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PASTOR SEARCH

REV 2015

Pastor Search provides strategic guidance for General Baptist churches when the occasion arises to search for a pastor. Using tried and true methodology easily adapted to any church setting, this handbook provides invaluable advice and assistance to the pastor search team.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| To Our Search Teams _____ | 1 |
| Getting Started _____ | 2 |
| Our Pastor Has Resigned _____ | 4 |
| Gathering Information _____ | 12 |
| Narrowing the Search _____ | 15 |
| Presenting the Prospective Pastor _____ | 19 |
| The Interim Pastor _____ | 22 |
| Appendix 1 Congregational Survey _____ | 26 |
| Appendix 2 Reference Release Form _____ | 28 |
| Appendix 3 Suggested Interview Questions _____ | 29 |
| Appendix 4 Seven New Trends in the Pastor Search Process _____ | 33 |
| Appendix 5 The Four Levels of Scrutiny of Pastoral Search Committees _____ | 35 |
| Appendix 6 An Outline for a Pastoral Call Document _____ | 37 |
| Salary Worksheet _____ | 41 |
| Contact Information _____ | 45 |
| Company Information _____ | 46 |

TO OUR SEARCH TEAMS

To Our Search Teams

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

Within this booklet you will find items and sections that will be helpful in the search process as well as also being helpful in the general administration of the church. For example, the evaluation form suggested for the newly called pastor also works well for an established pastorate. Advice on setting up a salary package where the pastor is recognized as an employee of the church is important not only to the newly called pastor but also to the established pastor.

It may be wise for the user to first read through the entire booklet in one sitting. Later the contents can be reviewed section by section as the need arises.

SECTION HIGHLIGHTS

Section Headings have been designed in such a way that the user may quickly turn to the section of interest. The section headings have been included on each page that is included in the section thus allowing a quick reference point for section location.

Notes sections have been provided at the end of many of the sections. Be sure this becomes a working booklet for you by including your notes and questions as you work through the process.

APPENDIX HIGHLIGHTS

Several appendices have been included with sample documents or background information that should prove useful to the search team.

LOOKING AHEAD

As you and your search team work through the process of pastor search, please take notes on the points of this booklet that prove helpful. Also, please note sections that are not as clear as you would like them to be. Finally, if additional information should be included, please indicate what could be added. If you report these suggestions they can be incorporated in the next revision of the booklet.



Dr. Franklin R. Dumond
Director of Congregational Ministries
June 1, 2015

Getting Started

Many people serve only once in a lifetime on a pastor search committee. As you serve realize that you have been given a special trust by both the church and the Lord of the Church.

This handbook has been designed with the unique needs of the General Baptist church in mind. It has been planned to be practical in nature and user-friendly in its organizational detail. While no handbook can be comprehensive, it is hoped that this work will be adequate to guide search committees as they lead their congregations to find God's man to lead God's church.

One early question for the church without a pastor is, "Who can lead us in this time of transition?" It may be that another staff member or other church members can provide this pastoral leadership in the transitional time period. If the search process looks to be more than three months or if the previous pastor was in place for a long term, the church would be wise to secure the services of an interim or transitional pastor.

The interim or transitional pastor may then serve as a sounding board or consultant to the pastor search committee while ensuring ongoing ministry within the larger work of the congregation. Even in transitional stages the broader ministry of the church must continue.

The work of the committee will be guided by the constitution and bylaws and/or the policies and procedures of the church. These should be studied carefully by the congregation and the search committee to establish a framework for the committee's work. The committee must remember that its purpose is to assist the church in finding the pastor God has called to the church. The congregation at large must remember that the inner workings of that process have been assigned to a select committee and not to a committee of the whole. In General Baptist church polity the ultimate decision-making authority rests with the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The successful search committee will spend much time in prayer seeking God's will. Only the Lord can guide the committee perfectly to find God's man to lead God's church. The search process can never be seen as just a personnel selection process. Human reasoning can never be adequate for spiritual tasks. Regular praying by both the committee and the

GETTING STARTED

congregation helps keep the right spirit among the people and helps keep the right task before the search committee.

In an earlier day search committees were labeled as pulpit committees. The implication of that label is that the way a person preached provided the determining factor in calling a pastor. In these days, however, the successful pastor search committee will not only evaluate preaching skills but also leadership and personal ministry skills.

As you read this material and move through the stages of your search, remember that speed is not the priority; finding and doing the will of God is your task.

NOTES:

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

Our Pastor Has Resigned

When the pastor announces a resignation, the church enters into a period of grief and transition. Generally there is disappointment over the resignation, especially if it is a long-term pastor who leaves out of a compulsion that it is God's timing that leads to another place of ministry. Even when the parting is a stressful one common courtesy and Christian brotherhood demand we give attention to a few details that will aid both the church and the departing pastor in the transition. The church cannot prepare to welcome a new pastor until first waving good-bye to the departing pastor. The suggestions printed below may help church members say good-bye in practical, helpful ways.

W A V I N G G O O D - B Y E

- 1) Recognize the achievements of the past with photo albums and scrapbooks.
- 2) Convey appreciation for years of faithful service through smaller fellowship events for the pastor and his family.
- 3) Send cards and letters with words of appreciation.
- 4) Arrange snapshots of family groups to be presented to the pastor. Be certain those photos are identified with dates and names so that even if the pastor does not return frequently to 'catch up' with these families they can still be remembered fondly.
- 5) Organize a farewell reception. Plan well. Invite early. Provide for participation by the community.
- 6) Offer a severance package. Many business professionals are allowed accrued vacation and sick days along with other bonuses when they conclude their years of faithful service. A pre-determined severance package could address in advance what the church established as a fair reward for 10, 15, 20, 25, or 30 years of faithful service. A sample agreement follows.

When our pastor honorably concludes his service we intend to provide severance pay as follows:

After 10 years of service 2 weeks' severance

After 15 years of service 3 weeks' severance

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

After 20 years of service 4 weeks' severance

After 25 years of service 5 weeks' severance

After 30 years of service 6 weeks' severance

- 7) Review housing arrangements. Pastors who live several years in a parsonage effectively pay for the church-owned home, will they be given any equity?
- 8) Moving day: Who will help?
- 9) Make a phone call to check up on the pastor after he arrives in his new location.
- 10) Make it a point to remember birthday/anniversary dates in the first year the pastor and his family move away.

Saying good-bye may be painful emotionally, but it is an inevitable part of life as we know it. Developing a strategy and a pre-arranged plan helps everyone feel better about those fond farewells and allows everyone to have a part in waving good-bye.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE TRANSITION

Pastoral transitions have been periods of peril for many churches. This need not be the case. The transition period may be aided by the ministry of the former pastor and well-placed leaders in the church. Churches passing from the pastoral leadership of one pastor to another may be well served to secure the services of an interim or transitional pastor.

