calling an adequately qualified minister is an investment, not merely an expense.

Compensation is partly determined by the amount of service that the church expects the interim minister to perform. His training and experience should be a factor in determining the total package. Some ministers have expertise in a certain area of ministry that could accommodate the church in specific areas of pressing need. The benefit of such a service is incalculable when compared to costs.

The church should not take advantage of the minister by trying to save money while without a full-time pastor.

Several approaches might be taken in determining the salary, expenses, and benefits for the services rendered by an interim specialist.

In some instances, a church may prefer a simple equation in directing their decision. A "part-time interim" weekly pay should be no less than one percent of the former pastor's total annual compensation and benefit package. Travel should be reimbursed on a per mile basis as allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.

An example of this schedule follows:

The former pastor's annual salary and benefit package was \$40,000 (including the provision of a parsonage if one exists). One percent of this figure is \$400.00. So, the weekly salary would be set at \$400.00.

Again, experienced interim leaders contend that the interim pastor is a specialist. So, regardless of the amount of actual time he spends "on the field," or "in the office," if he is on call for emergencies and provides normal pastoral ministry and also offers assistance as a capable leader in addition to preaching three times a week, his compensation must be no less than sixty percent of the former pastor's pay scale. Using the percentage, and the \$40,000 annual figure, the interim's compensation would be \$24,000 a year or \$2,000 a month.

On occasions, some churches seek to determine how much money they can save during the interim period while not paying the full budgeted amount assigned the former pastor instead of seeking the best possible leadership available.

The interim minister should be permitted to designate the compensation in ways most beneficial to him. Amounts for housing, retirement, and other allowable benefits, like life and hospitalization insurance premiums, could be paid for and deducted from the total amount agreed upon by both parties.

The church could provide a motel room for the interim pastor when he has to travel some distance which would not make it feasible for him to go to his home on Sunday afternoons and return to the church for the evening service without an excessive time requirement.

These are just a few suggestions. Certain situations are somewhat unique, and the interim specialist and the congregation's leadership will need to negotiate the compensation package.

### ***E. THE NO CANDIDATE RATIONALE***

After an interim pastor is on the field and engaged with the church family, occasionally some members express an interest in calling the interim as their regular pastor. What precipitates this action? The following list includes reasons **why some people choose to pursue the interim as a candidate** for the permanent pastoral position:

1. Good relationships have already been established.
2. The church's comfort zone is not disturbed.
3. The "we know what we are really getting by now" perspective. There is less risk involved in having an interim stay than calling the unknown.
4. The process is convenient, less time consuming, as well as more economical.
5. "Popularity" is a prominent factor in such considerations, and the feeling that no one would vote against a person who is already among the body of believers.
6. It eliminates what some see as a prolonged and confusing start-up process.
7. One always finds a few church members who perennially pursue the goal of insuring the lowest level of dissatisfaction and the path of least resistance.
8. The interim might demonstrate the model for effectiveness in pastoral ministry; some members want this to continue.
9. A power struggle could be going on in the congregation.
10. Although it is rare, one will find that an interim pastor might "campaign" for the permanent position.
11. Some members perhaps don't understand the nature of interim ministry.

***In uncertain times, the emotional forces in a church family tend to exert the power to override or subvert the spiritual values.***

Why should an interim pastor **NOT be a candidate** for the full-time pastorate of the church he is serving?

This seems to be a question which surfaces occasionally within some churches and within some pastor search committees. The reply to such a query involves multiple concerns as listed below:

1. The matter of ethics is a basic consideration. The agreement accepted by both parties declared that the relationship was temporary and designed for a stated purpose – to assist the church during the time in between regular pastors.
2. Clear endings and beginnings are most significant during the interim. Allowing the interim leader to become the regular pastor contributes to an unclear ending of the former period and an unclear beginning in the next pastor's tenure.
3. Real needs and issues, which would benefit the church to address during the interval time, might be ignored or avoided.
4. The search process that has productive possibilities of discovery and the pursuit of new directions will likely be negated.
5. Such an approach can create conflict within the church when the assignment of the search committee is circumvented or short-circuited. Polarization might develop among church members.
6. The interim could have an advantage over other candidates.
7. A few members have, in some cases, developed a dislike for the interim pastor and his being called will have built-in opposition, as well as continual opposition.
8. The church could fail to consider competent candidates who would provide more adequate leadership.
9. A precedent might be set for future pastoral calls.
10. Interim pastors have a better opportunity to minister effectively if they have no "vested interest" in the full-time pastorate. They can be more objective in serving/leading the church. Possibly, an interim leader might be motivated by "what can I do to get this call?"
11. Members who do not get their way might make it hard for the new pastor.
12. Not considering the interim creates an unencumbered environment for the search committee's work.
13. When the two parties have made a covenant at the outset of the relationship, switching in the middle of the stream would be considered a breach in the commitment.

From an overall perspective, when an interim leader is called, the transition is likely hurried. There is the danger of carrying unresolved issues into the next pastor's ministry.

***An interim minister who wavers between putting himself in the position of becoming a candidate for the full-time pastorate can short-circuit the entire search process.***

At the same time, one must acknowledge that the Holy Spirit cannot be put in a straitjacket. So, on rare occasions, there might be an exception to this rule; however, experience has proven that the search process is usually best served when the interim is not eligible for the vacant pastorate.

The interim pastor who has made this covenant, should resist all pressure to allow his name to be put in the candidate pool. Frequent affirming communications by church members during the vacancy segment can weaken the interim's unyielding position. It is understandable that many favorable compliments will be showered upon him during the performance of pastoral ministries, but this should serve more as an affirmation of his skills than an indirect sense of God's call to become a candidate for the church's pastorate.

How does a minister respond to comments by church members when they say, "we sure wish you would just come on and be our pastor?" A simple reply like, "Well, I made a commitment to God and this church when I accepted your call to be the interim pastor; it was clearly understood that this was our binding agreement. I am confident it's not God's will that I be considered."

Certainly, the interim pastor will experience the pain of separation when he concludes his work with the church. Moving on is part of the territory when ministering in transitions.

#### ***F. THE CANDIDACY OF EXISTING STAFF***

What happens when an existing staff person wants to be eligible for the call?

Often, it's best for the search committee to consider this person as a viable candidate like the group views any prospective person. This does not mean that the committee is necessarily duty bound to entertain a staff person's candidacy; it does mean that the committee is making a statement that it is not automatically eliminating anyone from consideration.

Such a position might also allay negative responses from other church members for refusing to accept the staff member as a candidate. When taking this approach, the decision is made within the committee and not in the face of the congregation. A search committee would do well to adopt the process or procedure it feels led of the Lord to pursue in its search effort. Perhaps the committee could "go public" with their process by printing it in the church weekly paper to communicate their intentions to the membership. The congregation could see the strategy that any name submitted is a legitimate candidate.

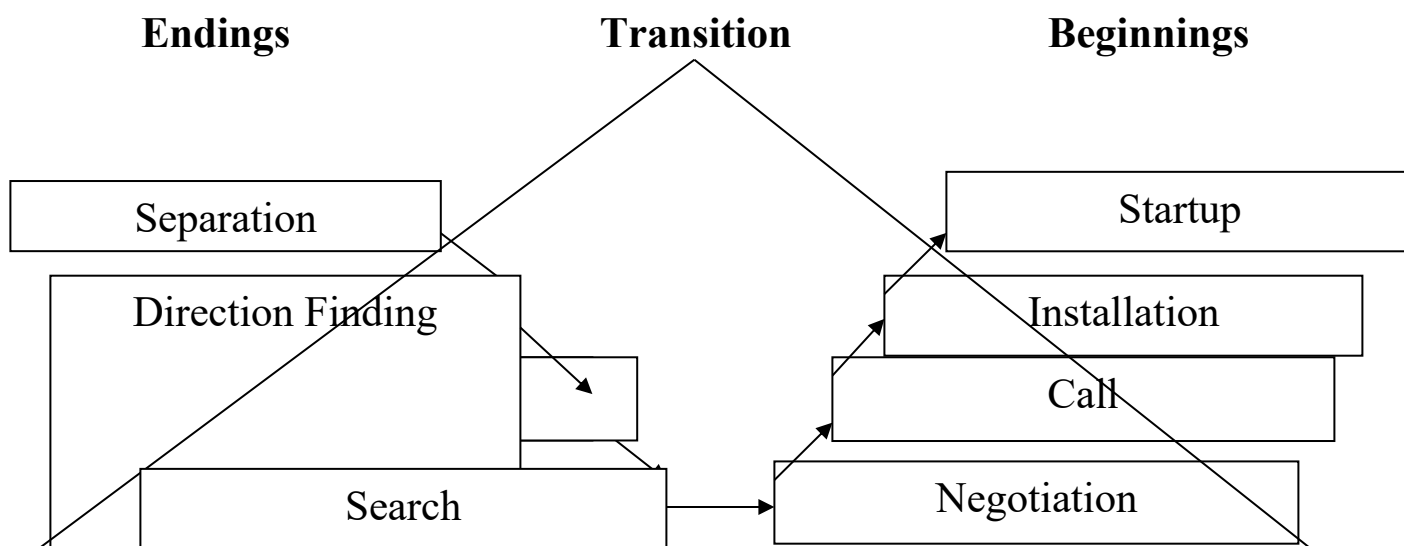
The final decision about who is to be recommended would be made by the pastor search committee. The committee must always focus on the person it feels led of God to present for the church family's consideration and not offer rationale as to why other candidates were not their choice. The simplest answer to any inquiries about other candidates might be: "Many worthy candidates were prayerfully considered; the person we are recommending is the individual God led us to present."

Most associate staff members would likely disqualify themselves, but on occasions this has become a serious problem. Some of the same reasons that are listed above in the "no candidate rationale" for the interim pastor might be helpful for the pastor search committee to review.

## Chapter Three

### Understanding The Transition

#### The Interim Period In The Life of A Local Church



Each phase of the interim period depicted by the graphic display is explained later in this chapter. The phases are never precisely separated from each other, but they overlap and intermingle with each other.

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From an organizational perspective, interim ministry in the local church can be described as the *management of change and transition* under the Holy Spirit's leadership.

Interim ministry begins with the end in mind – both ends -- the end of the permanent pastor's ministry and the end of the interim period just prior to the beginning of the new pastor's startup. It must be realized that before a beginning can occur, there must be an ending.

The interim segment in the life of a church can be described in three phases: endings, transition, and beginnings. The following outline serves as an overview of the entire interim process:

#### **Endings (Closure)**

1. Separation of former pastor (his leaving - positive or negative)

#### **Transition (In-Between-Times)**

1. Direction finding
2. Self-study
3. Search
4. Negotiation

#### **Beginnings (Startup)**

1. Calling the new pastor
2. Installation
3. Startup

## *A. ENDINGS*

William Bridges in his book, Managing Transitions: Making The Most of Change, says: “Before you can begin something new, you have to end what used to be. So beginnings depend on endings. (The problem is, people don’t like endings.) Change causes transition, and transition starts with an ending.” (Page 19) Bridges uses the term “neutral zone” in describing the interval between beginnings and endings.

Few people like endings because they produce changes. A productive interim process must begin with a good ending. Even though the former pastor’s departure might have been less than desirable, the closure of that segment of the church’s life must be redeemed. When termination occurs in the life of a church, much of the congregation’s future will be determined by how the closure of the pastor’s ministry is handled by the church family – the acceptance of the pastor’s departure, dealing with his absence, addressing anxieties about the present status and projected future.

Terminating a relationship is not accomplished by a mere announcement. Rather, termination is an ongoing process of events, feelings, actions, and interactions. Making a decision to leave and announcing this to the congregation is the beginning of a process, not the end. The process will continue for the pastor into his new ministry in the next church.

Certainly, all pastoral changes are based, as a rule, on God’s directives. On a human note, one of the major reasons for pastoral changes is related to the need of a pastor to change directions. Some want to be in an environment where their skills and gifts can be more effectively utilized. A “greater challenge” often expresses the intent of this type pastor. Then, some pastors want a “haven of rest” where they can experience healing from hurts in a previous pastorate. How does this affect the church that the pastor left? Does the membership understand the reason why the pastor decided to leave?

A church must have an adequate understanding about how pastorates end if it expects to have a productive future. Bridges states that, “The single biggest reason organizational changes fail is that no one thought about endings or planned to manage their impact on people.” (Bridges, Page 32).

No one knows when endings begin. In some instances, it could be said that a pastor’s ministry never got started before he left. Then, occasionally, a few church members become so “possessed” with a certain pastor and his family that they never really let go of the former leader and never accept the new pastor.

Too, a few pastors experience such a productive ministry in one church where their gifts were graciously recognized and used challenges abounded, and most objectives achieved, that it is difficult to really engage the next pastorate. In time, the next church served becomes a disappointment, and as a result, the pastor never actually connects with the new church. Sometimes, such an experience might result in a conflicted relationship between the pastor and his new congregation.

“Why are you leaving?” This is perhaps the question most frequently asked when a pastor announces his resignation. The answers are as many as there are pastors who move to a new church setting. The most frequent reply is “I am following God’s leadership.” Of course, this should be the primary motive in all moves.

How do church and pastor conclude their ministry? Saying goodbye is not always easy, but the way a pastor and congregation separate is tremendously significant in terms of impacting the transition process for both. William Bridges makes the following observation: “More beginnings abort because they were not preceded by well-managed endings and neutral zones than for any other reason.” (Page 52)

Termination or separation is a definite aspect in the process of transition. The word “termination” is being used here in a broad sense and not what some consider a negative experience. Basically, the concept is one of closure.

Most pastors leave a church family on good terms. As difficult as it is, closure can be a time of celebration of what God has done with the mutual ministries of pastor and people. Incalculable contributions are often made during a pastor’s tenure. The glad-sad conclusion can be a powerful testimony of what God has done among His people in a particular body of believers. Positive closure between the primary spiritual leader and the flock can result in rich dividends.

The status of a church “suddenly without a pastor” is not ordinarily one of chaos and confusion, but when a congregation loses its most visible leader, the members experience mixed feelings and demonstrate such with a variety of concerns and responses. Not all separation experiences can be viewed as positive and productive. It is grossly inappropriate for committed Christians to part company without deeply caring for the local body of Christ they have mutually worked to nurture, develop, and protect.

Regardless of the relationship between pastor and church, several possible conditions might be anticipated. The following list offers insight into the condition of some church families at the conclusion of a pastor’s work. It also characterizes the organizational losses of these churches upon the pastor’s departure.

#### 1. Disorganization

On occasions, one will find personal disorganization on the part of the pastor. He has been so intricately involved in dealing with the church that is calling him that his attention has been diverted from his present ministry. It is difficult, at best, for a pastor to handle all the concerns before him in the process of a change in pastorates. Some matters may fall between the cracks during his decision-making and moving efforts. A few of the concerns immediately following the pastor’s departure are listed below.

- Uncompleted projects – ministries left unattended.
- Confusion – “Who is in charge - the remaining staff reports to whom?”
- Structural – who makes decisions or which committee has responsibility for what?

#### 2. Dissatisfaction

This feeling occurs in the minds of many church members, as well as, perhaps, the pastor. It is best for both pastor and members not to magnify petty grievances out of proportion.

#### 3. Unresolved issues

#### 4. Oscillation

Some church members revolve back and forth between the feeling of intra-dependence and extra-dependence.

a. Intra-dependence -- we are self-sufficient and things are in our control.

The church is a vehicle by which members can engage in ministry and witness.

b. Extra-dependence -- we are dependent upon someone outside ourselves (the pastor). The church is more of a resource, which exists to serve members’ needs.

### 5. Mesmerized by inertia

Sometimes, a church experiences a depletion of enthusiasm and loss of momentum. Committees, which relied upon the skills of the pastor, may feel lost.

### 6. Disengagement

If a pastor ends his ministry on June 30, in all likelihood he started leaving, in his mind at least, around February 1. It is rare, but on occasions some church members never disengage the former pastor, and some pastors never disengage their former church.

This statement made by a church member to her pastor upon his leaving says much about positive disengagement: “You will be missed. There will be a place for you here, but it will not be the same place. We will replace you, just as you will be replacing someone else where you are going to serve.”

Church members cannot transfer their love from one pastor to another; that is impossible. However, church members must transfer their loyalty to the new pastor.

All these matters influence the church’s life – the members’ attitude and mood.

### 7. Involuntary Separation

When a pastor is asked or forced to leave, the church’s environment will be entirely different and likely call for special attention by the interim pastor. If a situation is severely conflicted, a third party conflict management consultant could be a productive resource person.

An interim pastor can serve as a healer in a disputed incident. His labor can also be designed to assist the church restore its self-confidence, positive image, and self-esteem.

A church’s membership needs to be reminded that everything is not ending. Much of what they have previously experienced will continue. Even when a pastor’s separation devastates a congregation, the body should be reminded that it is only a *piece* of its life and not its *whole* life that is coming to a close.