The resigning pastor, especially after several years of fruitful ministry, has a responsibility to the congregation to assist in the transitional time period. Generally a pastor will give 30-60 days' notice of the transition; and often in a longer term pastorate or when a pastor is retiring, awareness or notice will be even longer. The resigning pastor can assist in the transition by

- 1) maintaining the ministries of the church. All pastors are interim in the sense that each serves for only a period of time before the transition to another ministry assignment. Even in the transitional time frame, the life and work of the church continues.

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

- 2) organizing information and records. Many pastors have a wealth of information about family relationships within the church they have learned over the years. Many pastors also have vital church records that need to be in the possession of the church.
- 3) supporting and resourcing the work of the search committee. While the departing pastor will not generally name a successor, the pastor of the church has a responsibility to ensure that a proper process and a right spirit is put in place.
- 4) saying good-bye in healthy ways. In crisis transitions the departing pastor leaves just before relationships and trust are damaged beyond repair. In healthy transitions the departing pastor assists those healthy relationships developed across the years to more of a friend-to-friend style relationship rather than being maintained as pastor-to-member relationship.

At least three options exist for transitional leadership when the church has no elected pastor.

- 1) Calling a transitional pastor to lead the ongoing ministries of the church in the interim period. Transitional pastors lead churches to move from one pastor to another regardless of the reasons for being without a pastor. They help churches bring closure to one era of pastoral leadership and prepare for the launch of a new chapter in the life of the church.
- 2) Assigning pastoral responsibilities to other staff members according to their gifts and available time. The advantage of a multi-staff church is one of team-based ministry. Should an existing staff member take on the extra role of transitional pastor, the church should carefully evaluate the extra time demands and adequately compensate the staff member for those services.
- 3) Enlisting a series of preachers to preach in some or all of the meetings where sermons are appropriate. This step has the advantage of giving members the opportunity to hear a variety of preachers and may assist in the transition as congregants get accustomed to other preaching styles and other pastoral personalities.

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

SELECTING THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

The current bylaws of the church should govern the search process and the selection of the search committee. If no guidelines are found, church leaders should consult with denominational officials regarding the nature and size of the committee.

If the policies and procedures in the bylaws seem outdated or ineffective, a proposal to revise them should be considered before the committee begins its detailed work.

I have observed several common mistakes churches and pastor search committees make in the process of searching for a new pastor.

- Forming a pastor search committee that doesn't represent all the church
- Forming a pastor search committee that is too large
- Forming a pastor search committee that is too small
- Not having a clear assignment from the church
- Not having clear guidelines for committee operations
- Not doing a congregational self-study or health assessment
- Working with a poorly organized or lone ranger search process
- Considering the interim or transitional pastor as a candidate
- Not being honest with candidates about the life of the church
- Not preparing well for interviews
- Not being discreet when visiting a prospective pastor's church
- Not checking references thoroughly
- Moving through the process too quickly
- Not considering the candidate's family in the process
- Proceeding from a human resources perspective of an employment search rather than a spiritual perspective of finding the will of God

THE SIZE OF THE COMMITTEE . Generally those churches searching for a full-time vocational pastor will be well served to have a working committee of five to seven members. A smaller congregation searching for a bi-vocational pastor may be served by three to five members. If the committee is too small, then segments of the congregation may not be represented in the process. If the committee is too large, everything about the process becomes more complicated than necessary.

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

Some churches elect alternates to serve in case one of the regular members of the committee cannot continue. This approach is not recommended except in special circumstances, unless the church bylaws require it. If there are special circumstances, then it is important that these be spelled out clearly when the committee is selected. Because the need for alternates does not occur often, the church can elect a replacement should a committee member be unable to continue.

Search committee members should exhibit personal characteristics of spiritual growth and discernment, active Bible knowledge, and faithful attendance and support of the church. Effective search committee members will also be team players, able to maintain confidentiality, have the freedom to attend meetings and travel, and have no agenda based on self-interest.

Search committee members should represent all segments of the church. In no case should a church ask a person to serve on the committee just to appease a faction in the church. The membership of the committee needs to consist of persons who feel a sense of leadership of the Lord to serve and who thus serve to find His will rather than to promote the special interests of a factional group.

ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE. The election of the pastor search committee should be done in accordance with the election procedures agreed to by the church in its bylaws or policy manuals. If a church assigns the search committee to be drawn from existing officers of the church, then the committee comes into existence when the pastor's resignation is accepted. If the church uses at-large members to fill the search committee, then a nominations' process should be used comparable to that used to fill other positions or roles within the church.

Because the search committee undertakes a special task it is best if this task is not assigned to an existing board or team that already has ministry tasks to accomplish. Assigning the search process to the deacons or an existing personnel committee may seem efficient but in the long run may limit the process since ongoing ministry must compete for the time and attention of members who are also assigned the special task of serving on the search team.

It is much better if a team of 3-5 people works quietly and confidentially on this special task prior to making a recommendation to the congregation.

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

ORGANIZING THE COMMITTEE. After its selection, the committee should organize with a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and prayer coordinator. Both the membership of the committee and its organization should be communicated to the church. Throughout its work the committee should regularly communicate its process without communicating the detailed work of the committee. Throughout its work the committee should regularly call on the church for prayer and fasting to search for the will of God.

A CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE. The pastor search process involves four very distinct aspects for both the committee and the congregation.

First, this should be a very spiritual experience. Every committee member's personal devotional life should be enhanced in these days. Spiritual sensitivity to the Lord's direction and leading will need to be sharpened. Because the pastor search committee is now on the "front lines," spiritual assault and attack may be anticipated to come from very unexpected sources! The Lord, however, has not brought the committee to this point to be abandoned; He intends to empower and encourage committee members who do His will!

Second, this should be an educational experience. A great deal will be learned about oneself, the church, and the Kingdom of God in these next few weeks/months. To help in that educational experience the committee would do well to study together a very useful book, *One Size Does Not Fit All*, by Gary McIntosh.

Another important aspect of the educational process is to see how other churches your size and larger operate. There may be a need to visit other churches or to dialogue with members from other churches in this process. Be open. The Lord has a great deal to teach every member of the committee in these next few weeks/months.

Third, this should be a confidential experience. Be very careful in sharing information about process and progress. Minutes should be kept of committee meetings but these meetings should not be discussed with other groups or with other people. **No matter how well-intentioned and harmless it may seem to share information with other people or other groups, it will be very important that the committee work stays within the committee.** Reports to the congregation should be regular, agreed upon and reviewed by the committee members, and general in nature until recommendations are ready.

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

Fourth, this should be a deliberate experience. There is no need to rush the work of the Lord. Take time to find the Lord's direction; He will provide it. The days are long gone when there would be a large number of pastors applying for the position. The available pool of pastors in our denomination and in other denominations is getting smaller and smaller every year. Many churches are now taking a year or so to fill their staff positions.

The nature of the committee work should entail

- 1) regular meetings. You will need to meet frequently as you organize and go about your task.
- 2) careful assessment of the church's needs. Beware the squeaky wheel syndrome where a few people voice anonymous observations about needs and goals. Be careful that you avoid falling back into the way it once was or engaging in a ministry that will maintain the status quo; you are helping the church prepare for the future. An excellent way to do this would be to lead the church to undertake a Church Health Assessment or Refocus Process developed specially for our denomination. Both Pastoral Ministries and Congregational Ministries departments are able to assist in these kinds of evaluations through the Church Health Initiative.
- 3) an effort to understand the diversity of your church's current ministries and current congregational makeup.
- 4) input from members of the pastoral staff, if your church is blessed with a staff ministry.

MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY . After its selection, the committee should take intentional steps to maintain the confidentiality of the process. This is important for two very practical reasons.

First, private interviews protect the confidentiality of the candidate. Many candidates will already be serving in a church and will not want it publicly known that they are initially exploring other options. Some candidates will be invited by the committee to submit information and it is unfair if the committee does not keep that information private and confidential. Occasionally pastors lose credibility with the congregation they

OUR PASTOR HAS RESIGNED

serve because a search committee requested information from them that in turn was not protected from public disclosure.

Second, private interviews protect the integrity of the congregation. When candidates are paraded publicly before the congregation then members know that three or four candidates are being considered. It is entirely possible that preferences can be developed based on very limited information. Thus when the final recommendation of the committee is made some members may resist the recommendation based on their limited information of who was being considered.

The ultimate breach of confidentiality comes when a ballot is submitted with two or more names for consideration as pastor. Under no circumstances should a committee propose a public choice between two or more candidates. Narrowing the field to a single candidate is the responsibility of the committee. If this responsibility is ignored then the stage may be set for division and conflict if the election is 'close'. Even if only a few people vote for the losing candidate they may hesitate to extend trust and cooperation to the new pastor.

NOTES:

Gathering Information

Before accepting applications or information from available pastors, the search committee should engage in preparing profiles that represent the perceptions of the church and committee regarding the kind of pastor the church needs. It is also important to prepare current profiles of the church and community. These profiles assist those most likely to be seriously considered by the committee and often provide keen insights for the committee and the congregation in this decision-making process.

PROFILE OF CONGREGATIONAL PERCEPTIONS

It is important to find out what the church desires in its pastor. If the expectations of the church are honest and are honestly met, the search process may lead to a successful, long-term pastorate.

Invite the congregation to respond in writing. Several model surveys are available, and a sample is included in the appendix. This page may be copied or adapted to meet the needs of the congregation.

You may get very good results by taking the time to explain the survey to the congregation and allowing at least one week for the survey to be completed. It is well to offer two series of weekend services for the return of the surveys. It is also important that extra copies of the survey be available in case folks forget to bring their copies back with them.

A congregational forum where members have the opportunity to voice their opinions may also enhance the survey responses. Comments in the forum should be limited to what people desire for the future of the church without references to the former pastor or to the search committee process. This experience is for hearing personal perceptions, not for evaluating their merits. Listen non-judgmentally.

A congregational forum will be well-organized if child care is available, a time limit is set, and microphones are used. A forum held in a fellowship hall or large assembly area will generally gain more useful results than one held in an auditorium setting. If possible, have a time of fellowship and refreshments after the meeting.

GATHERING INFORMATION

Understanding the expectations of the church is an important part of the committee's work. If the expectations are unrealistic or unbiblical the committee and other church leaders will want to engage in an educational, informational process to help the members come to terms with reality and the Bible.

PROFILE OF THE CHURCH

Many churches have data management software in their church offices that allows quick and easy profiling of the members of the congregation. Demographic profiles are important for both current and future ministry of the church.

A good profile of the church can be developed from a compilation of the last five annual Church Growth Reports. These reports are provided annually to all General Baptist churches. Copies are generally on file with the church clerk or in the church office. Associational report books often summarize these reports. Most churches also provide a copy to the denomination.

A good profile of the church will also include a short history of the congregation. Dates of organization and building dedications along with other key milestones help both the prospective pastor and the committee gain a clearer understanding of how the Lord has been at work in the church.

A clear understanding of membership, outreach, growth trends, and budgets will be gained from this profile. This information assists both the church and prospective pastor to more objectively understand the life and ministry of the congregation in the previous few years.

PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY

A good profile of the community will assist the prospective pastor and the committee in determining if a good match seems possible. Many search committees will find that the local Chamber of Commerce or school district will already have much of the community profile gathered. Many times this information is already displayed on web sites and can be readily adapted to the needs of the committee.

GATHERING INFORMATION

The community profile should include this information:

- Census data about population and ethnic makeup
- Description of type of community (rural, suburban, inner city, transitional, etc.)
- Socioeconomic status of the community
- Special situations such as tourism or major industries
- Schools
- Health-care facilities
- Other churches and ministries and percentage of unreached population
- Short history of the community

GATHERING PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE PROFILES

Some resumes/profiles will arrive at the church when the word of an opening spreads. These will often come from individuals not currently serving a church or from those who desire to relocate. As these are processed, it is very important for the committee to establish why the applicant has taken this initiative.

All resumes/applications should be acknowledged with a letter of thanks and a request for prayer for the committee and church. A sample letter is in the appendix. The receipt of an application does not guarantee the applicant an interview or any further contact with the committee unless the committee determines to pursue that individual.

Suggestions for prospective pastors may be developed from other area pastors familiar with your church. Denominational officials who serve through General Baptist Ministries offices in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, may also be aware of pastors feeling led by the Lord to consider relocation. Officials at Oakland City University in Oakland City, Indiana, may be aware of pastors completing training and ready for a field assignment.

NOTES:

NARROWING THE SEARCH

Narrowing the Search

While each stage of the search process is important, no stage should be immersed in prayer more than the process of narrowing the search. Human knowledge and judgment are inadequate here, and only spiritual discernment is sufficient. Spiritual discernment is a gift to those who earnestly seek it, as illustrated in the following Scriptures:

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3 NIV).

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5 NIV).

EXPERIENCE, TENURE, EDUCATION

Study the applicants. Information received from the applicants should be shared with the committee with the clear understanding that this is confidential, private information that should not be shared or copied in any way.

When the committee looks for matches between the congregation’s perceptions/ the community’s needs and the candidate’s profile, a serious disconnect may exist with a particular candidate. If that is the case, God may be guiding the committee to no longer consider that prospect.

The committee will want to consider experience as a key factor in the search process. Not only should the committee consider years of service but also types of experiences in ministry. As a general rule, the more a person’s experience has been in one particular setting or type of church, the more his way of doing ministry is influenced by that setting.