## ***B. TRANSITION (IN-BETWEEN-TIMES)***

The transition or in-between-times in the life of a vacant church is not altogether unlike the Israelites leaving Egypt and wandering in the wilderness for forty years before entering the promise land. Although each of these three stages is significant, the transition time is the most crucial. A productive transition experience can build upon a good ending or redeem a bad ending, while ensuring a better prospect for a fruitful beginning for the next pastor. So, perhaps more than any other, the biblical metaphor “wilderness” emerges most strongly as the term for a church “in-between-pastors.”

The wilderness is that place of:

1. Altered relationships
2. Sudden freedom
3. Uncertain leadership
4. Possible deprivation
5. Temptations
6. Disappointments

How much better off we were in Egypt with our (former pastor).

7. Hopes
8. Faith



The transition period is a place where many fears grip the members, but also where the hopeful future takes on new promise. Wilderness becomes a paradigm for the interim time.

Again, Bridges in his book on “Transitions” states: “While it is essential to build into the transition period temporary systems for getting people through the wilderness intact, you need to do more than just sustain the system. You need to capitalize on the opportunity that the neutral zone provides to do things *differently and better.*” (Page 39)

Some ministers are more capable wilderness leaders than others are. The interim pastor needs to give serious attention to the wanderings of church members and leaders during the time of transition. The time between pastors can be used effectively with the leadership of a sensitive interim pastor.

Parenthetically, John the Baptist could serve as a model of for interim pastors. He knew his role as forerunner a forerunner of our Lord. It’s obvious he covered an interim period in the life of the kingdom. “He (new pastor) must increase, but I (interim pastor) must decrease.”

An opportunity exists during the interim segment of the church’s life to do some evaluation and planning which could strengthen the congregation’s ministry. Although these concerns will be covered in more detail in other parts of this workbook, they are placed here in outline form to show the flow of the interim process.

The four areas for consideration during the transition experience are:

#### 1. Direction Finding

It is interesting that as many times as a church changes pastors that some church members do not remember what the congregation did the last time they were without a pastor. Although the church has done this before, it still seems to be a strange process. A church will likely experience some confusion when a pastor leaves.

The first item on a “pastorless” church’s agenda is to determine the direction they will take during the interim period. Who will be leading during the vacancy segment? Who will be preaching each Sunday? Will there be someone to visit the hospitals, conduct funerals, and perform weddings?

Seeking the services of a competent interim pastor should be one of the first matters considered by the church. Information designed to assist a church in calling an interim minister is found in the last chapter of the workbook. Some church families have sizable staffs and the different ministries are proportionately assigned to staff members. Care should be taken not to expect the existing staff to assume an excessive number of additional responsibilities while attempting to maintain their regular tasks simultaneously.

Some churches develop a transition team or interim planning committee to cover the needs during the interim period. Other congregations ask an existing committee or group to take responsibility for offering guidance during the time of transition.

A sample description for a transition team is placed on subsequent pages of this chapter.

## 2. Self Study

“Who are we and what are we about” are two of the most crucial concerns a church seeking a new pastor must address. A third critical point is an effort to determine where the church prefers to go in the future. A self study does not require a full blown six to nine month long range planning effort. What the church is seeking is a snapshot of itself in order to get a perspective of where it intends to go and how it plans to get there. If you don’t plan your own future, someone else will likely determine it for you. Chapter Four of the manual discusses this process.

## 3. Search

After determining who and what you are as a body of believers and discerning where you feel lead to go, the committee is more adequately prepared to pursue its assignment of searching for a pastor. Having developed a picture of the church, the committee needs to also develop a picture or profile of the pastor who will be the best “fit” or “match” for their congregation’s life and ministry.

Following the assessments mentioned earlier, the committee should have adequate insight about the kind of leadership the church needs based on its study efforts and pastor profile before it looks seriously at the first resume or ever gets “in the car.” The search process will eventually evolve into a “face-to-face” interaction that must go beyond all the facts, figures, and profiles created on paper. Some committees are tempted to go only by feel and intuition in their search efforts. Mistakes are made on occasions when a search team considers potential candidates on the basis of how they like them. This is no time for a beauty contest.

It is true that at some point the personal chemistry must begin to mesh, but this is the combined result of using objective criteria, and relying upon spiritual discernment and practical wisdom. More information on the search effort is placed in the following chapters of the workbook.

## 4. Negotiation

Although negotiation has to do with coming to terms with a pastoral candidate about housing, salary, and benefits, negotiation goes far beyond the mere consideration of dollars and accommodations. The nature of the proposed “pastor-people” relationship is a priority in all considerations with a prospective candidate. Discussing worship and leadership styles is most significant in determining a possible match. All of these concerns will be covered in other parts of the workbook, especially in chapters four through eight.

## ***C. BEGINNINGS***

The beginnings segment of the interim process has some similarities to the endings in that the beginnings involve the re-establishment of mutual identification between the new pastor and the church family, while the endings portion involved dis-engaging the former congregation. The following are aspects of the beginnings process:

### 1. Installation

### 2. Startup

Material dealing with the startup a new pastor is found in Chapter 10 “Engaging the pastor.”

When a church has had a productive interim experience, it will have a much better opportunity of calling and retaining a new pastor. Also, there is less likelihood that the new called pastor will fall prey to becoming an unintentional interim minister limited to a “short stay” as described below.

## **Article #2: The Un-Intentional Interim Church**

(An article that might be printed in church newsletter or bulletin)

Much is being said these days about the intentional interim pastor. The phrase refers to an experienced minister who is called to a church to serve temporarily during the “in-between-pastors” period of the congregation’s life. The interim pastor and the congregation set specific goals.

Have you heard of the un-intentional interim pastor? On occasions another name is used: “buffer pastor.” He is called to a church as any other minister, but because of unusual circumstances, his ministry is short-lived.

This pastor is a called man of God, adequately trained, has a good track record of experience, productive leadership skills, and obviously gifted for the ministry. When he accepts the call to the church, everything evidences a marvelous opportunity for both the church family and the new pastor. He anticipates a long and fruitful ministry.

The pastor arrives on the field with enthusiasm and optimum motivation. Without doubt, the new church will be responsive to his guidance and receptive to his ministry—as have previous churches served in other locations.

Then, slowly, things don’t seem to fall into place as expected. Church members rebuff even the smallest gestures by the new pastor. Something is amiss, but it’s difficult to pinpoint the cause. The honeymoon ends abruptly and enthusiasm dwindles quickly.

One would expect comparisons with the previous pastor; however, the “he doesn’t do like our former pastor” syndrome becomes an obsession. The new pastor almost has to stand in line to address a committee meeting, and his input is all but ignored.

What’s the problem? The church is not open to a new and different ministry in many respects because it still lives in the glory days of old or is held captive by the memory of a former pastor. When interviewing the new pastor, the search committee said they “wanted to grow,” but what was discussed on the idea level is not what the church accepted on the action level.

The new pastor realizes he is battling with shadows, myths, and legends. The church members have their own agenda, and it is not likely that anything can be done until the memories fade away and the membership is acceptable to a different and new style of leadership and ministry. Any hint of change frightens the members.

The pastor becomes an un-intentional interim—his ministry does not last long.

It could be that the unresponsive congregation and mistreatment has nothing to do with the new pastor as a person. Certainly, there could be times when a pastor may play havoc and run roughshod over a congregation, but this is rare.

The new pastor's skills and commitment are never doubted; rather it is his very being which is questioned because the sacred space reserved only for the former spiritual leader has been usurped, or the congregation is consumed by thoughts of "the good old days."

The transition between pastors is one of the most critical segments in a church's life. Much preparation can be done in order to ensure an orderly move from one leader to another. Trying to fill the vacancy in record time doesn't help matters.

Such an approach might prevent a congregation from becoming an "*unexpectedly interim church*."

### **Interim Transition Team**

During the interim period in the life of a church, ambiguities may arise, and polarization might occur between those who want to rush forward and those who want to hold back. Staff members possibly become overloaded and priorities might become confused, information sometimes gets miscommunicated, and a few vital tasks are neglected. Occasionally, uncertainty turns into frustration.

People don't "feel" the change, they actually "feel" the loss.

The Transition Team or Committee (Interim Steering Committee or Interim Planning Team) is a leadership group that assists the church move through the interim period. The members of this committee do not compose an independent decision-making body, but rather serve as a coordinating team to insure adequate communication, while seeking the cooperation of all members and helping them to preserve unity within the church family.

The members serve as a temporary leadership group. The effort is designed to monitor the church's progress and offer guidance during the interval.

The committee is elected or appointed in the appropriate manner approved by the church family.

The term of office is limited to the duration of the interim period.

Members must be thoroughly acquainted with the policies, history, program, staff, structure, life and ministry of the church.

The committee, as a rule, is composed of five to seven people.

The constituency might include people who are already serving in leadership positions such as: deacon chairman, finance committee chairman, and personnel committee chairman. Some congregations call this component "the administrative committee."

If the church has a multiple staff, a particular staff member could serve as "staff coordinator" if the interim pastor is not given this assignment.

The interim pastor usually serves on this committee as well.

The group can give the church a sense of confidence and security that "all things" are being attended. They would serve as a temporary vehicle for getting people through the "wilderness wandering" intact.

The committee would consider the following tasks:

1. Work with the interim pastor on concerns and issues within the congregation.
2. Provide leadership for managing the interim session.
3. Assist the church family in determining ways to meet established goals during the interim period.
4. Help in considering the developmental tasks. (These planning components will be considered later in the conference.)
5. Serve as an information source for the congregation. (This results in making members feel included and connected to the whole, while helping eliminate confusion, rumors, anxiety, or apathy.)
6. Offer realistic feed-back on concerns that might surface.
7. Help the church to “normalize” the interim experience.
8. Consider any changes that might be needed for the “in-between time.”
9. Help the church deal with its losses.
10. Work toward insuring a breakthrough rather than a breakdown.
11. Interpret setbacks and disadvantages as new entry points for adventuresome ministry.
12. Seek opportunities to brainstorm new answers to old problems.
13. Provide a ready access to the church’s grapevine.
14. Assist the church to resist the natural impulse for premature closure and prevent the members from “squeezing out” any dissent.
15. Help the organization adequately understand and properly adhere to adopted policies and procedures.

*Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt  
in a hurry,  
but it took forty years to get Egypt out of the people.*

## **Chapter Four**

### **Planning The Work**

Most experiences and events that produce meaningful results do not happen accidentally. The old adage “plan your work and then work your plan” has much merit for the ministry of pastor search committees. Occasionally, but often enough to merit reference, some search groups are too eager to catapult out of the church house and onto the road. Then, some teams are ready to start before they begin. Thorough planning will prevent a haphazard approach to the search process and save the committee untold frustration and disappointment.

After the committee is elected and trained, where does the search effort begin?

#### ***A. Engaging in Prayer***

Determining objectives will be discussed in the next chapter of this manual, but it must be stated here that the overall goal of the search process is to discover and commit to doing God’s will. Prayer should be the committee’s most important activity. The Holy Spirit is the group’s primary counselor.

Consider the following references and add your selections as well:

Jeremiah 33:3; Matt. 18:19; Luke 11:9; Luke 18:1; Romans 8:26-27; I Cor. 7:5; Phil. 4:6; I Thess. 5:17; James 5:16

God has already selected the person He wants to serve as the next pastor. This conviction does not make the committee’s task easier. Prayer and obedience are indispensable for the fulfillment of God’s will.

Without question the “pastorless period” in the life of a church will be saturated with prayer more often and with greater intensity than at any other time in the congregation’s life. Even when the maintenance committee meets to discuss a leak in the roof, the people on the committee will not only pray about the roof, but also for the pastor search effort.

The search committee might choose to devote one of its first sessions entirely to prayer. Certainly, each meeting of the group will begin and end with earnest petitions. Perhaps the closing prayer time could be a practice in which each person offers a brief, but specific request for the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Individual members may take a particular assignment to pray about during their personal devotion time.

#### ***B. Establishing Some Agreements***

The people serving on the committee need to perceive their work as being on a spiritual journey! It must be acknowledged that God is going to stretch the faith experience of all the committee participants during the interim. The circle of friendship will draw tighter with each passing week as the group labors to determine God’s will for the life of their church. The members should expect God to do a mighty work in and through their lives.

Commitment to the task should not go without being stated. Much time, energy, and effort must be invested in the search process. The committee’s task should take priority over other church activities.

The committee should be responsive to any and all concerns expressed by the church’s membership. When a parishioner suggests a name of a prospective candidate, the search committee should give it

serious consideration. It would be best if the committee took the lead in requesting a resume of someone suggested by a church member, rather than the inquiry coming from someone not serving on the search group.

Be alert to ensure that the committee focuses only on the pastor-candidate being recommended to the church. Some church members might inquire about a person whose name they submitted that was not the final candidate for presentation. The group could reply simply by pointing out that many, many worthy candidates were considered. Many of these were exceptional prospects, but the group is convinced that God's will is being accomplished in recommending the candidate they are offering for the church's call.

Search committees should agree to be unanimous in their final recommendation. It is difficult to expect the congregation to demonstrate a unified response in voting to call a candidate if the committee is not at one in their decision. Unanimity is not realized by using pressure or coercion. The group must be characterized by sensitivity to the perspective of all its members. The Holy Spirit will give spiritual discernment to the all members as they yield to Him.

Commit early on in the effort to refuse being in a hurry. God is never in a hurry to do anything. Trust in His timing. Refuse to be pressured by any individual, group, or the entire congregation in rushing the process. At the same time, be patient with the larger body of believers as you expect them to be patient with God and the work of your group. It would not be viewed as a lengthy vacancy if the search process took one month for every one year the former pastor served. An article entitled "How Long Does It Take To Call A Pastor" is found at the end of this chapter.

Guard confidentiality adamantly. No prospect's name under consideration should be disclosed to anyone outside the committee. Every effort should be made to protect the ministry of any pastor being reviewed by the committee. If a candidate's name is revealed early on in the search effort, some church member might know the pastor and critique him, while sharing negative impressions with other church members, even though the pastor is not a top candidate.

Do not be easily discouraged in your work. Be prepared for some disappointments along the way. Even in the face of spiritual trauma, God always works redemptively. Take care that the group does not expect whistles, bells, fireworks, or earthquakes to precede God's revelation in the final candidate of His choice. The best way to describe how a committee will be certain of God's will is simply to say, "you will know."

### ***C. Educating The Congregation***

One normally assumes the larger body has an adequate understanding of the interim period's unique dynamics, as well as the search process and assignment. This may or may not be an accurate assessment of the congregation's perceptions. Every church does not function exactly alike in its vacant interval. Specific tasks are often given to different groups or committees within in the pastorless church. For instance, the deacons might be charged with the responsibility of negotiating for an interim pastor. In other instances, the same committee assigned the pastor search effort will also have the duty of securing the interim pastor.

On occasions, especially where a church body is unfamiliar with the way a new pastor is sought and recommended, the search committee would profit from going public, in a summary fashion, with the strategy it intends to use in efforts to fulfill the assignment. It has proven to be amazing how quickly many church members make a similar remark such as, "I cannot remember what we did the last time we were without a pastor."

In some situations where the vacating pastor has stayed a long time, a church may be at a total loss as to what needs to be done. The better part of wisdom contends that the search group presents only one candidate in view of the church's call to that individual. Occasionally, a few churches might expect two or three candidates to be brought before the church family for one to be selected out of the group. The latter procedure can create bedlam, might be likened to a lottery system, and is to be aggressively discouraged.

A well-trained and experienced interim pastor can make an incalculable contribution during the interval in more ways than merely "filling the gap." He can help the fellowship interpret the vacancy period, as well as offering personal ministry and leading in worship through a preaching and teaching ministry.

The next chapter presents material designed to help assess the congregation's needs as it prepares to seek its next primary spiritual leader. An addendum (Chapter 12) is placed in this workbook addressing the work of the interim pastor and more information on what can be expected during this vacancy period.

Publishing articles in the bulletin or newsletter pertaining to the interim segment and search process might benefit the church as a means of helping members come to terms with the struggles of the interim process and gain insight on what to expect in the search efforts.