Tenure should also be considered. A look at the average tenure in church positions may indicate a series of short stays that need to be evaluated. A pastor can break out of this pattern, but the pattern may continue. This fact should be an important topic covered by the interview process if discussions continue.

Education should also be explored. The educational qualifications of each candidate should be measured against the congregation’s expectations. Educational degrees should be evaluated and unaccredited degree programs should be given serious scrutiny.

NARROWING THE SEARCH

Continuing education is an important part of ministry in the 21st century, so it is helpful to investigate the prospective pastor's desire to continue growing in his knowledge and skills.

Basic academic degrees most often listed by Baptist pastors include

- Associate of Arts—a two-year degree program often general in nature
- Bachelor of Arts—a four-year degree program defined by its major field
- Master of Religious Education—generally a two-year degree program following a four-year degree
- Master of Divinity—a three-year (90 hour) degree program that emphasizes languages, theology, church administration, and pastoral care
- Doctor of Ministry—a two-year course of seminars focused on more specific aspects of ministry such as Church Leadership or Preaching and a dissertation or ministry project defended in an academic setting.
- Doctor of Philosophy—at least two years of advanced study plus a written academic thesis. This degree is generally earned by those who intend to teach in an academic setting.

General Baptists provide for a Certificate of Pastoral Ministries for those who complete a course of home study directed by the Department of Pastoral Ministries through the LAMP program.

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND OTHER INTERESTS

It is important to consider the prospective pastor's family background as well as his present family situation. Is the pastor married? Does the pastor enjoy a stable, healthy marriage? Will your church consider a pastor who has never been married or who is widowed or divorced?

Other interests. Hobbies and work habits indicate whether the pastor can maintain a balanced lifestyle. The most effective pastors understand the part a balanced lifestyle plays in the life and work of ministry.

NARROWING THE SEARCH

NARROWING THE FIELD

When all applications have been received or at the end of the six to eight week window for receiving them, the committee should prayerfully narrow the search to the top three to five candidates. This is done by prayerfully seeking God's leadership, both collectively as part of the committee and individually as committee members sense the will of God.

Write to the top prospects and request additional information. Be certain to address this correspondence to their home addresses to avoid any potential misunderstanding and misinformation at their church offices. When writing to them request any information your committee does not already have but considers necessary. Send them the information you have gathered as part of your church and community profiles. You may wish to request

- audio or video tapes of two sermons preached in the last two years.
- references if they have not already been provided.
- permission to consider the candidate further. (Note: If this permission is denied, God may be leading the candidate to consider another ministry setting.)

Write the persons you will not be considering. Thank them for allowing the initial contact, but explain with courtesy that the committee will not be considering them at this time. Ask for their prayers, and assure them of your prayers. Keep their information in a secure file. God may lead you to reconsider one of these candidates.

Prayerfully narrow your search to one candidate on whom you can focus your attention by carefully reviewing the biographical profile gathered and the audio/video tapes provided, along with the other insights you have gained in the search process. Just because you decide to consider one person at this time does not necessarily mean you will choose this candidate as your pastor.

Now that you have come to committee consensus on one person to consider, the committee needs to

- check references.
- interview the prospect and spouse in a neutral setting.
- decide whether to continue with this prospect.

NARROWING THE SEARCH

- hear the prospect preach by discreetly attending a worship service or arranging for a candid, unedited video tape of a typical worship service the pastor led.
- interview a second time in the church's community and allow the candidate to understand the setting and nature of the community the church serves.
- conduct a negotiation conference to discuss budget issues, work schedules, and transition time-table.
- decide whether to continue with the presentation/recommendation process.

NOTES:

Presenting the Prospective Pastor

At this point the pastor search committee members have agreed that God has led them to this prospect. The prospective pastor has agreed that God is leading toward being available to serve this particular church. Now it is time for the church to decide if this candidate is called and equipped by God to become the pastor.

INFORM THE CHURCH. An attractive brochure with biographical information and a picture of the pastor and his family can be prepared. With video projection, family pictures can also be displayed as part of the weekly gathering before the pastor arrives for full consideration. The committee members may offer some personal testimonies regarding their reasons for bringing this pastor at this time. These testimonies may be shared in Sunday School departments with one shared in each worship service.

One week before the prospective pastor and family visit, the church should be called to prayer and information should be shared on how the recommendation, vote, and announcement of results will be handled.

SCHEDULE TIME WITH CHURCH GROUPS. During the visit weekend, provide opportunity for the prospective pastor to meet with several church groups. Make the schedule known in advance, and encourage people to make it a priority on their calendars.

Host a church-wide reception. On the Saturday evening of the weekend visit, provide an informal church-wide fellowship time in which the prospective pastor and family can meet and visit with members and friends of the congregation. Make it a casual time without a formal receiving line, but be certain that committee members guide the event so the prospective pastor's time is not dominated by a few people.

Invite the prospective pastor to share his testimony, and allow the congregation to ask questions.

THE PROSPECTIVE PASTOR PREACHES. The prospective pastor will preach at Morning Worship just as any other guest preacher. Inform him of who will lead the service and how the invitation/response time is handled when there is a guest pastor in the pulpit.

PRESENTING THE PROSPECTIVE PASTOR

THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE PROSPECTIVE PASTOR. In keeping with the bylaws of the church, the committee will present a recommendation to the church to call a pastor. It is helpful if this can be done as closely as possible to the weekend visit. Many churches will use the Sunday evening of that visit weekend to come together for the formal recommendation. Since this is a business decision of the congregation, prior announcement of the meeting must be made in keeping with the bylaws. It is possible to give several weeks' public notice of a meeting to elect a pastor without giving the final recommendation until the weekend visit, if that preserves the prospective pastor's current standing in an existing ministry setting.

The church vote must be taken in accordance with established procedures of the church. The recommendation should define the nature of the call being extended. The congregation should have full information regarding salary, moving expenses, housing, anticipated starting date, and any other details that would help church members make an informed, prayerful decision. Generally this will be a secret ballot vote with a two-thirds majority of votes cast in the affirmative to call a pastor. The congregation should be informed immediately of the results. Tellers are wise to count the ballots on the platform in full view of the assembled congregation.

If the church accepts the committee's recommendation, the church is ready to move into a new era of ministry. If the recommendation is not accepted, the congregation's disagreement means not enough members interpreted the information available to them the same way committee members interpreted the information available. This should lead the committee to review communication with the church to see if improvements can be made in preparing for a future recommendation.

The prospective pastor should be made aware of the congregation's decision according to a prearranged plan. The pastor may still be in the community and able to make a short acceptance statement to the congregation. There should be a follow-up letter from the search committee.

The church should be informed verbally and in writing of the decision. Call the congregation to prayer, thanking God for providing a pastor to lead the church. Encourage the church to pray daily for the new pastor in the transition from one church to another.

PRESENTING THE PROSPECTIVE PASTOR

The search committee can ensure a smooth transition by helping the congregation say hello to the new pastor.

S A Y I N G H E L L O

1. Provide a record of the past with a good church history for the new pastor.
2. Host smaller fellowship events for the pastor and his family to allow time to get acquainted.
3. Send cards and letters to convey words of welcome.
4. Develop an updated photo directory of church families to help the new pastor learn names and family relationships quicker.
5. Organize a “Welcome to our Church” reception.
6. Offer a sabbatical program. Extended leave every five to seven years may encourage the pastor to stay for a long term.
7. Review housing arrangements. A parsonage may help the pastor move to the church with ease, but it may not enhance long-term residence. Establish a projected schedule for the pastor to have a housing allowance and the opportunity to purchase his own home after one or two years.
8. Help on moving day. Several helpers on moving day can greatly assist the pastor and his family set up in their new home.
9. Make a phone call. Check up on the new pastor and his family, but keep it short and friendly.
10. Be sensitive at holiday times. The pastor and his family may be far away from extended family and could genuinely appreciate an invitation to share some holiday traditions in their new community.

The Interim Pastor

Only rarely will the search process result in a new pastor selected and installed in a seamless transition from one pastor to the next. Generally there will be a break in sequence, an interim period, which can be used to strength the congregation if used intentionally or can result in weakness or lack of focus if used accidentally.

INTENTIONAL VS. ACCIDENTAL INTERIM. An intentional interim recognizes the transitional nature of this time frame in the congregation and provides for proactive steps to be taken both by the interim pastor and the congregational leaders to take full advantage of the situation. Thus, an effective, intentional interim period will likely result in a stronger, more focused congregation.

The accidental interim, on the other hand, will likely only focus on short term results and will often extend only to filling the pulpit from week to week.

LENGTH OF THE INTERIM. While each situation will be unique there are some general guidelines that can be helpful to establish the appropriate length of the interim period between pastors in a local church. Several questions will help frame an appropriate response to how long the interim should last.

First, how long will the search process take? The nature of the search process will itself determine, in part, the length of the interim. If a pool of candidates is readily available and if the search team and the congregation can quickly come to understand the Lord's will, the interim period may be shorter rather than longer. Often in this situation, it will be determined by how long it takes for the new pastor to disengage his current ministry so he can engage the new ministry.

Second, when will the congregation be ready to welcome a new pastor? This will vary not only from congregation to congregation but also from one specific situation to another. Generally, if the previous pastorate has been a lengthy one then the interim period will be longer rather than shorter. Of course there are always exceptions to this standard and increasingly congregations that have benefited from long-term pastorates are much more likely to begin their search prior to the departure of the long-term pastor. Often formal succession plans are in place well in advance of the retirement or relocation of a long-term pastor.

THE INTERIM PASTOR

The presence or absence of conflict in the departure of a pastor will impact the nature and length of the interim. If conflict resulted in the departure of the pastor then the interim should extend at least until that conflict is resolved. In the absence of conflict then the emotional climate of the congregation must be used to gauge when the timing is right to begin a new pastorate. How long will the congregation grieve the loss of their former pastor before they can be ready to welcome a new pastor?

Two more extreme cases may require longer interim periods between pastors. In the case of the sudden death or sudden retirement of a long-term pastor, the congregation should expect a longer interim. To make a premature choice could result in a selection that is unfair to all parties concerned. In these cases when sudden replacement is necessary, congregational leaders will do well to move slowly, deliberately so there is time for emotional and spiritual adjustment in the face of surprising circumstances.

A second case that may require a longer interim period occurs when a long-term pastorate ends without adequate plans for succession or replacement. Unfortunately when a pastor has served for a number of years and then relocates prior to retirement, the congregation may be unprepared to go on without him. In these cases the interim may need to extend to the point that the congregation is functioning in a healthy fashion once again.

THE WORK OF THE INTERIM PASTOR. While the specific assignment will vary from congregation to congregation there are several tasks that need to be accomplished during the interim period.

1. Worship services must be maintained. Thus at a minimum there will be a need for an interim preacher. The intentional interim will see this as a primary role of the interim pastor but will also recognize that there are a number of other tasks that need to be undertaken during the interim period. The accidental interim will see this as the totality of the work of an interim pastor and often the interim pulpit will be filled with a number of different pulpit guests.

2. Pastoral care must be offered. Often the interim pastor will only have limited time available and may not be readily available for crisis care of the membership. A strong small group ministry or a well-developed deacon care ministry can meet these needs. Indeed, it is likely that the interim period will see a higher degree of lay involvement since there is often the universal realization that more help is needed. Fortunate is the

THE INTERIM PASTOR

congregation that learns and takes steps to extend beyond the interim the benefits of this high degree of person-to-person care.

3. Organization must be reviewed. Because the interim pastor comes from without he can often see the organization of the congregation with a new perspective. At the very least there should be simple answers to why we do what we do. Beyond this the interim period is an excellent time to formally review constitutions, by-laws and policy manuals. If changes are not found to be necessary then at least the new pastor will have a ready reference file as he begins his ministry. If changes are found to be necessary or preferred the interim pastor can assist in this process.

4. Membership must be clarified. Since many churches meet in business session only rarely rather than monthly, it is important in the interim to clarify who is a member. Once the membership is established then the rights of the members should be stated. Who votes? What is the voting process? What advance notice is required to have a pastor election?

WHO SHOULD SERVE AS INTERIM PASTOR? The selection of an interim pastor should be done with the same level of scrutiny extended to the prospective pastor. Often this review process is shorter and less formal than in the pastor search process since the interim pastor is generally already known to the congregation or at least to its leaders.

Recently retired pastors often serve these interim assignments. They bring years of ministry experience to bear on the situation with the result that the congregation is strengthened during the period.

Ministers whose ministry does not currently include weekend preaching assignments also serve as a ready pool of interim candidates.

Denominational leaders are sometimes also available to serve as interim pastors.

If a church is blessed with a multiple staff it may be possible for one of the staff members to step forward as interim pastor. Care should be exercised in this situation, however, since it may be unfair to the staff member to expand his job expectations. Also, if the church prefers that the staff remain in place to serve alongside the new pastor it may foster a sense of competition with the new pastor if one of the staff members serves as interim pastor.

THE INTERIM PASTOR

SHOULD THE INTERIM PASTOR BE CALLED AS PASTOR? The tendency may exist to get comfortable with the interim pastor and to consider him as a potential pastor. If the interim pastor is to become the next pastor then the search committee should engage in as full an investigation and interview process of him as was extended to other candidates prior to their recommendation.

It is not uncommon for an interim agreement to state plainly that the interim pastor may not apply for the vacant position. Also the congregation's by-laws or policy manual may address this situation.