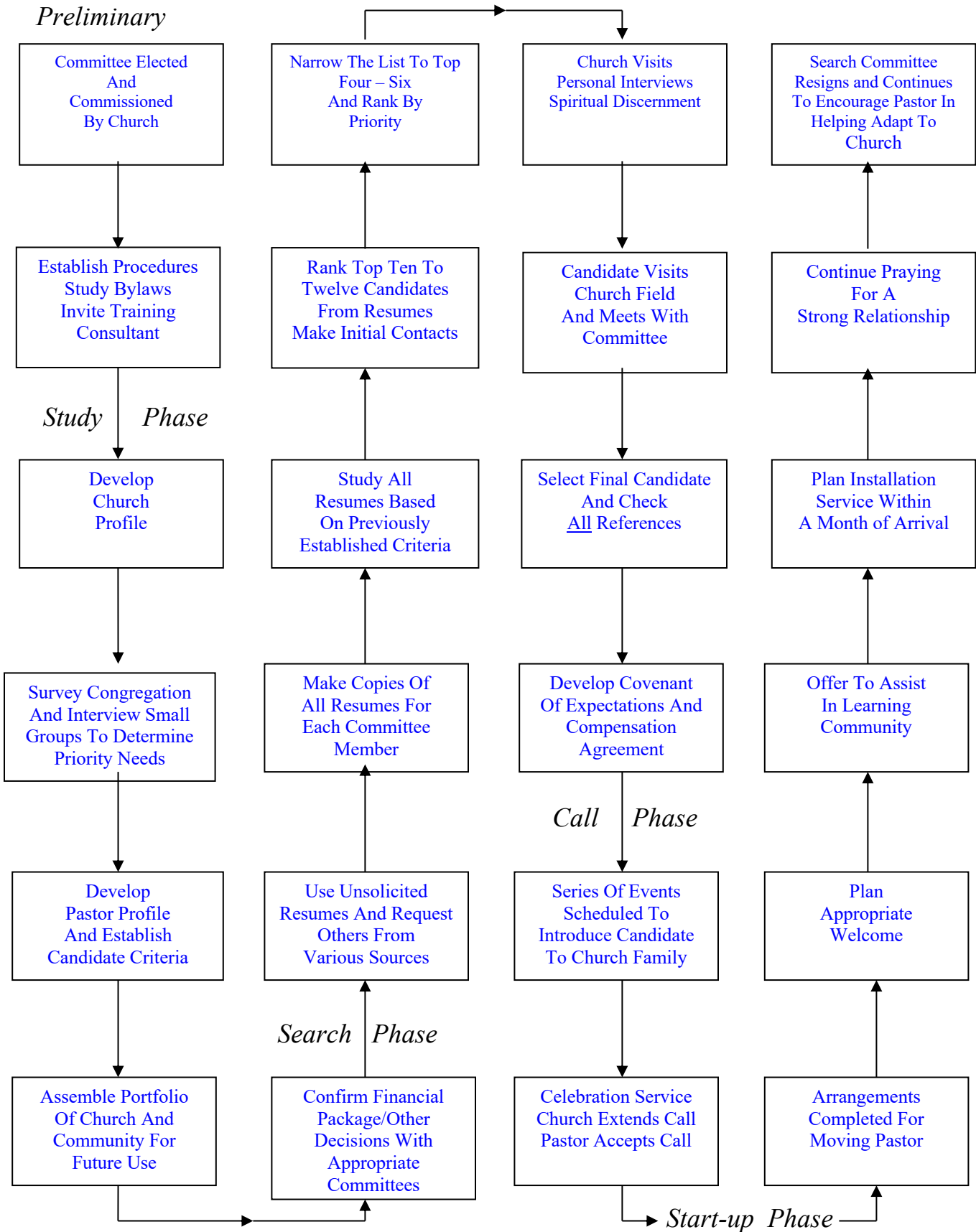
Some congregations initiate a transition team or committee to provide leadership during the interim. This group is responsible for ensuring that ministries are maintained and that administrative work is cared for efficiently.

#### ***D. Developing A Process***

The committee would do well to construct a plan or strategy to use as a guide for its efforts. It is true that "without a vision the people perish" and also that "without a plan the people panic." Some orderly approach or arrangement of sequential events will prevent many frustrating experiences. A flow chart is found at the end of this chapter as an example that a committee might consider using. This kind of instrument is merely a platform upon which the Holy Spirit can perform a great work.



PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE PROCESS FLOW CHART



## ***E. Informing The Congregation***

Periodic reports made to the church family will broaden the base of ownership, alleviate some anxiety, and enhance the sense of congregational responsibility. Information can be distributed in a variety of ways. Verbal reports from the pulpit during the worship service, excerpts in the Sunday bulletin or the church newsletter, and a brief sharing time in the business meetings, are a few ways committees might consider communicating with the church family.

Often, the actual substance of the report is less significant than the fact that efforts are being made to stay in touch with the final decision-making body -- the church family. The reports need not be extremely factual like, "we have received forty-five resumes, made fourteen visits, and interviewed seven candidates." The reports need to be more general than specific until the time the committee is prepared to bring the candidate to the church for a vote to call. Again, the effort is designed to maintain adequate contact with the larger body.

The frequency of such sharing times might be every four to six weeks.

### **Article #3: How Long Does It Take To Call A Pastor?**

(An article that might be printed in your church's newsletter or bulletin)

Do you like short or stock-answers to significant questions? At times, such responses are merited. Consider the answer, "It all depends," to the question which forms the title of this article. How long does it actually take to call a new pastor for your church? The answer "depends" on several considerations.

The word "adequate" best expresses the time period one can expect instead of actual time segments. Adequate time for one church family may be different for another.

A church needs adequate time for their grief process to be addressed. In some respects, a pastor's leaving is like a death in one's family. The big difference being that the "body" stills exists while serving some where else. On occasions, some church members could even be angry because the previous pastor left. People need time to deal with their emotions. Of course, sometimes a church might be relieved when a pastor leaves.

Church members need to work through their feelings of uncertainty. The absence of the church's primary servant-leader shifts the balance of the congregation's life - it profoundly affects the whole church system. Because of the change, a church is at a critical turning point in its life. Uncertainty could lead a church to be too hasty in its decision to "get a new pastor in a hurry."

Who is he or who are we -- which is the more important question? A church needs adequate time to reassess its present status. Who are we under God as a unique body of believers? Making sure we understand our nature provides a better platform of readiness for God's will to be revealed to us.

Perhaps the most important question church members must decide is "where are we going -- what's our vision for the future?" If you don't know where you are going, it doesn't make much difference who is going to lead you. On the other hand, if the future is going to be an extension of the past, leadership is not an important consideration. With this in mind, a short or long period of time in calling a pastor doesn't matter that much.

Adequate time is needed to ensure the best match possible.

All things considered, seldom does a church call a new leader in less than six months following the former pastor's departure. It might bring comfort to some churches to understand that it would not be a negative experience if the congregation were without a pastor one-month for each year the previous pastor served.

Above all else, the most important component in calling a new pastor is the church's *level of readiness*. God gets us ready for what and whom He is getting ready for us. He always works at both ends of the spectrum at the same time. God will reveal His will when the church family is ready to receive it.

## Chapter Five

### **Determining The Needs**

It is much easier to find something if you know precisely what you are looking for!

The starting point for pastor search committees is not deciding what kind of vehicle the group is planning to use for travel. An enormous amount of work is necessary long before anyone picks up a telephone or gets in a car.

This imperative cannot be overstated. The search team must become engaged in serious studies and information gathering before the group decides whom to contact or where to go. Strange, but true -- you cannot get there from here -- that is, if you do not know where you are now. It is impossible to make productive decisions without having adequate information.

Again, which question is most important: “who is he or who are we -- who will the candidate be and what will he be like, or who are we and what are we like as a body of believers?”

Another inquiry that must be prioritized is, “what do we want in a pastor, or what do we need?” A simple response to this question is, “we want what we need!” Certainly, God’s will, first and foremost, is to offer a church what it needs.

Does a church need the same kind of pastor it had twenty-five years ago, or does it need a pastor with a different leadership style and philosophy of ministry for today? Does the committee simply conclude the need to duplicate the previous pastor’s perspective of worship, witness and ministry? Making such evaluations is no indication that earlier leaders were incompetent.

In order to answer these crucial questions, the search committee would profit from a thorough study and analysis of the church’s life, history, context, and other pertinent issues that impact its health, vitality, and potential growth. ***Making an effort to engage in such research could be the committee’s most critical and productive work.*** Some of these subjects will be presented in this chapter for the committee’s review.

If a church is going to realize the kind of mix/match between their church family and the new pastor, somebody needs to get an accurate reading on exactly “what kind of church are we?” A consultant was helping a congregation in a town-like meeting forum, and he asked the group what was their church really like. Most members responded by naming winsome characteristics. After about thirty minutes of these responses, an elderly lady stood up and said, “I have been here for 34 years, and it seems to me that we are talking less about what we really are, and more about what we think we are and perhaps want to become.”

An attempt to analyze a church’s status usually leads to a better understanding of that particular church’s situation. Having an accurate understanding of who we are, what we are like, the way we operate, and what we do with our people and resources will more adequately prepare the congregation in determining what kind of new spiritual leader it needs. A church is more likely to get a vision from God about what He wants it to become and where He wants it to go if the church has a reasonable understanding of who and where they are now.

*Making such an assessment is as much a spiritual preparation process as it is organizational development or mere mechanical evaluation.*

## ***A. Forming A Church Profile***

One instrument that provides insight into the church's progress is a ten year profile. This piece displays the church's statistical records of pertinent components such as membership, additions, budget receipts, mission giving, and average Sunday School attendance. A sample of the ten year profile is included for your information at the end of this chapter. Statistical data for your church can be obtained from the associational office or the South Carolina Baptist Convention research department.

Information can be gathered that could assist the church know more about itself and help the search committee have a greater understanding of the church's nature and how it functions. The following are methods of obtaining the data:

1. Direct observation
2. Researching and assessing documents such as annual reports, business meetings, bylaws, and communication pieces.
3. Questionnaires
4. Interviews
5. Group discussions
6. Town hall type forums

Personal or small group interviews could be conducted by search committee members to gain insight into the church's nature and concerns. Allowing all committee members to spread out into different groups would expedite the process.

A few topics for discussion might include warmth and support among church members, morale, openness to change, acceptance of new members, amount of conflict in the congregation, and decision participation.

Questionnaires can be obtained from the South Carolina Baptist Convention \_\_\_\_\_. (Jim Herron might help with this process if needed.)

The following questions offer a platform to aid the committee and congregation to arrive at an adequate profile on their church family.

### **1. Identity: *Who Are We?***

The search process for a new pastor must be sensitive to the dimension of your church's identity.

How would you describe your church? No, not what it should be, but what it really is.

Identity has to do with a church's special nature. All churches are not exactly alike. Identity is the unique way these particular people live with their faith in God and historical heritage. Identity is built from your church's story, its people, its great moments, and its weak moments.

Identity speaks of what is important and what must be done or not done. It has to do with the heroes and heroines the church has known, the victories it has won, and the hardships it has survived.

This is who we are; this is what we are like.

Identity also has to do with mindset—with your spirit and attitude. A church's mindset creates and maintains the atmosphere of its life. Is it one of openness, trust, and love or suspicion and distrust?

Your sense of identity will determine the kind of leadership style you are looking for in a new pastor. If you don't fully understand who you are, it will be difficult for you to decide what kind of pastor you need and want.

## **2. Program: *What Do We Do?***

Program refers to the visible level of a church's life, the activities the church is engaged in, the things listed in the church paper or bulletin, and the meetings people attend.

Program has to do with activities held inside the church buildings as well as ministries away from the church facilities, like the crisis center, the mission trips taken by the youth in the summer, the events for senior adults, special music preparation; then, of course, sponsoring missions like language ministries.

At the time of a pastoral change, some members see the potential for change primarily in terms of programs they want in the future which they think are lacking or non-existent, or programs they feel need to be de-emphasized in the future, or perhaps eliminated altogether.

So, for some people, the ideal pastor is the one who is most likely to develop the programs certain members want. As important as programs are, they should not take on disproportionate concerns in the pastor selection process.

## **3. Process: *How Do We Act?***

How do we make decisions in our church? Who makes the decisions? When are the decisions made?

Where does the authority and power reside in our church? How is authority exercised? Who is in charge? Of course, Christ is the head of the church and the saviour of the body, but He entrusts His church into our care.

Process has to do with the way we operate, the way we function, the way we relate to each other, and the way we treat each other. Process is how communication occurs in the church. An inadequate communication process often causes conflict in the church. The correct information—delivered by the authorized persons through the proper vehicle—will do much to create and maintain harmony while, at the same time, prevent conflict.

Process is how we go about doing church.

How does the church relate to the pastor and staff? What role does the pastor play; where does he fit into the scheme of things? What are your expectations of a pastor? How are the other ministerial staff members seen in the eyes of church members? Are they hired employees or called people of God?

Process—how a church functions—will say much about the kind of leadership style you want in your prospective pastor. Is he a collaborative or authoritative leader -- one who seeks consensus or one who demonstrates individual authority in important decisions?

A pastor must lead with authority. Remember that there is a difference between being authoritative and being an authoritarian. Authoritative means one has knowledge, experience, skills, and training which merit “followship” on the part of the congregation. An authoritarian type is more like a dictator.

#### **4. Direction: *Where Are We Going?***

What is your vision for your church? Do you have a vision? If you were asked to share your vision for your church, how would you respond? “I want it to be a great church.” Too nebulous! You must be more specific.

You should be prepared to articulate your vision for your church to prospective candidates whom you might consider to be your pastor.

#### **5. Search: *What Do We Want/Need?***

What kind of pastor do you need? Certainly, you want God’s leadership, but how do you know when God’s leadership is obvious? How will you determine what kind of pastor you want and need? Some things have already been referred to which might help you in a search effort.

There is a question you need to consider. Is what people say they want really what they will respond to?

At times, a congregation will search for a certain kind of pastor-leader, communicate their enthusiasm for a certain church lifestyle or emphasis, and then win that prospective pastor to the vision of that kind of ministry.

There are times when we discover that what was wanted on the “idea” level is not what people are prepared for on the “action” level. A church must be able to act on what they say they want and need. Misunderstandings cause pain and disappointment.

#### ***B. Developing A Candidate Profile***

The committee would be wise in considering scriptural qualifications of a pastor. Give consideration to reading the following selections. I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4. Other passages also need to be reviewed by the group.

Since the search committee has been assigned the responsibility of leading the church family in securing a new pastor, start among the members on your committee in forming a candidate profile. Your perspective will be significant in arriving at an adequate profile since you are likely representative of the congregation’s constituency.

Perhaps this task would be the agenda for the first two or three meetings after you have worked through your organizational efforts. Developing criteria for determining viable candidates will give the group a sense of direction in making decisions about who will be considered.

In order to achieve this objective, you will, of course start by asking God. As emphasized earlier, prayer will be your most significant activity and the Holy Spirit’s leadership will be an equally indispensable

resource. Record each member's impressions in some orderly fashion and display these findings on a flip chart so all can be visible.

Some basic points to consider in a profile are:

Spiritual gifts	Experience	Compensation needs
Education	Age	Membership size
Training	Family	Type location

The most urgent need in Baptist churches today is *leadership*. Somebody must lead. According to New Testament practices, the pastor should be the primary spiritual leader among the people of God in the local church. One of the most frequent causes of church conflict is the pastor's role and leadership style and how the congregation perceives his role and responds to his leadership. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that another chief cause of dissatisfaction in churches is having a pastor who either does not know how to lead or chooses not lead at all.

The leadership grid on one of the following pages might assist committee members in discerning the type of leadership style the church needs. It may prove beneficial to show this grid to a potential pastor when you interview him. The grid is designed only to help people determine what might be a leader's normal approach to leading a congregation.

In reviewing this instrument, please remember that every possible church situation or decision cannot be covered or interpreted by a rigid point on a graphic line. A pastor who is wise will often exercise what this writer calls a "situational leadership" style. Different contexts call for a varied approach to leading or directing a group activity or decision-making process.

Pastors who are visionary leaders have spiritual gifts and practical skills in leading church members to demonstrate their trust and confidence in him as they embrace his vision and follow his leadership. The wording "members' input" on the grid must not be interpreted as expecting the pastor to ask permission for every imaginable thing he might do. You would not want your pastor to end up like one minister after being in a church for only three months who felt the need to "salute the water fountain" when he walked through the church hall.

The following list is provided as a starter piece to stimulate dialogue among search team members in an effort to determine the qualities desirable in a potential pastor.

### **Minister's Priorities**

1. He must be a spiritual leader—one who will be respected in this capacity.
2. He should be an example in holy living and moral conduct.
3. He should maintain a good financial record.
4. It is essential for a pastor to have a deep love for people, especially his members who call him to be an undershepherd.
5. His heart and soul should stay warm and compassionate for the unsaved, the sick, and bereaved as he makes his way to their homes to minister and witness.
6. He should give enough of his time to organization and administration to keep the organism alive and healthy, but not so much time that he neglects other areas of his ministry.