SHOULD THIS BE A PAID POSITION? The congregation would do well to offer some level of compensation to the interim pastor. While a full salary may not be appropriate, a genuine thank-you expressed in a check that at least covers expenses is appropriate. To determine the level of compensation the congregation should clarify expectations and specify remuneration much as in the calling of a bi-vocational pastor. (For more information see Pastor Compensation Handbook available by download at www.generalbaptist.com.)

NOTES:

APPENDIX 1 CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

Appendix 1 Congregational Survey

The purpose of the congregational survey is to enable the pastor search committee to more accurately gauge the thinking of the congregation. The congregation will express preferences and suggest options, and the pastor search committee will take them seriously. The ultimate charge to the pastor search committee, however, is to find the will of the Lord in the pastor search process. If you are a member of the church and of voting age according to the church bylaws, please complete this survey and return it to the church within the next two weeks.

Member background (The purpose of this section is to ensure that a cross-section of the church responds.)

I am: male female My age: 12-19 20-39 40-59 60+

1. In my opinion the minimum acceptable educational level of the new pastor is

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than high school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> high school graduate only |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attended college | <input type="checkbox"/> college graduate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attended seminary | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree from seminary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate degree from seminary | <input type="checkbox"/> formal education unimportant |

2. Years of prior pastoral or professional ministry experience preferred

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> no prior experience necessary | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years or less |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more than 5 years as pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years as pastor |

3. In my opinion the preferred age range for our new pastor is

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> no age preference | <input type="checkbox"/> 20-29 yrs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 yrs. | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 yrs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 yrs. | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 or more yrs. |

APPENDIX 1 CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

4. Would you wish the pastor search committee to consider a candidate who
has been divorced _____yes _____no
comes from outside General Baptist denomination _____yes _____no
has a gender of _____male _____female _____either

5. Please check what you consider to be the new pastor's five top ministry priorities.

- A gifted teacher who enables persons to learn and understand deep spiritual truths
- An administrator of the church office, giving attention to bulletins, correspondence, newsletters, etc.
- A person active in association and denominational activities/programs.
- A community volunteer who cooperates in community activities/programs.
- An effective communicator of well-prepared sermons
- A skilled counselor available to assist persons with personal and spiritual problems
- A person who emphasizes evangelism and the importance of witnessing.
- A person with leadership vision and a well-developed vision for the future of the church.
- A person who uses praise songs and/or drama in worship.
- A person who prefers to feature hymns and gospel songs in worship.
- A nurturing leader who is growing personally and helping others grow.
- A person who communicates well with youth.
- A person who communicates well with preschoolers and children.
- A person who understands and communicates well with senior adults.
- A person who understands and communicates well with single adults.
- A person who emphasizes the importance of strong families.

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCE RELEASE FORM

Appendix 2 Reference Release Form

I, _____, hereby authorize _____ General Baptist Church of _____ to verify all information contained in my application or other written communication, including all former churches in which I have served as a pastor, been a member, or been ordained.

I recognize that this verification process will include confidential contacts with former church officers, church members, pastoral colleagues, and denominational officials as well as other business, educational, and professional references.

I further authorize that any personnel at former places of employment, churches, or references may disclose any and all information regarding my work history, personal characteristics, salary, work habits, or other areas of importance to this organization.

Furthermore, I waive the right to take legal action against the aforementioned churches, their members and officers, or references for releasing such requested information.

I understand this authorization form and agree to the release and verification of the aforementioned information.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 3 SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Appendix 3 Suggested Interview Questions

Good interview questions cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Good questions call for some detail in the answer. Do not be afraid to ask hard questions but do ask them in a kind, courteous manner. Learn as much as you can about the prospect before the interview, and use the interview process to fill in the gaps.

This is a long list of potential questions. Some of them may be unnecessary in a formal interview if the answers have been provided in a preliminary information-gathering process. Other questions lend themselves to written responses as well as verbal responses during the interview. Many of the questions duplicate information, so it is wise to select the wording most appropriate to the setting.

Questions for the Candidate

Conversion and Ministry

1. Tell us about your conversion and call to ministry.
2. Describe important people in your life and tell how they influenced you.
3. Describe successes and failures in your ministry.
4. What strengths do you bring to ministry?
5. How have you grown since entering the ministry?
6. Where do you now need to grow?
7. How do you allot your time among pastoral ministries?
8. What do you like most about ministry?
9. What do you like least about ministry?
10. Describe your spiritual health and your feelings about spiritual accountability.
11. Describe your personal, private devotional time.
12. Share your plans for personal and professional growth.
13. What doctrines do you think are essential?
14. What are your greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses?
15. Four of the major elements of kingdom leadership are leadership, communication, administration, and ministry. Of these areas, which do you consider your greatest strength in ministry and why?
16. How do you measure success in ministry? How do you know when you have done a good or a bad job?

APPENDIX 3 SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

17. Who are your mentors/models in ministry (past or present)?
18. Why would you consider moving to another church?
19. How do you classify/describe your preaching style?

Denomination and Community

20. What is your relationship with the denomination?
21. Do you support Unified Giving as basic missions support?
22. How active are you in associational work, denominational work, and civic/social organizations?
23. Give us your beliefs concerning the basic General Baptist doctrines as stated in the General Baptist Statements of Faith.
24. How do you relate to other denominations?

Family and Personal Life

25. What do you do for fun?
26. Describe your current family and tell how each member relates to the others and to the church.
27. Do any of your family members have special needs?
28. How do you encourage spiritual growth in your family?
29. What is your spouse's role in your ministry?
30. To what extent is your family involved in your ministry?
31. How would your family feel about moving?
32. What do you and your family enjoy doing together?
33. What are your hobbies?
34. What do you do for entertainment?
35. Does your family support your calling and vocation?
36. Describe your two closest friends.
37. How do you relate to other ministers?
38. Describe your personal financial situation.
39. What is your philosophy of stewardship and tithing? Do you tithe?
40. Do you have outside business interests? If so, describe.
41. Describe your health.
42. How many and what books have you read in the past 12 months?

APPENDIX 3 SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Positions and Policies

43. What is your concept of the Bible?
44. What is your position concerning missions?
45. What is your conviction and personal practice concerning evangelism?
46. What is your policy concerning pastoral visitation?
47. What is your policy concerning pastoral counseling?
48. Do you do personal counseling and, if so, on what level? How extensive is your training in this area?
49. What are your convictions concerning these issues: alcohol and drugs, gambling, pornography, racial prejudice, divorce?

Leadership

50. When you change churches, what do you think is the most important thing for you to do during the first year?
51. What do you consider, in the order of their importance, your chief duties as pastor?
52. Do you think your best work can be done in a relatively short or a relatively long pastorate?
53. What would the ideal decision-making model look like?
54. What method do you use in accomplishing the goals and business affairs of the church (such as pastor-led, committee-led, team-led, deacon-led, etc.)?
55. What will be your involvement with committees?
56. How do you see the role of deacon in the church?
57. The church allows you to do revivals and travel to denominational meetings. How many of those do you normally conduct or attend?
58. What style of public worship and preaching do you prefer?
59. How would you describe an effective worship service?
60. What is your personal belief about the nature and function of the church?
61. Describe your leadership effectiveness.
62. How do you go about making changes in the church?
63. How do you work with the leadership of the church in planning?
64. What role do you see for the laity in the decision-making process of the church?
65. How do you keep up-to-date with recent developments in church-related issues?
66. Map out for us the manner in which you use your time throughout the week.

APPENDIX 3 SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Staff and Church Relationships

67. What would be your relationship with the church staff?
68. Would you expect to make changes in the current staff?
69. Do you see the staff as being called by the church? Are you willing to work with the present church staff?
70. Do you schedule office hours and days off?
71. Describe your effectiveness in reaching _____.
72. Describe your effectiveness in communicating with _____.
73. How would you rate your interpersonal skills?
74. What is your concept of the role of the laity (both men and women)?
75. What is important to you in handling conflict between you and a member of the congregation?
76. How do you manage disagreements in your church?
77. How comfortable do you feel working with all age groups that make up the membership of the church?
78. Discuss your work schedule and how you divide your time in the range of responsibilities.

Questions for the Candidate's Spouse

1. What influenced your decision to become a Christian?
2. Describe important people in your life and tell how they influenced you.
3. Describe your personal, private devotional time.
4. Were you aware of your spouse's call to ministry before you married?
5. How do you relate to the church where your spouse is pastor?
6. What is your role in the family?
7. How do you feel about moving?
8. Will you be working outside the home?
9. How do you feel about being a minister's spouse?
10. What strengths do you bring to your ministry in the church?
11. Describe your family and tell how each member relates to others and to the church.
12. How do you encourage spiritual growth in your family?
13. What do you and your family enjoy doing together?
14. What are your hobbies?
15. What is your concept of the Bible?
16. What is your position concerning missions?
17. What is your conviction and personal practice concerning evangelism?
18. What do you appreciate most about your spouse?

APPENDIX 4 SEVEN NEW TRENDS IN THE PASTOR SEARCH PROCESS

Appendix 4 Seven New Trends in the Pastor Search Process

Posted by Thom Rainer April 4, 2012

If there is anything consistent about the current state of how churches find and call pastors, it is the inconsistencies of the process for each church. It is inconsistent by denomination and by each church individually.

I have the opportunity to interact with a number of churches looking for pastors, and with pastors who are being considered by churches. Over the past few years, I've noticed changes and trends in the process. Let me highlight the seven most frequent changes I've discovered.

1. **Social media has become a major reference to check on potential pastors.** More churches and pastor search committees are looking at blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media venues of potential candidates. One search committee member told me he read four years of blogs of a pastor their church is considering. He said that he could tell a lot about the leadership and personality of a pastor by reading his articles and how he interacts with those who comment on the blogs.
2. **Two background checks are more common: criminal and credit.** Most church search members will not disqualify a candidate who has some issues in his background legally or credit related. But they do want the candidate to be upfront about any issues; and they want to know how he is dealing with those issues today.
3. **More leadership questions are asked.** In the past, Bible and theology rightly dominated the questions asked of a prospective pastor. Today those considering these pastors want to know more about his leadership qualities. "We had problems with two of our last three pastors," one church member wrote me. "But none of those problems had anything to do with their theology; they just had terrible leadership skills."
4. **Churches scrutinize the prospective pastor's church website.** I have been surprised how much churches depend on a website to find out information about a prospective pastor. They certainly expect to hear sermon podcasts there, but they are

APPENDIX 4 SEVEN NEW TRENDS IN THE PASTOR SEARCH PROCESS

looking for much more. Rightly or wrongly, they often evaluate the pastor by the quality and the content of the site.

5. **Fewer search committees are going to the prospective pastor's church to hear him preach.** I am hearing more often that they view such a move as disruptive to that pastor and the church. They have other options available to hear him preach. Of course, they lose the advantage of seeing and hearing that pastor in his current context.
6. **Churches are depending less on traditional resources to seek prospective pastors.** More are depending on informal networks to seek these pastors, rather than denominational or similar sources.
7. **More churches are asking questions about the emotional intelligence of a candidate.** Is he self-aware? Is he moody or temperamental? How motivated is he? Is he empathetic? Does he have good social and interpersonal skills?

There are several other trends I am watching closely. But these seven are the dominant trends in the pastor search process. Though they are ranked in order of frequency of comment, they are really all very close in their overall importance in the ways churches seek to find and call a pastor. So the number one issue, social media and the pastor, is not that much more dominant than the number seven issue, the emotional intelligence of the prospective pastor.

APPENDIX 5 THE FOUR LEVELS OF SCRUTINY OF PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEES

Appendix 5 The Four Levels of Scrutiny of Pastoral Search Committees

Posted by Thom Rainer February 18, 2013

In a previous post I [noted different trends among pastoral search committees](#). As I stated then, I am using the phrase “pastoral search committee,” even though it does not apply to every congregation. Some churches receive pastors through an appointment system from denominational leadership. Some pastors are chosen from a body of elders. The methods of pastoral selection are numerous.

Every church, however, searches for a pastor in the course of its history. After speaking with dozens of search groups, I’ve noticed a pattern in how they are evaluating prospective pastors. There is nothing new in what they are evaluating. What is new is how they are evaluating.

In a significant number of searches, perhaps a majority, the pastor search process takes place in four layers or levels. While each is important, the church assigns the greatest value to the first. The process is more subjective than objective, but the result is a clear definition of priorities in how a church evaluates a prospective pastor.

Level 1: Biblical, Theological, and Preaching

- Does he meet our theological and biblical beliefs?
- How does he respond to theological “hot button” issues?
- Does his practice match his beliefs?
- Is he an effective preacher?
- Would his preaching be well received by our church and community?
- Does he have several podcast sermons for ready listening?

Level 2: Background Information

- Does a legal background check reveal any issues of which we weren’t aware?
- Does a credit check reveal any financial concerns of which we should be aware?
- What has he communicated in the social media via Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and other channels?
- What do his references say about him?
- What do others who aren’t references say about him?

APPENDIX 5 THE FOUR LEVELS OF SCRUTINY OF PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEES

Level 3: Leadership and Relational Skills

- Is he an effective leader?
- How would his leadership style fit at our church?
- How does he handle conflict?
- Does he have healthy relational skills?
- Does he lead his family well?

Level 4: Previous and Current Church Experience

- Did he lead his church to healthy growth?
- Was he a missional leader in the church's community?
- Does his past experience indicate he understands culture and contexts well?
- What were his primary emphases at previous and current churches?
- Did he relate to other church staff well?