7. He should cooperate with the association and the convention in the denominational work concerning the mission and missions of the church.
8. A pastor should be the pastor of “all” the people.
9. Without apology, God’s undershepherd must put integrity above expedience, never manipulating people for personal gain.
10. Above all, he must be a man of prayer and a student of God’s word. The church has a right to expect God’s man to study and be prepared to preach and teach His Holy Word. When people come to the Lord’s house, they have a right to hear a “prepared sermon” on what God has to say to help them meet the needs of everyday living. The church has a right to expect a man of God to stay healthy spiritually and intellectually, not only by individual study but also by taking advantage of the various studies and growth conferences offered by the association, state, and convention-wide personnel when his schedule permits. A pastor should keep his people drinking out a stream instead of a “stagnant pool.”
11. A pastor also should take care of himself physically, taking some time away from the tension of his work to get proper exercise and diversion. An adequate amount of this diversion ought to include activities with his family, knowing that family responsibilities are as much a part of his ministry as church activities. *In short, he must learn the meaning and experience of sabbath.* (Italics are those of the workbook’s writer.)
12. If the potential pastor is married, his wife ought to be understanding and empathetic toward his ministry. She is a vital part of his ministry. It is important to know something about the candidate’s family.
13. As he advances in age and tenure at any church, the pastor must work at staying optimistic and positive in his attitude, work, and association with his members and fellow workers. (J. W. Harbin When The Pastor Leaves)

It would be good for a pastor search committee to discuss these qualities and assets with a potential pastor before he is ever extended an invitation to preach in view of **a call**.

The church family is certainly an invaluable source of input to aid in the effort of developing a candidate profile. The members’ concerns and attitudes could be registered by making a simple survey during a morning worship service. A few committees have tried other ways and times to secure this information, but the most productive approach is taking the survey during the worship hour. The sheets can be completed in about five minutes. Take the surveys up immediately after the members finish filling them out. Copies of the survey can be placed in a central location of the church after the service for those members who were not present the day the survey was made. A sample of a form is included in this chapter. This piece may be reproduced for the church’s use.

The committee would do well to also conduct interviews or listening sessions with small groups in the church.

## Church Member Survey

1. About what age person would you like for our next pastor to be, assuming that other characteristics are favorable? Check one.  
  - Age should not be a factor
  - Under 30
  - 30 – 39
  - 40 – 49
  - 50 – up
  
2. What preference, if any, do you have regarding the formal education.  
  - Formal education should not be a factor
  - At least college training
  - At least seminary training
  - Doctoral program in theology or ministry
  - Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Consider this list of typical activities of a pastor. In thinking of our church's pastor, our church's needs and its programs, on which of the activities should our pastor ideally spend the most time and the least time.  
  - a. Preparing sermons
  - b. Visiting church members
  - c. Counseling, advising individuals
  - d. Attending meetings of church functions
  - e. Visiting prospective church members
  - f. Office work, administration
  - g. Denominational (associational, state, et cetera)
  - h. Personal evangelism, soul-winning
  - i. Reading books, magazines
  - j. Personal prayer, Bible study
  - h. Providing leadership and casting a vision for the church

On which three should he spend the most time: \_\_\_\_\_

On which three should he spend the least time: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Please list briefly any qualities or characteristics you would especially like to see in a person serving as our pastor. Indicate any, which you feel, are of greatest importance.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. I would like to submit these name(s) to be considered as pastor. (Please write on back of sheet the address and any additional information available.)

It is not mandatory for the committee to make a report of its finding from this survey; rather, it is a matter of choice. At the same time, the group must keep in mind that the survey is a guide and not an absolute requirement by the church family.

On occasions, using a position description or a list of expectations in reviewing resumes of prospective candidates might help some search committees. If you have primary concerns about certain areas of ministry, such an instrument could assist the committee. It is best and easier to *inspect what you expect*. Generic models of these pieces are found on the following pages.

### **Specific Areas To Consider in Developing A Pastor Profile**

A rather comprehensive list of ministry skills is placed here for your review. The search team might find it helpful to consider these areas of ministry in attempting to determine the qualities most needed in your church's life. A suggested rating scale follows the list that committee members and/or other church members/groups might use in assessing the church's needs and developing a more specific pastor profile.

\_\_\_ **Administration** -- Managing and directing the church's day to day operations as well as discerning its members' spiritual gifts, assisting them focus their gifts for Kingdom effectiveness, and stewarding the financial resources for greatest Kingdom results.

\_\_\_ **Conflict Management** -- Managing processes and climates where opposition occurred as a result of differing viewpoints, directions, or personalities.

\_\_\_ **Counseling** -- Providing encouraging and constructive counsel personally, or through directing those in need to specialized, trained professionals or care-givers.

\_\_\_ **Equipping the laity for ministry** -- Encouraging and assisting God's children in the discovery and development of who they are in Christ (their passions, gifts, talents, skills and abilities for ministry) and the application of their Christian identity in the context of their daily living and church ministry.

\_\_\_ **Evaluating** -- Engaging in the process of comparing what is, to what ought to be, for the purpose of determining direction for ministry or areas of improvement.

\_\_\_ **Evangelism** -- Presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that people place their trust in Him as Savior and Lord.

\_\_\_ **Leadership Development** -- Developing leadership processes and skills in oneself and others which empowers you and them for mission and ministry.

\_\_\_ **Mentoring** -- Influencing the development of oneself and others through accountability found only in intentional relationships.

\_\_\_ **Motivating** -- Encouraging and inspiring other people, believers and non-believers, to discover and develop his or her full potential in Christ and His calling for their life.

\_\_\_ **Pastoral Care** -- Exhibiting a "shepherd's heart," that shows by spirit, word, action and presence an understanding of people, and their needs and provides personal care giving and/or empowers others for primary care giving.

\_\_\_ **Planning** -- Establishing strategies and action plans to achieve personal and congregational goals.

\_\_\_ **Preaching** -- Preparing and delivering clear and convincing sermons which motivate hearers to grow in their knowledge and appreciation of God that elicits loving, intelligent responses to Him.

\_\_\_ **Preparing** -- Developing spiritual climate and attitudes and which empower God's children to understand and accept God's purpose for their life.

\_\_\_ **Teaching** -- Utilizing my spiritual gifts and knowledge of God's word and of His world to lead other toward changes in attitudes, actions, behaviors, and lifestyles.

\_\_\_ **Visioning** -- Discerning God's identity, direction, mission, and preferred future for a congregation and then communicating that identity and mission in a realistic, credible manner where God's children accept the mission and move toward that future identity.

\_\_\_ **Visitation** -- Being among the people, members, and non-members alike, in their homes and work settings, to develop relationships.

\_\_\_ **Worship Leader** -- Planning, designing, and leading worship experiences that assist people to experience God and out of that experience they express gratitude, devotion and service to God.

Rank the ten highest skills in this list that you feel a new pastor should have in order to lead your church in accomplishing God's will. A ten would be the strongest need and nine the next strongest and so on through the final number one. As you see, you are to only select ten of the seventeen areas. Have someone compile the totals assigned each item to determine which areas are the priorities for the entire group.

Again, after the committee develops a satisfactory profile, reviewing various candidates will be much easier because you will be using objective criteria upon which to base possible considerations, as well as the Holy Spirit's guidance.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Considering The Candidates**

By this point, the search committee should have arrived at some definite understanding about the procedure it will use, the relationships among the group, values that will determine its decisions, and criteria for considering candidates.

#### ***A. Assimilating Criteria***

The committee needs to gather all the information about the kind of pastor the church needs by assimilating the materials used in the committee study and the survey findings taken from the church family. Writing out the criteria in a specific and orderly fashion will assist the group to ensure that it is staying on target with agreed upon objectives. These concepts were discussed in chapter four.

Often, there is a tendency to compare one candidate with another; this exercise is merely part of being human. The first comparative, however, must be done using criteria the committee has established to assist it in discovering the best possible candidate. No one questions the basic objective of finding and doing God's will for the church family. It must be referenced that the committee determined the needs earlier by prayer, study, and remaining sensitive to the Holy Spirit's counsel. The criteria will give the members a sense of direction as they sift through the numerous resumes that will be received.

So, developing a profile on your "ideal candidate" stating specific needs the committee senses that are required and desired for your church family will help immensely. This kind of instrument might also be included in letters of inquiry to certain candidates or sources from whom the committee requests information.

Obviously, some needs and concerns are intangible and not always detectable within written material. Using resumes is only one aspect of the search process. This effort will give the Holy Spirit a vehicle to communicate His will to the committee as multiple candidates are considered by using objective criteria in determining the most viable prospective pastors.

Incidentally, as referenced earlier, some people have reservations about distributing the results of the church survey. As an example, reporting to the congregation that the survey revealed a desire for a pastor between the ages of 35-40 years does not necessarily mean that the committee is obligated to stay exactly within these parameters. If the group feels led to recommend someone 44 years old, the survey compilation should not be an obstacle. The survey results are not designed to be a straitjacket for the committee; rather, the purpose of such input is to give the search committee a "reading" on where the church family is in its thinking.

#### ***B. Using Resumes***

The terms "resume" and "biographical sketch" are for the most part the same kind of information pieces. Both are prepared to provide churches with adequate information about a minister who might be interested in being considered by a church seeking a pastor. The word "resume" is used in this manual.

It is the better part of wisdom for a pastor search committee to work with printed resumes. Just a name and a few vague thoughts will not likely offer much to go on in trying to discern God's will. Some church members will possibly stop a search member in the church hall and say something like, "By the way, I

attended a funeral last week in a neighboring city and heard this outstanding pastor who conducted the service. Would you put his name on the search committee's list?"

Such a contact might well introduce the committee to a candidate, but more information is needed for that individual to be taken seriously. At the same time, when a suggestion of this nature is made, the committee should be sensitive in responding with care to such a request. It is better for the search committee to make a request for a resume directly from the candidate rather than asking the church member to secure the information.

Using printed resumes will save the committee much time and could prevent perennial frustration. Visiting a church to hear or talk with a pastor without the basic information about the person tends to short circuit the search process and abort the goal of seeking only those candidates who have the basic gifts and experiences determined by prayer, committee studies, and church member surveys.

Again, printing and providing the basic criteria agreed upon by the committee for each member should be an enormous benefit as the group begins to look at resumes.

### ***C. Soliciting and Receiving Resumes***

Where do resumes come from? How does a search committee receive them? What communication process can a group engage in to obtain information on pastors who might be interested in making a change in places of ministry?

The first sources are those resumes that come to the committee unsolicited. Usually, when a pastor resigns, that church is considered by some people to be "open." Friends of certain pastors will ask permission to send a resume to the vacant church. A cover letter ordinarily accompanies the resume.

At times, the person who makes the recommendation can be about as significant as the person who is recommended. When a search committee knows the source of the resume, that can often be a measure of assurance that the person is a viable candidate. Occasionally, a few pastors will send their own resume to churches. Each committee has to interpret the legitimacy of this strategy.

Sources for contacting to request resumes include:

- Friends and families of church members
- Local Baptist Association
- State Convention
- State Baptist Paper (hard copy and online)
- Baptist seminaries

A "word to the wise:" Do not accept another church's "left-over" resumes!

It bares repeating: the Holy Spirit can use any vehicle He chooses in order to bring certain churches into contact with minister-candidates.

## ***D. Reviewing Resumes***

An effort to handle a large number of resumes is no small task. The mere logistics can be demanding. What is more important is absorbing the material and trying to discern the Spirit's leading. The task becomes a little easier as committee members continue to read and evaluate the multiple resumes most groups receive.

A few pointers on reviewing resumes might be worth considering. The following list is neither exhaustive nor in priority order for the committee's attention.

- Dates of the candidate's birth, marriage, and ordination should be expected.
- The name of the church that ordained him is often included.
- Specific academic degrees received, and the names of the educational institutions should be listed along with the dates the respective degrees were received.
- The number of accredited colleges and graduate theological schools is increasing each year. If a committee has doubts about certain schools, make inquiry to a reliable information source. The Pastoral Ministries Department of the South Carolina Baptist Convention has a current copy of the work entitled Directory of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools. A committee may call (800-723-7242) to make an inquiry about a school.
- Be alert to blanks in the chronological sequence of ministry places. Ask why?

The appearance of a resume can say much about the candidate himself. It is true that some ministers might have their material professionally produced, but a resume that looks like it has been retrieved from a trash can also says something about the candidate. Given the widespread availability of modern technology, one should expect information pieces to speak well of the persons they represent.

Each committee should receive a copy of all resumes. A form that might help the committee keep track of the resumes is placed in this chapter. The form can serve as an index sheet. Each resume is given a number in the order it was received and individual members record the other few information items on the sheet.

At the beginning of the review process, resumes are examined by members away from committee meetings. A member assigns a quality by using the letters A through C. When the committee meets, a compilation is made of those candidates who received A's, B's, and C's. A comparison is sorted to determine those persons who received the most of each letters.

From this process, the committee will develop a list of the most likely candidates. The number should be from ten to twelve. These resumes are arranged in some order of priority for serious consideration.

Some of the resumes will be eliminated early in the process. Other resumes that could be potential candidates are saved for future use if needed.

***Remember: the intent is to seek the person who best matches the criteria established by the committee earlier in their times of prayer and study. Utilizing a profile in no way circumvents the Holy Spirit's leadership. Rather, the profile was prayerfully developed under His leadership.***

### ***E. Checking Statistics***

Data for any church aligned with the South Carolina Baptist Convention is available from the state convention and most associational offices. These reports cover a ten-year or less period for a particular church family. These statistics can offer a committee insight on a candidate's present ministry.

A quick source of basic information on every church affiliated with the SCBC can be found in the state convention's annual minutes. Most church staff members have a copy of this book.

### ***F. Contacting Candidates***

The search committee can use several ways to make an initial contact with prospective pastors. Much prayer must precede any communication process. One basic objective in the early contact is determining the candidate's interest. Keep in mind that most pastors know their resume is in circulation, unless the committee itself is making a specific request for information on the candidate for the first time. Although he might be aware that his resume has been distributed, a considerable amount of time could have passed and his situation changed by the time your group contacts him.

Some search teams write introductory letters to the top five or six candidates. The correspondence informs the candidate that the committee has the person's resume and that he can expect a follow-up telephone call soon to ask if he is still open to considering a move. In addition, basic information about the church might be included with the correspondence.

Then, there are search groups that do not use introductory letters, but make the phone conversation their first contact.

Both the initial or follow-up telephone contact tends to generate a personal touch, and much can be determined in a brief dialogue when the exchange is immediate and spontaneous. Using the phone can help a committee catch the spirit and attitude of the individual, as well as learn about his philosophy and style of ministry.

Form letters and a telephone contact sheet are provided in conjunction with this manual for committees that choose to use them. A few samples are found at the end of this chapter.

A few search strategies take the form of using surveys that the pastor is asked to fill out and return. On more than a few occasions, committees lose good candidates because many ministers do not wish to take the time to respond to lengthy forms.

More committees today are requesting audio or video tapes from candidates. This is done more frequently when traveling some distance to the pastor's present church is a major consideration. Although an audio tape can determine some things, the dynamics of the pastor's personality will be lacking.

### ***G. Deciding How***

After having narrowed the candidates to a smaller number and made the initial contact to determine their interest, the committee should be ready to begin a more in-depth dialogue with potential pastors. The telephone interviews, though brief, should have provided an adequate perspective about the spirit and



attitude of certain candidates. Almost without exception, some candidates will be dropped from the list based on the findings of the first contact. Some disclosure of the pastor's style, or philosophy of ministry, or special situation like a family need in terms of geographical location will necessitate eliminating some men.

The ten to twelve prospects will have been reduced to six or eight. The committee will begin preparing to follow-up on engaging these potential pastors.

The next procedural step brings some difference of opinion among committees. Should a group consider only one candidate and go all the way through the process to either elimination or extending a call; or should a committee entertain the possibility of talking with three or five candidates before deciding on the final recommendation?

Most committees are developing their strategy whereby the group considers only one person at a time, *seriously*. In considering only one person at a time seriously, the search team visits four to six prospective pastors before interviewing any of them. Now, if the visit requires traveling a great distance, a committee might make arrangements for an "awareness session" with the pastor while in that area.

When the group has heard four to six candidates, there is a strong likelihood that some will be eliminated because the mix does not appear to be right or the pastor's preaching is not up to the committee's expectations. Again, when it is determined that a certain person is no longer under consideration, the committee should contact that prospect immediately and inform him of their decision.

The committee's next regular meeting following the visit is used to critique the candidate's qualities, skills, abilities, and share each other's impressions about the experience. The search team repeats this process until their "short list" of pastors has been completed. It is at this point that the group begins the intensive interviewing.

In a training session with a pastor search committee, a member told the consultant who led the discussion period that he had served on a previous search committee and they called the very first person they heard. The member went on to explain, however, that their decision was made only after hearing four other candidates.

A second alternative strategy of considering candidates is to methodically contact a potential pastor to determine his interest, visit his church, and follow-up immediately with the interview process. Some committees repeat this procedure with the top six or so candidates before making a final decision.

Then, a third approach is to contact only one candidate and make arrangements to visit his church. A determination is made whether or not to continue considering the prospect after the visit. If there is mutual interest, the entire interviewing process is followed through in its entirety until the committee makes a decision either yes or no on that one individual before contacting, visiting, or interviewing another pastor.

One will likely hear that considering more than one candidate at time will result in a confusing effort in coming to a decision. In the final analysis, it is not so much a matter of comparing one person with another. When a search team allows the criteria/pastor profile previously established to be an objective guide, seeks diligently the Holy Spirit's leadership, while using spiritual discernment and practical wisdom in their decision-making process, God's choice will become evident.

One has to wonder if there is only one way that is exactly right or exactly wrong!

Without question, the Holy Spirit cannot be put in a straightjacket. Both clergy and lay people can discern the Lord's will in following the Spirit's guidance without the necessity of an ironclad procedure.

### ***H. Compiling A Church/Community Portfolio***

Another component that will contribute to the search process is information on your church and community. Data about your church family and community will be most helpful for any candidate you consider. The point in the procedures when you share the information with prospective candidates will be determined by the sequential steps you choose to take as a search team. Suggestions have been made earlier in this material about the timing for distributing various pieces for the candidate's consideration. Most search committees distribute these pieces only to their top prospects.

A list of items to include in the portfolio is found below.

- Church pictorial directory
- Church annual letter (report or Annual Church Profile)
- Nominating committee report carrying all elected officers and leaders
- Committee on committee's report carrying all committee members
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Recent worship service agendas
- Recent newsletters
- History of church
- Long range and short range goals
- Mission/Vision statement
- Pictures of church facilities and community institutions
- Associational book of reports or annual minutes
- Name and phone number of Director of Associational Missions
- Community's welcome center pieces
- Map of local area
- Census statistics
- Promotional pieces provided by the Chamber of Commerce
- Ten year statistical compilation chart of key church indicators

**(A letter to determine a prospective candidate's interest in changing places of ministry.)**

Dear Reverend Brown:

Our pastor resigned his place of service in our church to accept a call to serve in another congregation. We were fortunate to have him with us for eight years.

The pastor search committee of our church received your resume recently. I am writing you on behalf of the committee to determine your interest in possibly considering a change in places of ministry. This inquiry is neither a commitment on our part, nor do we expect your initial response to our request to be a commitment on your part to consider a call to serve our church as pastor.

We are asking if you would be interested in considering further communication concerning the possibility of sharing in ministry with our church.

Calvary Baptist Church is located in Anywhere, South Carolina with a resident membership of 333. Currently, the average Sunday School attendance is 138. Our annual budget is \$148,000.00. The church family contributed over \$27,000.00 to mission causes last year.

Some basic information pieces are included with this correspondence that might assist you to gain some perspective of our church's life and ministry. I will be contacting you by phone in the next few days to follow-up on this inquiry.

Be praying for our church in its search for the person that God would have serve as our next primary spiritual leader. Be assured of our prayerful support in your present ministry.

Sincerely,

John B. Smith, Chairman  
Pastor Search Committee  
Calvary Baptist Church

## **Questions the Search Committee May Ask During a Telephone Interview**

1. How long have you served in your present church?
2. Why do you feel a need to consider a change in pastorate?
3. Tell me about your philosophy of ministry.
4. Please share a brief description of your leadership style.
5. How involved are your wife and family in your church's ministry?
6. How do you view the role of deacons in the church?
7. What are your basic gifts and strengths?
8. Is your present ministry growth or maintenance oriented?
9. What do you think about the information pieces that we sent you earlier?

Ask committee members to add other questions to this list.

At whatever point in the communication process the committee decides that a particular candidate is not the person to be pursued, contact that individual to inform him that your group feels led to look further in determining God's will for your church.

## **Questions the Search Committee and the Candidate May Ask In Person**

Some of these questions could be formulated in such a way as to integrate them into a church member survey about the congregation's view of the pastor's responsibilities and needs. These questions might also be used in small group interviews.

1. Has the church adopted any formal goals they are working toward?
2. Do you feel that specific, periodic study times away from the church should be set aside for the pastor? Should funds be provided to assist in having these study times?
3. What are the types of decisions the church expects to vote on in conference or business meetings? Does the church vote on every expenditure, even though the budget approved earlier allocated funds for certain items?
4. If the pastor should want to recommend a change in organization, staff, schedule, or building, what process would he need to follow for the process to be acceptable to the church?
5. How do the deacons view their role in the life of the church?  
Are the deacons: \_\_\_\_\_ business managers; \_\_\_\_\_ a board of directors; \_\_\_\_\_ pastoral ministers; or \_\_\_\_\_ deacon team ministers?
6. What ongoing problems does the church have that you would want the new pastor to help work through?
7. What has been the church's experience in starting new classes or departments?

8. What are the tender or ticklish areas of the church that a pastor might need to tiptoe around? What are the issues some folk tend to get upset over when addressed from the pulpit? How does the church respond to sermons on giving?
9. What does the church tend to expect of the pastor's wife?
10. If the church has a parsonage has it been a source of contention in the past? Is the home in the best possible condition? Would the church be open to considering a housing allowance for the pastor?
11. What janitorial duties are expected of the pastor, such as opening and closing the buildings, overseeing lawn or maintenance work, and so on?
12. Could the prospective pastor review the minutes of the church business meetings for the past three years?
13. Who could the new pastor most likely count on to enter into a strong prayer or evangelism emphasis in the church?
14. How much authority will the new pastor have?
15. Would the church guarantee the pastor freedom in the pulpit to preach his convictions as he feels led by the Holy Spirit?
16. Do church committees consult with the pastor before major recommendations go to the church for final decision?
17. Will the church family respect the pastor's uniqueness by allowing him to be himself instead of trying to fit him into a particular mold?
18. Should the church insure a pastor that his compensation would be evaluated seriously each year as evidence of the congregation's care and concern?
19. Do you feel that the pastor should have a three month sabbatical leave after he has served five years?
20. Do you feel that a pastor with seven to nine years' education beyond high school should receive the same level of compensation that other professionals receive with the same education?
21. Although the pastor is available for emergencies 24 hours a day, do you feel that he should have to days off each week like most people in the workplace?
22. What should the pastor's role be in relation to other church staff members?
23. Would church members approve the pastor spending a little less time visiting with church members in order to spend a little more time visiting the unchurched?
24. Did you know that people in the helping profession experience burnout more than any other field?



## **Chapter Seven**

### **Visiting The Churches**

Which comes first -- visiting the worship service or interviewing the candidate? Some committees might choose to talk with a pastor before hearing him preach. This tactic is designed to assess his inter-personal relationship skills before considering his preaching abilities. On occasions, pastors will make this a specific requirement in order to be considered by a search committee.

#### ***A. Determining Their Interest***

Although it was referenced earlier, it needs to be reiterated that the prospective candidate's interest in moving must be known before the committee visits the worship service. Showing up on the candidate's doorstep without knowledge of his feelings about a possible change in pastorates could jeopardize his present ministry. Employing this strategy is also good stewardship of time, finances, and energy.

This concern is even more valid in smaller membership churches. The presence of a pastor search committee visiting a worship service in a small church will be grossly obvious. Too, this can be disconcerting to members of the church being visited. One should expect this experience as being part of the territory for the committee's work. At the same time, however, why disturb the life of a church when there is not the slightest indication the prospective candidate is the least bit interested in entertaining a change in places of ministry?

It might prove beneficial for the committee to review the previous chapter just prior to the visiting and interviewing process.

#### ***B. Making The Arrangements***

After preliminary contacts have been made, the committee should make thorough preparation for the visits and/or interviews with prospective pastors. Developing adequate procedures will offer the committee specific guidance in their efforts to engage candidates. Interviewing the pastor under consideration will be discussed in the next section.

After the contact has been made, the trip needs to be well planned and organized.

When the committee is preparing for their church visit, the following check list might be helpful.

Travel Arrangements

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_ +

Check Each Member:

- \_\_\_\_\_ +
- \_\_\_\_\_ +
- \_\_\_\_\_ +
- \_\_\_\_\_ +
- \_\_\_\_\_ +
- \_\_\_\_\_ +
- \_\_\_\_\_ +

Driver: \_\_\_\_\_ +

Airline / Hotel Reservations \_\_\_\_\_ +

Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_ +

Departure Place: \_\_\_\_\_ +

Plans For Meal(s) \_\_\_\_\_ +

***C. Working By Appointment***

One will find a variety of opinions regarding prior notification of pastors when visits are made. Little is gained by trying to “sneak up” on a pastoral candidate. A search committee will do well to work by appointment. Contact the minister to determine if a certain date will be satisfactory for your committee’s visit. Some people have reservations about the pastor knowing the committee is coming on a particular Sunday because he might prepare a “special sermon” just for them.

In making the contact, the committee chairman could ask if the pastor will be in his pulpit for the next three, four, or several Sundays. This allows flexibility for the search group and might provide for more normal pulpit preparation. Also, the committee will likely exercise good stewardship of time and expense by not wasting a trip if the pastor won’t be present the day the visit is made.

A pastor could be on vacation or preaching in revival services for another church. Certainly, a committee would not want to visit a worship service if the date of their trip was designated as “pastor appreciation day” for the minister in his church. Most churches have special days to celebrate or dedication type services periodically, which will not likely be appropriate for a committee’s visit.

If the search team desires to have an interview with the candidate while in the community on the day of the visit, an appointment is an absolute necessity. Arrangements must be made for the time and place of the meeting, as well as possibly reserving a site for the committee’s meal.



When the pastor has prior notice of a committee's visit, he is better prepared to more adequately handle his own congregation. The minister's primary responsibility is to the church he presently serves. To say the least, the candidate might be able to handle himself better when he is saved from the possible shock of a committee's presence.

As elementary as it may appear and given the fact that worship services are now being held in a variety of time periods, the committee needs to make sure it arrives at the correct time. The search team might also need directions to certain church facilities.

#### ***D. Attending The Service***

Is it necessary for all members to visit a church at the same time? Some committees prefer the entire group to hear a candidate together feeling it is best for everyone to hear and observe the same things at the same time. Other groups choose to break up into smaller numbers to visit different churches in order to cover more ground in a shorter period of time, especially when air travel is necessitated.

A search committee should not try "to hide" in a worship service. A search committee's presence in most churches is about as inconspicuous as an elephant trying to hide behind a cabbage leaf. This does not imply that all members should sit on the same pew. Good common sense dictates many of the logistics in a church visit.

In the initial stages of church visits, the inexperienced committee member might feel extremely self-conscious, but that will subside as the group makes other visits.

While participating in a worship service, give thought to the following interests, as well as other concerns the committee has.

- Observe everything.
- Consider more than just the sermon.
- Reflect on the atmosphere and tone of the service.
- Notice how the pastor participates in the worship experience.
- Determine how the people respond to the pastor in and out of the pulpit.
- Review the way the service is orchestrated.
- Discern the spirit and attitude of the pastor.
- Assess the style of worship -- traditional, blended, or contemporary?

A sermon evaluation form accompanies this chapter for the committee's consideration and should be used some time after the worship service.

As the committee exits the service, the committee chairman can identify himself on behalf of the committee.

#### ***E. Evaluating The Experience***

On occasions, a search group will start assessing the worship service and the pastor's sermon before they leave the church house or get back into their vehicle. Whatever structure the evaluation process takes,

each member should have ample opportunity to express himself individually. A committee might go around the table or circle and ask every member to share impressions.

Give thought to evaluating your own performance in the effort. “How did we do?” is important, too.

### ***F. Notifying The Candidate***

If your committee is convinced at this point that the pastor you heard is not the person God wants you to consider, make an immediate, written contact to express appreciation for the opportunity to visit the church and inform him of your decision. It is most unethical to keep a minister waiting and wondering about his status with your committee.

The committee might have a keen interest in the pastor you heard, but did not interview him the same day. Touch base with the candidate expressing gratitude for the visit. Be sure to let him know you are still praying to determine God’s will for the life and work of your church and that you will be in touch with him fairly soon.

Then, if you feel led to eliminate him from consideration, be sure to contact him immediately to share your decision. A sample letter is found on the following page.

**Sample Letter to a candidate who was contacted or visited and is no longer under consideration.**

Dear Brother Brown:

We are grateful for your willingness to be considered as a possible candidate for the pastorate of our church. We appreciate the time you spent with us, the material you provided, and our privilege of visiting your worship service recently.

After much thought and prayerful deliberation, we sense God leading us in other directions in determining His will for the life and work our church family.

Please know that we pray God will continue to bless you in His assignment at your present place of service.

Again, thanks for the opportunity of getting to meet you.

Sincerely,

**Prospective Pastor's Sermon**

---

Name of Minister \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Points in the sermon that impressed me: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**My impression of the prospect and his sermon:**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<b>Positive</b>	-----	-----	<b>Obvious Preparation</b>	-----	-----
<b>Enthusiastic</b>	___	___	<b>Spoke Distinctly</b>	___	___
<b>Clear</b>	___	___	<b>Stayed with Subject</b>	___	___
<b>Personal Warmth</b>	___	___	<b>Inspiring</b>	___	___
<b>Humor</b>	___	___	<b>Doctrinally Sound</b>	___	___
<b>Good Illustrations</b>	___	___	<b>Appeal to the Mind</b>	___	___
<b>Good Appearance</b>	___	___	<b>Appeal to Emotions</b>	___	___
<b>Good Introduction</b>	___	___	<b>Good Conclusion</b>	___	___

Did he apply the sermon to everyday life?      \_\_\_ *Yes*    \_\_\_ *No*

Did you sense God's presence during the message?      \_\_\_ *Yes*    \_\_\_ *No*

Would this kind of preaching meet the needs of our church?      \_\_\_ *Yes*    \_\_\_ *No*

Use of notes:    \_\_\_ *Excellent*    \_\_\_ *Good*    \_\_\_ *Fair*

What about his pulpit mannerisms?    \_\_\_ *Good*    \_\_\_ *Fair*

Approximate length of sermon? \_\_\_\_\_

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Committee Member*

## Chapter Eight

### Interviewing The Candidates

The most effective form of communication, as well as the most expensive, is frequent face-to-face dialogue. One will find no substitute for engaging an individual in a group discussion process to determine his abilities to relate to others. Responses to written forms have some value, but immediate and spontaneous interchange is indispensable for learning first-hand who this candidate is and what he is about.

#### *A. Checking The References*

At what point in the process should the references be contacted? Some committees check the references of all the candidates on the short list before further contact is made. This is a time consuming task when one takes into consideration that one or two candidates will be eliminated after the first visit, but some committees contend that no further contact with the pastor should be made before all reference checking has been completed. If this route is taken, perhaps the printed form might work adequately.

On the other hand, one will learn that certain search teams choose to move through the process until they feel almost certain about one specific pastor before they check that candidate's references. When references are contacted before the committee has determined the candidate's real interest, or if the committee has yet to determine its own depth of interest, word might get back to some of the pastor's current church members that their pastor is ready to leave. Incomplete or misleading information of this nature might damage the pastor's present ministry.

It is only understandable that pastors who allow their resumes to be shared with search committees will use their best references. This is true also in any profession or employment environment, but knowing this should not deter the search team from reference checking. ***All references must be contacted!***

Some committees prefer to mail a printed form to all references and ask that it be returned to the chairman. Most groups make telephone interviews because more can be gained from a one-on-one dialogue with references. If some area of concern is not clear about the candidate, the interviewer can pursue a certain line of inquiry more thoroughly until a matter is clarified in the phone conversation because of the ability to respond immediately.

When the references are contacted, it might be helpful to ask each one if he/she knows another person who is familiar with the prospect. Get that other person's name and contact him as well. This allows the committee to move beyond the candidate's references and one step deeper in the interviewing effort.

A reference interview form for the committee's consideration is included in Chapter Nine (Section B. Checking References.)

## ***B. Scheduling The Session***

Start by determining some options for dates acceptable to all search committee members. Then, a personal contact by phone is the most efficient way to set up an interview with prospective candidates.

If the interview does not follow a worship service, many committees choose a neutral location for the sessions. Some groups select a restaurant with a private dining area. Other committees feel that having the candidate come to their church offers an opportunity to hold the interview and show their facilities at the same time.

Discretion must be exercised to ensure confidentiality if the committee's church is used. When the church has a parsonage, the pastor and his wife can view the home as well. At times, the pastor's home becomes the designated site.

Distance can impact the decision about time and location. On occasions search teams will meet the potential pastor in a geographical location between his ministry area and their church.

## ***C. Choosing A Format***

The committee must bear in mind that the interview experience is not designed to be an interrogation effort. Certainly, the group endeavors to create a relaxed environment for all participants. The perspective should be one with a desire for a mutual exchange and an attitude of sharing with one another.

Again, one basic objective is to catch the spirit and attitude of the candidate as well as to obtain facts and figures. More plainly spoken is to say one wants to sense "the heart" of the pastor. Assessing his personal relationship skills is critical in the interview process.