My simple point in showing four different levels is to demonstrate that most search committees have clear priorities. Rarely, however, are these priorities articulated. They know they will not find a perfect pastor. Since some imperfections will exist in all candidates, the search committee is much more likely, for example, to accept a Level 4 flaw rather than a Level 1 flaw.

All of these issues are important to the pastor search committee; some are just more important than others.

APPENDIX 6 AN OUTLINE FOR A PASTORAL CALL DOCUMENT

Appendix 6 An Outline for a Pastoral Call Document

Misunderstandings often arise in the aftermath of extending a call to a pastor. Often verbal agreements are made that require all parties to remember what was discussed. Also all parties are prone to assume that everyone understood the agreement the same way. Following is an outline of items that could be included in a pastoral call document.

In its business session held on _____, the _____ Church agreed to extend a call to _____ to serve as pastor.

The job description for the pastor of _____ Church is as follows:

(insert job description here)

The salary worksheet for this position includes:

a. Base Package

Salary _____

Housing Allowance

or Rental Value of Parsonage _____

Self-Employment Tax _____

Total _____

(*Note: While the rental value of the parsonage may be deducted from the cash salary the church should provide for utilities as part of the pastor's salary. Maintenance and improvements for the parsonage are the responsibility of the church and should be included in the church budget under building and grounds not as part of pastor compensation.)

APPENDIX 6 AN OUTLINE FOR A PASTORAL CALL DOCUMENT

b. Fringe Benefits

Retirement (5%) _____

Health Insurance _____

c. Professional Development

Minister's Conference _____

Mission & Ministry Summit _____

d. Professional Expenses

Mileage _____

Cell Phone _____

Continuing Education _____

Performance Review will occur on or before this date: _____

The following form shall be used to guide the performance review and shall be completed by at least six (6) and not more than twenty (20) people representing a cross section of the congregation.

APPENDIX 6 AN OUTLINE FOR A PASTORAL CALL DOCUMENT

Professional Assessment Form

(adapted from Dale Burke "Less is More Leadership")

It is my desire to grow as a leader, and I cannot do it without your feedback. Please take a moment to fill out this form. Please be gentle, but honest and specific. Then return it by mail in the envelope I have provided so that it reaches the church office no later than

Employee: _____ Position: _____

1. What do you appreciate most about my work or area of ministry? What are its strengths? (List three or four items.)

2. What one or two aspects of my work or ministry need improvement? Where are we weak?

3. What are my personal strengths as a leader? In relation to my character, conduct, or style, what do you appreciate most? (List three or four items.)

4. Where would you suggest I focus as I seek to grow and improve as a leader? (List one or two items.)

5. Using a scale of 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10

Help! Weak Average Strong Super!

6. How would you rate my work and ministry this past year?

Now _____ One year ago _____

7. How would you rate my personal leadership and character?

Now _____ One year ago _____

APPENDIX 6 AN OUTLINE FOR A PASTORAL CALL DOCUMENT

Conflict Management. In the event that pastoral conduct is unacceptable the following course of action shall be pursued.

a. If the annual performance review indicates the need for improvement and change a plan for that improvement shall be developed by the pastor and the leadership team/personnel team. This plan shall have specific objectives and a time line of no more than 90 days.

b. If adequate improvement is not realized in the time frame identified, the leadership team may place the pastor on probation pending further efforts.

c. If after the probationary period performance has not improved the leadership team/personnel team may require the pastor's resignation.

d. Should a member/members feel that the pastor's conduct needs improvement a written, signed request with specific reasons shall be submitted to the leadership team/personnel team. After evaluating the concerns, the leadership team may pursue reconciliation with the concerned member/s or if the concerns are deemed to require further action the steps identified in a, b, c above shall be followed.

e. In the event of immoral or illegal conduct or gross negligence the pastor may be removed immediately by the leadership team/personnel team.

SALARY WORKSHEET

Salary Worksheet

(Note: This worksheet should be used for educational purposes. Specific tax planning should be done with tax preparation professionals or with personal research into the latest IRS regulations.)

1. Computing Self

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Housing Allowance | Parsonage | |
| Salary | \$25,000.00 | Salary | \$25,000.00 |
| Housing | \$4,800.00 | Rental Value* | \$4,800.00 |
| sub-total | \$29,800.00 | sub-total | \$29,800.00 |
| 15.30% | \$4,559.40 | 15.30% | \$4,559.40 |

Rental Value*
300/month rental value
100/month church provided utilities

2. Computing Federal Income Tax--Reimbursable

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Salary | \$25,000.00 | Salary | \$25,000.00 |
| 1/2 Self Employment | \$2,280.00 | Self | \$4,559.00 |
| sub-total | \$27,280.00 | sub-total | \$29,559.00 |
| less adjustments | \$5,700.00 | less | \$5,700.00 |
| taxable income | \$21,580.00 | taxable | \$23,859.00 |

adjustments

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| mileage | 100 miles/wk @.565/mi x 50 wk | \$2,800.00 |
| cell phone | 75/month | \$900.00 |
| professional | 2000/annually | \$2,000.00 |
| | | \$5,700.00 |

Fringe benefits:

Health Insurance These are not taxable when paid directly by individual or family coverage as per church policies
General Baptist 5% of salary from church, 2% withheld from
Vacation ___Weeks

SALARY WORKSHEET

3. Computing Federal Income Tax--The church as employer plan

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Salary | \$25,000.00 | Salary | \$25,000.00 |
| 1/2 Self Employment | \$2,280.00 | Self | \$4,559.00 |
| sub-total | \$27,280.00 | sub-total | \$29,559.00 |
| no adjustments | | no | |
| taxable income | \$27,280.00 | taxable | \$29,559.00 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|------------|
| adjustments | These costs are borne by the church as employer. | | |
| mileage | 100 miles/wk @.565/mi x 50 wk | | \$2,800.00 |
| cell phone | 75/month | | \$900.00 |
| professional | 2000/annually | | \$2,000.00 |
| | | | \$5,700.00 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Fringe benefits: | These are not taxable when paid directly by | | |
| Health Insurance | individual or family coverage as per church policies | | |
| General Baptist | 5% of salary from church, 2% withheld from | | |
| Vacation | 2 Weeks | | |

Instructions: add the salary and the housing and multiply by 15.3% to determine Self Employment liability. Parsonage rental value and housing allowance should be recorded in some official document of the church (budget worksheet, board minutes, business meeting records, etc.) Actual rental value of the parsonage may be influenced by its proximity to the church, for example a large home located adjacent to the church may not have as high a rental value as if it were located elsewhere in the community.

The church should not withhold Social Security/Medicare Taxes from the pastor since the church is not required to match the withholding as secular companies are required to do so. If the church provides an allowance equal to ½ of the Social Security/Medicare tax that amount is considered earned income since for Social Security purpose the minister is considered Self Employed.

The pastor may use his W-4 withholding instructions to allow additional income tax to be withheld to