Certainly, this stage of the relationship is too early to expect any bonding experience, but a search team can gain a feeling of how they "mesh and mix" with the prospect. At the same time, this period should not be considered as a "courting experience."

A few committees have been known to set up a "mock interview" or trial run by using the director of missions, interim pastor, or a retired pastor as the prospective candidate for the purpose of "practicing the process."

Should the candidate's wife be included in the interviewing sessions? Most people answer this question with a resounding "YES." The group must remember the wife is not being "hired," but will definitely make an incalculable contribution to the pastor's ministry.

## ***D. Selecting The Topics***

The committee would do well to start the session by asking some open-ended questions allowing the candidate to freely express himself. Often such an approach can lead a person to share much of himself and answer many of the search team's questions before they are asked.

At the same time, however, a group needs some specific replies to certain concerns. The following list includes several areas of a pastor's life that a committee would want to consider.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conversion experience</li><li>• Call to the ministry</li><li>• Spiritual gifts</li><li>• Personal beliefs</li><li>• Theological convictions</li><li>• Leadership style</li><li>• Understanding of pastor's role</li><li>• Support and involvement in missions</li><li>• Daily schedule</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worship and witness</li><li>• Discipleship</li><li>• Personal vision statement</li><li>• Use of specific strategies</li><li>• Ministry goals</li><li>• Dreams for the church</li><li>• View of Scripture</li><li>• Specific moral and social issues</li><li>• Personal health</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concept of deacon ministry</li><li>• Church organizations</li><li>• Local and national denominational alignment</li><li>• Pastor's relationship with the church staff</li><li>• Denominational involvement</li><li>• Conflict management style</li></ul> |
|--|---|--|

It could be a productive discussion to use the leadership grid presented earlier in this manual in an effort to determine the prospect's leadership style. A copy of the grid could be shared with the candidate with a request for him to respond to the piece. Keep in mind that a pastor must not be expected to maintain a rigid position at one point, but can be expected to exercise good judgment in using a leadership style called for by the context of the situation.

### ***E. Provoking Thoughtful Dialogue***

Often, interviews might be dominated with simple "yes and no" responses. A list of some thought provoking questions is placed below for the search group's consideration.

Great is the shock that comes to the church when after a few weeks, or months at the most, problems begin to develop with a new pastor. The church members are made to wonder about the work of the search committee that recommended the pastor. The search committee begins to wonder about themselves or they begin to feel that they have been misled, deceived, or betrayed. The seeds of destruction are being planted in such a situation. The harvest is predictable and tragic.

Apparently, information was needed in the process that was not surfaced by interviews and references. The recommendation of the committee and action of the church was made with less than adequate knowledge. Every committee needs to be prepared to ask questions that will bring to light possible problem areas or attitudes.

The questions that will be suggested in this article are in addition to the most basic and common inquiries that have to do with moral and doctrinal purity, personal integrity, spiritual commitment, and professional experience. All of these are important but they may not get to the heart of whether a pastor is suited for the church where he is being considered.

***Who are your heroes?***--Whose books do you read? Whose tapes do you play? Who is the model who has most affected your ministry?

***What doctrines do you feel have been most neglected?***--And you may ask, "What doctrines do you feel most compelled to address in your preaching?" You may ask if he has ever been accused of going off the deep end on some doctrine. If so, you need to know what it is. It could be an issue of such magnitude in the pastor's heart that an overemphasis could threaten his ability to lead the church.

***What moral or political issue would you be most inclined to crusade for or against?***--His concerns may fit well with the major concerns of the congregation. If they do not, then both pastor and people need to know of the deep feelings the prospective pastor has about key moral issues. If he is weak in his convictions, they need to know that, too. His respect for those who disagree with him is crucial to good long-term relations.

***What would your supporters in your previous pastorates say are your strong points?***--This will tell you a lot about what you can expect from the new pastor. It likely will reveal his strengths or his perceived strengths.

***What would your detractors say are your weak points?***--This could lead to information that would need to be followed up by additional research.

***What do you feel can be gained from cooperation and participation in associational and convention activities?***--Some churches discover they have called nondenominational, or at best, independent Baptist pastors who neither know nor care about their church's relationships with the association or conventions. This question may surface the truth about the individual. If it doesn't, then ask about the Cooperative Program and Southern Baptist literature and you likely will find the heart of the man exposed.

***How do you go about leading a church to accept and approve programs and projects that you feel God wants the church to do?***--The answer will tell you if he expects the church to go along with him without their input or without their questioning of it. It also will tell you whether he will work with committees and the deacon body or whether he tries to do everything by his personal platform charisma or manipulation of a few key leaders in the church.

***What part of the pastoral ministry do you find most difficult for you to do?***--This will need to be explored to see if an area of high expectation on the part of the church may be an area in which the pastor will have difficulty delivering.

***What types of people do you have the most difficulty relating to?***--Personality types, racial or economic groups, educational groups or social groups may need to be specified. If some group is mentioned who make up a good part of the church's membership or the church's prospects, then caution needs to be exercised.

***What worship styles are you most comfortable with? What style will you expect to develop in this church?***

***What has been your experience in working with deacons?***--He could be asked to tell about his favorite deacon.

***What have you done when you have broken a confidence, personally attacked someone from the pulpit, or unintentionally offended someone in the church you serve?***--You want to learn if the individual can acknowledge wrongdoing.

***Can you give us an example of a misunderstanding you may have had with a church member and tell us how you worked through it?***--Since personal relationships "make or break" a pastor, this is a valid question that needs to be addressed.



***What do you feel your responsibility is for the Sunday School, Discipleship Training, and other church programs?***--Too many pastors think their only responsibility is to do a good job of preaching and leave all of these program details to someone else. None of the programs can do well without the enthusiastic involvement and support of the pastor. A discussion of balance between evangelism and discipleship should figure into this discussion.

***How do you avoid the accusation that is sometimes made that the pastor has favorites in the church?***--His policy on relating to all of the people in the church is important.

***How does your family feel about your commitment to your ministry?***--The committee needs to be prepared to not only learn if there are problems with the wife or children's support, but also to assure the prospective pastor that they want him to give priority time to his family.

***How do you feel about getting to know the church family personally?***--There is a growing tendency for pastors to not be so aggressive in getting to know their people individually. This could be reflected in coming in at the last minute for meetings and leaving as soon as the meeting is over without any effort to meet and fellowship with the people. It may also show up in rigid study hours with very few hours made available to the people.

***How perfect do we have to be for you to love, accept, and work with us?***--Churches have their imperfections just as pastors do. Pastor and people need to understand that a call to work together is a call to accept the imperfections of each other.

***Will we be disappointed or embarrassed when we do a credit check on you? Do you borrow money from church members?***--Do you live within your means? Do you have a sideline by which you seek to supplement your income?

***How do you handle situations in which divorced people request you to perform weddings for second marriages?***

***What are your expectations of how you will be treated/appreciated/followed/supported should our church call you?***

***What has been your experience in working with staff members and volunteers? Describe your relationship with staff members.***

***What are your personal and ministry-related goals?***

***What do you do on your day off? What did you do on your last family vacation?***

(The material covering the previous questions was taken from the "Church Administration Magazine" published by the Baptist Sunday School Board, SBC.)

## ***F. Inspecting What's Expected***

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a basic approach to the interviewing process should revolve around the criteria profile and church expectations survey results assimilated at the beginning of the search process. At this point, sharing a few observations gained from experience in working with churches, their pastors and church staff members should offer search teams additional insight into the interviews.

There are times when a church becomes frustrated in an effort to evaluate the performance of the pastor and church staff. The staff may share mutual ambivalence with the church's assessment process. Such confusion might be due to a lack of clarity in the church's expectations, or inordinate demands placed on the ministerial staff.

A better part of wisdom is to implement the simple technique "inspect what you expect." If a church family does not know what it clearly expects from a pastor and staff, it is highly unlikely that they will know what to evaluate. A copy of a staff assessment piece is included in this workbook. This is offered merely as information for the committee's benefit and not as an actual evaluation tool for potential pastors. The form might introduce some thoughts in considering concerns or topics in interviewing prospective pastoral candidates. The piece is placed at the end of this chapter.

## ***G. Answering The Candidate***

The interviewing process should be a reciprocal experience. The candidate needs to learn about the committee's church family. A sensitive committee can learn much by the questions and concerns the potential candidate surfaces. How would you respond if the pastor asked about your personal vision for your church's future?

As mentioned earlier, the search team will want to give the pastor some additional material pertaining to the church's history, statistics, and ministry. A package can be assimilated with such items as a church directory, nominating committee report, constitution and bylaws, annual report, copies of bulletins and newsletters, and similar pieces that would be of interest. Some committees prefer to distribute a church budget at the time when compensation is discussed. This item will be considered in the next chapter of the manual.

As a rule, compensation is not discussed in the first interview. A committee should feel free to inquire about the candidate's compensation package. The simplest approach is to ask, "Would you give us an idea of what your present compensation package is?" It is understood, and might be worth sharing, that the committee is merely asking to make sure their figures are reasonably compatible with the candidate's package. It is rare that a pastor is asked to make a lateral move or for less compensation. Although the church that calls a new leader covers the moving expenses, there are costs incurred by a pastor when moving to a new field that are not retrievable.

A committee can arrive at a ballpark figure of the compensation by reviewing the pastor's present church's statistics as found in the state convention annual minutes. The total receipts category will give the group some figure to compare with your own church's record.

## *H. Evaluating The Interview*

A debriefing meeting can assist the committee in assessing the results of the interview. The discussion might begin by permitting each member to share his/her overall impressions of the meeting. A few starter questions for the committee's review might take the following form.

- Were all areas of concern covered?
- Did the committee handle itself well during the interview?
- How explicit was the candidate in responding to inquiries?
- How did the committee feel about the possible "mix and match" experience?
- Did the group discern a measure of alignment with the pastor criteria profile?
- What other topics, if any, should the group use in a follow-up interview?

Further observations by the search team's members will enlarge the interview evaluation effort.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Selecting *THE* Candidate**

The search process has been a spiritual journey! God has revealed many things to the members. Arriving at a final decision is the spiritual fruit produced by weeks of diligent prayer and ardent research. Prayerfully, the Holy Spirit has been the committee's primary counselor and guide.

#### ***A. Deciding "For Sure"***

The question most frequently asked by search committees is, "How will we determine God's will in knowing the right person to recommend?" The search team will not likely hear bells or feel the ground shake beneath them as signs of God's purpose for a particular prospect. The simplest (and perhaps the best) answer is to say, "You will know!" This decision-making position is difficult to explain or describe; it is something a member serving on a search group must personally experience. The only additional comment to the previous answer is, "you will know that you know."

*It is hard to improve on spiritual discernment and practical wisdom!*

The committee will come to an agreement that is unanimous. It happens only rarely, but one committee member might not be as thoroughly convinced as others. When this happens, the basic objective is to arrive at a consensus. A consensus means that everybody may not be in total agreement, but all can accept, live and work with the decision. Pressure or coercion should not even enter a group's mind in seeking a final decision.

The committee could benefit by answering some questions proposed to itself for sake of the clarification of selection. Think on the following:

- Does your response run from eureka to a sense of peace about this candidate?
- Can we see him serving as pastor of this church?
- What are the points where we are unanimous with each other and with what candidate?
- Can you see yourself and the church partnering with him for ministry?
- Does this man's gifts/temperament/passion/vision match with the model desired by the church? Compare with the church survey.
- Do the interpersonal skills of the pastor and his wife match our church?
- Discuss the possible match in leadership styles with the church's style.
- Does the pastor handle conflict in the same manner as the church?
- Are we at peace about the candidate and his wife's response about moving at this time?
- Can he and his family leave emotionally?
- Are there any staff or church problems that need to be resolved before making a final decision?
- Do any references or credit checks raise a red flag?

#### ***B. Checking The References***

As pointed out in the previous chapter, different committees use a variety of strategies in determining at what point references should be contacted. Again, all references must be contacted. The following is a reference interview form for the committee's use.

**PERSONAL REFERENCE FORM**  
(Can be modified for telephone or written correspondence)

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Called \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Introductory Comments: "Hello, I am \_\_\_\_\_, a member of the pastor search committee for the \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church. Your name was given as a reference for \_\_\_\_\_.

If you have about 10 or 12 minutes, your answers to a few questions will help our search committee learn more about \_\_\_\_\_ and assist us in determining God's will for the life of our church.

Is this a convenient time to share with me?

1. How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

2. From the following rating scale, please rate your personal knowledge of this person:

\_\_\_\_\_ Very well \_\_\_\_\_ Not well

\_\_\_\_\_ Well

\_\_\_\_\_ Casual acquaintance

3. Please list three major character strengths that you have witnessed in this person and which you believe he possesses:

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

4. How well does this individual work with others?

STAFF?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

LEADERS IN THE CHURCH?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERS IN THE CHURCH?

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5. In your opinion, does this person possess leadership skills? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which skills have you observed?

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6. How well does this person handle conflict?

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Frustration?

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7. Please rate how well you believe this person is gifted and prepared for the position for which we are interviewing?

\_\_\_\_\_ Very well                      \_\_\_\_\_ Adequately                      \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know  
\_\_\_\_\_ Well                                      \_\_\_\_\_ Not well

COMMENTS:

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8. How would you characterize this person's marriage or family relationship?

\_\_\_\_\_ Rock Solid                      \_\_\_\_\_ Developing  
\_\_\_\_\_ Good                                      \_\_\_\_\_ Needs Help

9. Are there any characteristics, which would disqualify this candidate from a staff position in a church?

\_\_\_\_\_ No                                      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

Please explain:

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10. Additional comments:

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### ***C. Visiting The Field***

If the candidate has not visited the church's community in previous interview sessions, the committee should set up a schedule of events for the prospective candidate.

Tours of the area including such points of interest as schools, residential subdivisions, education sites, business areas, recreational facilities, mission points, major traffic arteries, and cultural centers will enhance the candidate's perspective of the community.

A walk-through of the church facilities with adequate information provided about staff and ministry locations, along with special equipment used by the church would be of interest to a potential pastor.

The candidate will want to meet members of the church staff before a final decision is made. At times, a candidate might also request to meet with certain leadership groups in the church.

Such meetings are best described as "awareness sessions." Keep in mind that meetings of this nature are not designed to offer the respective groups an opportunity to interrogate the candidate. Certainly, basic questions are in order, ideas and concepts are shared, but elaborate details of proposed strategies should not be on the agenda.

### ***D. Clarifying The Agreements***

Often, disappointment and conflict emerge out of misunderstandings. Clear and concise communication is always imperative, but more so in the final discussion period since little time remains to correct misconceptions. The search team would profit from developing and using a checklist to make sure that all major issues are discussed, covered, and agreed upon. It must not go without saying that the committee should never make promises not authorized by the church family.

A form entitled, "Check List for Clarity In A Call" is placed in this chapter of the workbook to assist the group review the major points of concern preceding the final decision.

The compensation will be discussed discreetly. Some committees come to an agreement on the package within the parameters approved by the church and then allow the chairman and vice-chairman to discuss with the candidate what the church is offering. If the committee is small, only the chairman may be assigned this task.

When the information about the compensation package is shared with the potential pastor, make sure all details are ***presented in writing***. It is a good practice to give the pastor a copy of the offer signed by the chairman, and then also have a copy signed by the pastor and retained by the committee. This ensures no misunderstandings about compensation.

Another form that might assist the committee along these lines entitled, "specific Agreements" is placed at the close of this chapter.

An agreement that must not be overlooked is expressed in the committee's question, "If our church extends you a call, you will come, won't you?" It is understandable that a pastor could change his mind after the trial sermon and church vote, but he should be convinced of God's will, as is the committee, at this point before he accepts the invitation to come and preach a trial sermon.

SBC's Health and Retirement Agency named "GuideStone" ([www.guidestone.org](http://www.guidestone.org)) is an excellent resource to help search committee with matters related to insurance and retirement plans and cost.

### ***E. Investigating The Candidate***

A thorough, professional background check is a must before a candidate is presented for a call by the church. This investigative search effort must exceed a mere credit report.

One word of caution -- the committee will do well to permit only one person to read the report. As you can imagine, an enormous amount of confidential data is included in this instrument. The person who reviews the report can merely tell the committee that it is acceptable.

The church may have an organization or a means to conducts background checks, however the following are also a couple of organizations that do background checks for a fee:

- Protect My Ministry ([www.protectmyministry.com](http://www.protectmyministry.com))
- Clear Star Background Screening ([www.clearstar.net](http://www.clearstar.net))



## BACKGROUND SCREENING CONSENT FORM

Your prospective employer has contracted with an employee screening service to verify certain information contained in your application for employment, conditional job offer or provided by you during the interview process. The information requested below is necessary to complete this task. This information is NOT a part of the application for employment and will be used for the sole purpose of verification of information and or statements made by you. PLEASE complete all requested information.

PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL SECURITY #: \_\_\_\_\_

DRIVER'S LICENSE #: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

It is possible that your employment may be determined in whole or I part by your prospective employer using data from a report supplied by our employee screening service. Pursuant to Section 609 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, you may be entitled to a copy of this report.

### APPLICANT CONSENT

I understand and agree that an employee screening service will verify all or part of the information I have given my prospective employer. I understand that this verification will include an inquiry into my credit history, motor vehicle driving record, criminal and civil records as well as other public record information. I authorize the release of such information as may be necessary to verify the information I have provided. I release and hold harmless from all liability any individual or entity requesting or supplying information with respect to my application for employment.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## CLARITY OF CALL

**Yes**    **No**

- |     |     |   |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | 1. Church moves/provides moving expense?  |
| ___ | ___ | 2. Church provides housing for pastor, family?<br>If yes, in what form?<br>Pastorium ___ Allowance ___<br>If allowance, how much monthly? _____   |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Church provides utilities or allowance? If yes, amount:<br>Electricity    \$ _____    Water \$ _____<br>Phone            \$ _____    Other \$ _____  |
| ___ | ___ | 4. Church assists pastor in purchasing home?<br>If yes, indicate the following:<br>Provides down payment as gift or loan in the amount of _____<br>at an interest rate of ___% to be repaid at \$ _____ monthly.<br>Amount to be paid in full within _____ days of termination as pastor. |
| ___ | ___ | 5. Monthly salary to begin: \$ _____ with review for increase at the end of:<br>Months _____ (How often? _____) Year _____<br>Recommendation for increase to be made by _____ committee.  |
| ___ | ___ | 6. Monthly car allowance provided?<br>If yes, in the amount of \$ _____ per month and _____ cents per mile for<br>distant travel on church business.  |
| ___ | ___ | 7. Church provides insurance coverage? If yes, how much?<br>Health \$ _____ Life \$ _____ Retirement \$ _____   |
| ___ | ___ | 8. Church provides annual book allowance?<br>If yes, annual amount \$ _____   |
| ___ | ___ | 9. Church provides weekly days off?<br>If yes, number of days _____   |
| ___ | ___ | 10. Church provides annual, paid vacation?<br>If yes, number of weeks: _____ first year _____ second year _____ thereafter  |
| ___ | ___ | 11. Is pulpit supply paid by church for vacation absences?  |
| ___ | ___ | 12. Church provides time off for:<br>Revivals? How much time for revivals? _____<br>State Convention?<br>Southern Baptist Convention?   |
| ___ | ___ | 13. Is pulpit supply paid by church for these absences?   |

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. Are expenses paid to conventions?  
Is wife included? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. Church provides time off for bereavement?  
If yes, how much time? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 16. Church provides time off for illness?  
If yes, amount of time annually \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 17. Are salary and benefits paid during time of illness?  
For how long? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 18. Supply minister paid by church during time of illness?  
For how long? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 19. Church provides annual physical examination for pastor?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 20. Pastor is designated as supervisor of other staff?  
If no, who is designated and for which staff members? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 21. Time off is provided for study leave and training conferences?  
If yes, how much time annually? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 22. Does church pay cost of job-related training?  
If yes, how much of total cost? \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT (Working Draft)**

***A. Vocational Compensation***

- Base salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Housing allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Pastorium rental value \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Utilities allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Church share of Social Security \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL VOCATIONAL COMPENSATION** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***B. Protection Coverage***

- Retirement \_\_\_\_\_% of vocational compensation
- Health insurance (pastor and family) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Life insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Disability insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL PROTECTION COVERAGE** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***C. Ministry Related Expenses***

- Automobile expenses (mileage reimbursement) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Conventions/conferences (mark as many as apply) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ For expenses by pastor only
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Includes pastor's wife when she attends with him
  - \_\_\_\_\_ To be used at pastor's discretion
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor to give account for reimbursement (recommended)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Can be used for study leave and continuing education
  - Balance at end of year belongs to \_\_\_\_\_ pastor, \_\_\_\_\_ church
- Book allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Continuing Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL MINISTRY RELATED EXPENSES** \$ \_\_\_\_\_



- SABBATICAL LEAVE - The pastor will be provided with three months leave upon completion of five years service with the church. (This is not an extended vacation; rather, it's an opportunity for the pastor to break from the normal 60-72 hour weeks for rest, study, reflection, spiritual renewal, and career assessment.)
- REVIVALS AND OUTSIDE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS - The pastor may have two weeks each calendar year for outside engagements.
- PULPIT SUPPLY - The church will pay for the pulpit supply for the following reasons: pastor's vacation, pastor in revival, week of denominational convention when necessary to leave early due to location, illness. The pastor shall be responsible for securing the pulpit supply unless he is physically unable to do so.
- SICK LEAVE - The pastor will be granted sick leave of one day per month covering the workweek of Sunday through Thursday. He may accumulate two weeks of sick leave. He will begin with six days of sick leave to cover the first six months of employment. At the termination of his services, no sick leave will be compensated.
- LONG TERM DISABILITY - In the event of a disabling accident or illness, the church will continue to pay the pastor his usual compensations through the sixth month of his disability. The pastor's disability insurance through the Southern Baptist Annuity Board becomes effective after the sixth month of disability.

This covenant is entered into with the prayer that the ministry of this church and the ministry of this pastor will bring glory to God and will advance His Kingdom.

Signed by:

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Representative of Church \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved by the Church on \_\_\_\_\_

Again, some churches have detailed staff policy manuals that cover many of the provisions listed above. Then, some churches have little or nothing in writing about agreements between the pastor/staff and congregation.

In some church settings, when there are sizable changes in compensation and/or provisions for the pastor, these matters might be considered and settled by the congregation and/or committees before the pastor comes for the trial sermon and celebration service.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **Presenting The Candidate**

Now that the Lord has revealed His will for the church's life, and the candidate has agreed to allow the committee to offer him for consideration, the committee's next task is to present the candidate to the congregation in view of a call to serve as the new pastor. The committee would do well to thoroughly orchestrate the steps for making its recommendation to the body.

#### ***A. Reviewing The Policy***

The committee must review the church's governing instruments to make certain the procedure for recommending the potential pastor is in compliance with the requirements of the bylaws or church policies. This step was suggested earlier in the manual as a task for the committee at the outset of the search process, but the group should make sure the proper steps are being taken.

Some committees preface their recommendations by making reference to the bylaws in a letter to the congregation announcing the coming of the candidate. Such a step would take the simple form, "According to Bylaw Eight, the church will receive two weeks notice, (etc)."

A firm agreement needs to be reached prior to the candidate's introduction regarding his response to the church family's potential vote. Most committees require a pastor to agree to accept the call if the vote is satisfactory. Bylaws in churches might differ slightly in the vote percentage required to make the call valid. Then, some pastors may only accept the call when the vote percentage registers what they feel comfortable accepting.

#### ***B. Notifying The Congregation***

Ample notice should be given the church family about the potential candidate's special visit with the congregation. Details of all events should be included in the written correspondence. This communication plan informs church members about the presence of the pastor and his family and is designed to facilitate the decision-making effort.

It could be helpful to include a brief biographical sketch of the pastor in the letter. Prior knowledge of the candidate's background should assist the church membership to be better informed about his education, skills, and experience. This strategy assists parishioners by giving them a sense of confidence in the committee's recommendation before the vote is taken.

The search group will be wise in using a special mailing for this purpose. Although a follow-up announcement could be carried in the bulletin or newsletter, the primary information piece should take the form of a separate letter.

Then, make certain that the information is sent to *every* family unit. Do not assume that the inactive or nonresident members will be uninterested in the decision. This might be an opportunity for some delinquent members to experience spiritual renewal.

A sample notification letter is placed at the end of this chapter.

### ***C. Introducing The Candidate***

Give consideration to events and gatherings that will serve to enlarge the congregation's ownership of the calling process. Some churches develop a series of meetings with different groups for the sake of allowing as many people as possible to meet the candidate in a relaxed atmosphere.

Decide on the number and kinds of events you feel would be appropriate to offer adequate exposure of the candidate to the church family. Care should be taken not to exhaust the prospective pastor and his family with too many sessions.

Some churches arrange for a meal with the deacons and their spouses. Any exchange should be light conversation instead of endeavoring to develop hard and fast strategies.

The number and design of these meetings might be determined by the kind of closure the church experienced with the former pastor, as well as the congregation's present status. There could be a need to clarify some issues and concerns to ensure a more positive response toward the new pastor.

What about a "town meeting" kind of forum with the entire congregation? If the committee senses a strong need for this type session, it should be held before the trial sermon and not after. Too, a most capable moderator should be selected to help facilitate the gathering. On occasions, with such an open agenda, one might find a few church members capitalizing upon the opportunity to express their grievances about matters unrelated to the decision at hand.

Information in a previous chapter dealing with the interview procedures also addressed the possibility of meetings with various groups prior to the decision on the final candidate.

Again, certain churches desire a broader approach and a larger involvement for the purpose of exposing the candidate and his family to as many church members as possible. An example of a schedule for planned activities with multiple meetings is placed at the end of this chapter for committees that prefer the broader strategy. The piece is entitled, "Get Acquainted Weekend."

One of the most productive engagements for introducing the candidate takes the form of a drop-in on Saturday afternoon or evening before the Sunday when the pastor preaches the trial sermon. This gathering needs to be scheduled over a two-hour or so period, depending on the congregation's size. Some churches assign time segments to families by dividing the membership alphabetically. Most churches leave the schedule open to a spontaneous response.

Let it be known without question that this is not a reception! The session must be promoted as a drop-in or a get-acquainted time. Occasionally, by some other name, a few church members might perceive the gathering as an already "done deal."

### ***D. Developing The Recommendation***

If the candidate's calling requires a major change in conditions or relationships, the search team may desire to request a separate meeting for the church to consider such matters. For instance, if the committee



senses a need to provide the new pastor with a housing allowance instead of continuing to use an existing parsonage, it might be a better part of wisdom to settle this matter separately from the calling procedure. The objective of this measure is to prevent the new pastor from being identified entirely with the major change issue.

When the recommendation to call the pastor is connected with discontinuing the use of the parsonage, the candidate is being put at a disadvantage. The call and major church issue presented simultaneously can be confused with each other. The subject involving a major change should be considered by the church in a separate meeting some weeks before the pastoral candidate is recommended. The same holds true for other major issues that might need to be addressed.

The form and content of the recommendation should be brief, concise, and pointed. Some sample forms for wording recommendations are placed at the end of this chapter.

### ***E. Recommending The Call***

The term “trial sermon” is a traditional usage in most Baptist churches. One alternative for a church’s consideration is “The Celebration Service.” The idea in using this terminology is the celebration of discovering and doing God’s will.

The business meeting in which the vote is taken to extend the candidate a call to serve as pastor should be planned well. Have someone other than the search committee chairman moderate the session. The moderator should recognize the search team chairman for the recommendation.

Again, make certain that the committee’s recommendation is exact in its content in order that the wording can be read precisely as printed. Although some might contend that distributing copies of the printed recommendation to members is being overly formal, this practice ensures preciseness.

A time table for the pastor’s starting date on the new field should have been negotiated and determined prior to the call so that it can be announced to the congregation at some point in the celebration service. When special concerns need to be addressed, such as school opening/closing dates for the pastor’s children or the pastor’s prior obligations at his present church, some latitude must be left to the discretion of the committee and the new pastor.

A church’s bylaws usually give directions on how the vote is to be taken. Some churches simply vote by standing, while others require a secret ballot.

After discussion and questions are entertained, the moderator calls for the vote on the recommendation. A report of the vote is shared with the pastor to determine his response. Most churches voting during the same service ask the pastor to come back into the sanctuary for a brief acceptance statement. Such a procedure also allows members to welcome the pastor and his family following the service.

Some churches delay the vote one week. Using this strategy, a business meeting is usually held on the following Wednesday night to discuss the recommendation and a vote is called for without discussion the following Sunday in the morning worship service. Such a procedure can weaken the process and prevent it from truly becoming a celebration service, while tending to lose the joy of the moment when one is more likely to sense God’s presence than a week later. Then, the delay makes it difficult on the candidate who must wait another week to learn of your church’s decision. This also requires him to move through

the next week's morning worship service with his present congregation in doubt. The pastor must wait until the evening worship hour of that following Sunday to announce his resignation.

Create a positive ballot form that expresses the vote to call.

**I believe that it is God's will for our church family to call (Candidate's name) as our pastor.**

\_\_\_\_\_ YES                      \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If the decision is to be made by written ballot, organize the voting procedure ensuring that the distribution and collection of the ballots are done efficiently.

Assign people in advance to count the votes and bring the results to the search committee chairman. As mentioned earlier, the chairman shares the congregation's vote with the pastor for his response.

The worship service should be well planned in a manner that reflects the central purpose of worship and the celebration of discovering and doing God's will in calling the prospective pastor. It is best not to develop a "heavy order of service with a lot of extras." Make certain that the pastor has adequate time to establish rapport and preach without feeling rushed because of a possible time crunch.

Most experienced interim pastors express reservations about being present for the celebration service. The major objective for the worship experience is focusing on the person God has led to the church family. It is best for the interim pastor to be neither seen nor heard that day. Too, the absence of the interim pastor is one more step in the closure process for the interval period of the church's life.

The final decision about who is to be recommended would be made by the pastor search team. The committee must always focus on the person it feels led of God to present for the church family's consideration and not feel obligated to offer rationale as to why other candidates were not their choice. The simplest answer to any inquiries about other candidates recommended by church members might be: "Many worthy candidates were prayerfully considered; the person we are recommending is the individual God led us to present."

## Formal Agreement: Annual Financial Commitment

### *A. Vocational Compensation*

Base salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Housing allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pastorium rental value \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Church share of Social Security \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL VOCATIONAL COMPENSATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### *B. Protection Coverage*

Retirement \_\_\_\_\_ % of vocational compensation

Health insurance (pastor and family) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Life insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Disability insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PROTECTION COVERAGE \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### *C. Ministry Related Expenses*

Automobile expenses (mileage reimbursement) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Conventions/conferences (mark as many as apply) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ For expenses by pastor only

\_\_\_\_\_ Includes pastor's wife when she attends with him

\_\_\_\_\_ To be used at pastor's discretion

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor to give account for reimbursement (recommended)

\_\_\_\_\_ Can be used for study leave and continuing education

Balance at end of year belongs to \_\_\_\_\_ pastor \_\_\_\_\_ church

Book allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Continuing Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL MINISTRY RELATED EXPENSES \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***D. Other Considerations***

Christmas bonus (this year)	\$ _____
Homeowner’s insurance on pastorium	\$ _____
Insurance of pastor’s library, computer, etc.	\$ _____
Moving, relocation expenses	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b>TOTAL PACKAGE</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

***ANNUAL TIME AGREEMENT***

The church acknowledges that the pastor’s work cannot be rigidly regulated because of the nature of pastoral ministry. Crisis situations and emergencies along with meetings and a heavy schedule ma alter the pastor’s schedule and sometimes necessitate his rearranging his work and/or leisure. The pastor maintains regular church office hours for the purpose of church administration, counseling, and discussing church matters with church members. If the pastor is away during office hours due to an emergency, a need in the community, or denominational activities, the secretary will be available to take a message and notify the pastor upon his return.

WORK SCHEDULE – The pastor’s normal workweek is Sunday through Thursday. Friday is a discretionary day for the purpose of “catching up” on church business or for the pastor to attend to personal matters. Saturday is the pastor’s day off.

VACATION – The pastor will have three weeks paid vacation.

HOLIDAY PAY – The pastor will receive the following holidays:

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| New Year’s Day   | Labor Day            |
| Easter Monday    | Thanksgiving Day (2) |
| Memorial Day     | Christmas Eve        |
| Independence Day | Christmas Day        |

If a holiday falls on Saturday, Friday will be observed. If it falls on Sunday, Monday will be observed, and if it falls on Wednesday, Thursday will be observed. If the pastor is required to work a scheduled paid holiday, he shall be entitled to substitute another workday.

STUDY LEAVE TIME – The pastor will have two weeks for the purpose of attending conferences, assemblies, or retreats as he deems necessary providing the pastor is present on Sunday for all usual services and that his absence during the week does not prevent or hinder the church programs.

SABBATICAL LEAVE – The pastor will be provided with three months leave upon completion of five years’ service with the church. (This is not an extended vacation; rather, it is an opportunity for the pastor to break from the normal 60-72 hour weeks for rest, study, reflection, spiritual renewal, and career assessment.)

REVIVALS AND OUTSIDE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS – The pastor may have two weeks each calendar year for outside engagements.

PULPIT SUPPLY – The church will pay for the pulpit supply for the following reasons: pastor’s vacation, pastor in revival, week of denominational convention when necessary to leave early due to location, illness. The pastor shall be responsible for securing the pulpit supply unless he is physically unable to do so.

SICK LEAVE - The pastor will be granted sick leave of one day per month covering the workweek of Sunday through Thursday. He may accumulate two weeks of sick leave. He will begin with six days of sick leave to cover the first six months of employment. At the termination of his services, no sick leave will be compensated.

LONG-TERM DISABILITY – In the event of a disabling accident or illness, the church will continue to pay the pastor his usual compensations through the sixth month of his disability. The pastor’s disability insurance through the Southern Baptist Annuity Board becomes effective after the sixth month of disability.

This covenant is entered into with the prayer that the ministry of this church and the ministry of this pastor will bring glory to God and will advance His Kingdom.

Signed by:

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_  
Representative of Church \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved by the Church on \_\_\_\_\_

Again, some churches have detailed staff policy manuals that cover many of the provisions listed above. Then, some churches have little or nothing in writing about agreements between the pastor/staff and congregation.

In some church settings, when there are sizable changes in compensation and/or provisions for the pastor, these matters might be considered and settled by the congregation and/or committees before the pastor comes for the trial sermon and celebration service.

## NOTIFYING THE MEMBERSHIP

A letter, resume, agreement, (if there is one) and schedule of events similar to the following could be mailed to every church family one or two weeks prior to the prospective pastor's coming to be introduced, to preach the trial sermon, and to be considered by the church for a call to serve as pastor.

A report to Calvary Baptist Church 200 Main Street, Anywhere, SC

By the Pastor Search Committee:

Robert T. Smith, Chair

Evelyn B. Green

John T. McCormick

Helen R. Jeffords

William D. Bailey

The members of the Pastor Search Committee deeply appreciate the confidence demonstrated in us by the church in allowing the group to seek the Lord's direction in considering the call of a new pastor.

We have diligently sought the Holy Spirit's leadership in searching for the man God would have serve as the church's primary spiritual leader.

We have sensed your support and your prayers during the weeks of preparation, search, investigation, and travel. We appreciate the response of the membership when we asked for your input regarding the type minister our church should seek. Your suggestions had a definite bearing on the direction of the committee.

Unanimously, we feel that God has truly led us to the right person in Reverend Harry T. Smith. He will be here on Sunday, (month and day), in the morning service to worship with us and bring the message. We would like for you to know more about him. The information that follows will introduce him as the man whom we plan to recommend to the church as our new pastor. A vote will be taken immediately following the service (or in the manner determined by the individual church).

**RECOMMENDING THE PASTOR**  
(Example One)

(A recommendation similar to the one below should be presented to the church at a special called business meeting. Following the motion and a second, a time of discussion should be called by the acting moderator before the vote is taken.)

We, the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church, feel that God has led us to the right man to serve as our pastor.

Therefore, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and with the approval of the prospective pastor himself, we unanimously present the following recommendation:

- (1) That the \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church of \_\_\_\_\_ extend a call to Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ to become pastor of our church.
- (2) That this call shall include the following “Agreement,” (if there is one) as discussed with Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ and presented to the church membership:

(State here “the agreement” (if there is one) that the committee and the prospective pastor have already reached.)

- (3) That a written copy of this recommendation be placed in the minutes of our church and also that a copy be given to the new pastor.

The Pastor Search Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**(Letter to the Church Announcing Weekend Schedule to Introduce the Prospective Pastor)**

(Example Two)

(Date)

Dear Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church,

As your Pastor Search Committee we would like to invite you to meet our prospective pastor before you are asked to vote on Sunday morning, (date). We have planned a *Get-Acquainted Weekend* with the following schedule.

***Get-Acquainted Weekend***

**Friday, (date) 7:30 p.m. Meeting of Deacons, Staff, Administrative Committee, Pastor Search Committee, and Spouses with Prospective Pastor and His Wife**

**Saturday, (date) 7:00 p.m. Meeting in the Sanctuary with All Church Membership**  
*The prospective pastor will give his testimony, family and ministry background, and possibly a brief mini-sermon. His wife and children will also be introduced.*

**8:00 p.m.** *Each family is asked to bring "finger food" (food that will not require refrigeration or heating, please) to share. Please bring your food to the Family Life Center by 6:30, in order that everyone, including the Family Life Center Committee, will be able to be in the sanctuary at 7:00. Drinks and meat will be furnished. You will have an opportunity to greet the prospective pastor and his family.*

**Sunday, (date) 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship Service in the Sanctuary**  
*Prospective pastor will preach the message. His wife and children will also be introduced to the congregation.*

**After Service Secret-Ballot Vote**

*Vote will be taken with all members present having an opportunity to vote for this prospective pastor.*

We as a committee are unanimous in our decision to recommend this minister to become the next pastor of our church. He has agreed to come as our pastor upon the approval of the congregation. We thank you for your confidence in us and your prayers throughout the past \_\_\_\_\_ months and ask that you continue to pray with us as details are worked out.

We are excited and looking forward to this special weekend. **Remember . . .**

***You Are Invited to the Get-Acquainted Weekend***

***Meet the Prospective Pastor and His Family***

***Saturday, (date) 7:00 p.m. Meeting in the Sanctuary with All Church Membership***

***8:00 p.m. Church-wide Fellowship in the Family Life Center***

***Sunday, (date) 11:00 a.m. Prospective Pastor will Preach Sermon***

Pastor Search Committee: (List Names)



## **Chapter Eleven**

### **Engaging The Pastor**

The search committee must not allow their exuberant enthusiasm to short-circuit the call process. Still, much needs to be done to ensure a positive transition for the new pastor. Although some items can be assigned to others outside the committee and certain concerns automatically fall under another church committee's purview, the search team must monitor all procedures designed to usher the new pastor into his new place of ministry. These efforts must exceed the physical aspects of the transfer.

#### ***A. Considering Emotional Transitions***

A pastor moving his family to a new area and leaving a church and people he loved and served for years takes its toll. Remember that the pastor you called will have just lost a sense of identity with a former community and congregation. Then, his family is in the process of disengagement from a group of people who were, in most cases, their arch supporters and extended family.

Endings are always tough. Your church and new pastor will need to reverse the process of endings. The church family you represented in the search effort recently experienced an ending with a former pastor. Now, your new pastor is experiencing emotional pangs in endings with his former church.

The endings process will continue for several months into the new pastor's ministry among you. This is not a surgical cleavage. The transition is always slow if the prior relationships were meaningful and productive.

Both the congregation and new pastor are now participants in the "beginnings" stage of the transition experience. Re-engagements are necessary to establish the right relationship between pastor and people. A series of events and experiences will provide a basis for enhancing the establishment of new relationships. Some of these will be material, spiritual, physical, and emotional.

Simple gestures like a quick phone contact, a short letter, mailing a prayer card, sending a recent picture of your family, and dropping off "grace notes" all ease the transition. Oh yes, sharing some ice cream and cake along the way won't hurt a bit!

Such efforts can begin to open communications immediately and convey to the new pastor an earnest desire to engage in a covenant of partnership for kingdom building. The committee should encourage the development of procedural meetings, encounters, and structures to engage the new pastor family with the entire church family. Special orientation sessions can be helpful as well.

As difficult as it seems, church members need to remember and put into practice that although you do not have to transfer your love from the former to the present pastor, you must transfer your loyalty.

Many interim pastors preach a message the Sunday before the new pastor starts his ministry on some timely topic like "Developing Effective Pastor-People Relationships."

## ***B. Reviewing The Needs***

The committee would do well to develop a flow-chart, time-line, or check-list to offer direction in accomplishing the vital tasks in getting the new pastor settled within the community and church family.

Matters that need to be addressed:

- Consider any needs covering personal travel for pastor's family to the church field
- Review temporary living accommodations that might be needed
- \$500.00 adjustment allowance for expenses incurred not covered in household transfer
- Inspect and prepare the parsonage (if one is used by the church)
- Introducing the new pastor to realtors
- Inspect the pastor's office/study at the church for refurbishing if needed
- Arrange for food preparation during the first several days on the field
- Coordinate moving dates with pastor
- Contract with professional transfer company to move the pastor's household goods
- List other items and needs

## ***C. Installing The Pastor***

The installation service may be observed in a regular morning or evening worship hour or planned for another specified time. The main purpose of such a service is the mutual dedication and commitment of the pastor and the congregation.

(The service of installation offered below is a modified order of the one used by a Baptist church in South Carolina. It is understandable that this style service might not meet all needs and fit all worship styles. It is intended to merely serve as a starter piece. Each church will want to develop its own service.)

### **INSTALLATION SERVICE**

The Prelude

A Word of Welcome

The Call to Worship

The Invocation

The Scripture Reading (Jer. 1:4-10; 1 Tim. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5)

The Anthem

The Sermon

The Statement of the Presiding Minister

## An Affirmation between People and Pastor

*Leader:* Having been called as pastor of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church, will you now reaffirm before these people your faith in God the Father, Creator of all that is, in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and in the Holy Spirit as your teacher; and do you take the people of this church to be your people, this community to be your field of labor, without reservation of heart or mind?

*Pastor:* I do.

*Leader:* Do you promise to give yourself faithfully to the ministry of the Word and to prayer, to be a good shepherd of this flock of God, to minister to the needs of all alike, to be the friend of all who will permit you, to seek always to build up the body of Christ, to share the good news of Jesus Christ in this community and in the whole world, if wronged to forgive as you expect to be forgiven, to keep yourself mentally alert and physically fit, and to lead this church in the ways of Christ as the Holy Spirit may give you wisdom and strength?

*Pastor:* I do. I will seek in all ways to act in accordance with God's will, as discerned in the Scriptures and prayer, mediated by the wisdom of the Christian community, and struggled within the depths of my soul. I gratefully accept the responsibility as pastor of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church and happily join in its mission and ministry in this community and in the whole world. I will faithfully offer the gifts, experience, and training I have been given to work with you in the service of our Lord. At the same time, I would lay claim upon your support and guidance, that together, we may serve as instruments of God's peace.

*Leader:* You have heard from your pastor his willing acceptance of the responsibility he will bear as minister of the Gospel in this place. But his role is not a solitary one. It is our heritage as Baptists that the ministry is shared by all Christians and that the priesthood is for all believers. Therefore, let the members of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church now stand and make its declaration.

Do you confess your faith in God as your Heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, and in the Holy Spirit as your teacher; and do you promise, in dependence on divine grace, to serve the Lord and walk in His ways, sharing faithfully and regularly in the worship and service of His church?

*Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church:*

We do. We now renew our vows of loyalty to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We willingly covenant together with one another, with our pastor, and with the whole church to extend the Gospel in its power and purity into this community and all the earth, to be a church where all are welcome and loved, where hearts are healed, where the gifts of all persons are treasured, and from which Christian love is released into the world.

*Leader:* (Prayer) For the privilege of being followers of Christ and coworkers with His people, for the love, joy, and peace the Spirit brings into our life together, for the acceptance of our lives in service, and for the strengthening we receive from Thee.

*Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church:*

We give thanks, O God, and pray that You will give us spiritual wisdom to know more of you.

*Chairman of the Deacons:*

As a congregation we have testified to our willingness to support and cooperate with our pastor in every good way. In addition, it is appropriate for us to recognize our special relationship with his family. We now promise to sustain them and love them as our own.

*Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church.*

And now, (give pastor and wife's name), we receive you warmly into the life of this church. We will laugh with you, weep with you, support, and nurture you. We will look to you for an example but will try not to require more than we ought. As we surround you with our love, we set you free to live the lives God as given you.

The Recognition of Guests

The Giving of Greetings

The Hymn

The Benediction

***D. Planning The Reception***

The search committee can broker the reception with other groups or committees in the church. Set a time convenient for the pastor accompanied by the hour that will accommodate the best possible response of the church family. Many churches use the Sunday afternoon following the morning installation service. Make certain that the community and other area churches are informed about the welcoming reception extending them an invitation to participate.

***E. Providing Pertinent Information***

The items and services listed below should be most helpful to the new pastor.

1. Membership list including phone numbers (pictorial directory, if available) (Family membership list)
2. Annual reports (past three years)
3. Newsletters (past year)
4. Worship bulletins; average attendance for worship and Sunday School
5. Financial reports, current budget, next year's proposed budget, status of indebtedness
6. Minutes: church, deacons, committees, etc.
7. Job descriptions and specific assignments of employees and volunteer leadership
8. Listing of church officers, committees, and other leaders

9. Calendar of special/annual events
10. Calendar of regular meetings and programs
11. Maps: a) location of church members, b) community, c) state
12. List of places where church does business (office supply, grocery, plumber, etc.)
13. List of neighboring churches
14. Church history – special information – stories – etc.
15. Constitution and By-laws, policies (use of building, weddings, memorial funds, etc.), procedure manuals
16. Information about what was accomplished during interim period
17. Keys to every door with locks in church building and parlorium
18. Instructions about the heating system, sound system, etc.
19. Worship resources--hymnal, order of worship for special occasions, traditions, and common practices/patterns.
20. Community services—school system, local taxes, welcome wagon, hospitals, organizations and services, funeral homes, etc.
21. List of persons with special needs (shut-ins, recent change in family or job status, people who have been close to previous pastor or interim)
22. Goals: long-range and short term
23. Introduction to the staff at the local Baptist association
24. Introduction to State Convention staff

Give consideration to providing the new pastor with a helpful manual published by the Baptist Sunday School Board entitled, The First Two Years: Getting Started in A Church, by Bruce Gruubs.

## **Chapter Twelve**

### **Closing The Work**

It is celebration time for the committee! Indeed, it has been a “journey of discovery” and not a “road to despair.”

The search team is now seeking closure for its work.

Every search team would do well to consider being responsible for the agenda of the night service following the morning on which the pastor was called. Each member could share a testimony about what God did in your life during the search process. No, you do not want to dwell on the qualities of the pastor called by the church. The basic idea is to allow the church family to experience something about the mighty workings of God demonstrated in the lives of the search team. Such a time would also allow a personal word of thanks to be expressed to the congregation by each search group member.

Notifying the various denominational agencies for address changes would be helpful. The church secretary is familiar with the different organizations to contact for this purpose. Your association office and *Baptist Courier* would appreciate receiving brief notes, perhaps a biographical sketch, and picture.

The local media is a productive way of sharing the happening with the larger, local community. Using these mediums will be a good introduction to the immediate area where the church is located.

In the event that any prospective candidates have not been contacted, be sure to write them a letter sharing your good news.

Letters of appreciation mailed to any persons, groups, businesses, or resource entities should be mailed within two weeks after the pastor has been called.

In a few churches, the committee might need to be alert to the budgeting procedures to ensure that the agreements are being honored and handled according to the method approved by the church. The chairman might simply ask, “everything going all right?”

During the times of contacting, interviewing, and sharing between the pastor and search group, it is only understandable that meaningful relationships have already been cultivated. Such results are productive and encouraging. The committee should not assume, however, that it must remain in place to serve as a “monitoring group” to determine if the pastor is performing satisfactorily. Neither should the team interpret its role as being special guardians desiring to protect the pastor. Rarely, but occasionally, a search committee will claim special rights to the new pastor because of their involvement in the search process; guard against these possibilities.

As the Apostle Paul said, “Finally, but not immediately,” one more session needs to be held. This last of many meetings can serve as an opportunity for thanksgiving and praise to God for His faithful leadership and provisions. The members have developed close ties during the recent months; therefore, this final gathering as an official group will be most meaningful.

The time spent together in this closing meeting can also serve as an evaluation session. Such a gathering within a few weeks following the installation service could prove beneficial to assess the effectiveness of the process utilized in the search. The South Carolina Baptist Convention or other resource persons you

used for the training effort and consultations would appreciate your feedback on the suggestions made in the material that you might have used. An evaluation form is placed at the end of this chapter; the SCBC requests that you complete this piece and mail it to the proper address. You are also encouraged to offer additional suggestions you feel would be helpful for other search committees.

The final act of the search group's work is done when the committee makes a special request to the church in a regular business meeting. This move brings complete closure when the group asks that it be officially disbanded.

Prayerfully, your group can say with the Apostle Paul, "Rejoice! And again I say, rejoice."

## EVALUATION FORM

Please be so kind as to complete this form and mail it to:

Lexington Baptist Association  
255 Two Notch Road  
Lexington, SC 29073

Rate the following services on a scale of 1 (the lowest) to 5 (the highest) or...email: [LBA@MYLBA.org](mailto:LBA@MYLBA.org)

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. We were treated in a friendly, courteous manner when we contacted the Lexington Baptist Association.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. We received the assistance that we requested from the LBA staff and/or office.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The training for our Pastor Search Committee was helpful.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The materials used in the training session were helpful both in training and in the fulfillment of our responsibility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. When we had additional questions to ask during our search, we found the LBA staff and/or office helpful.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |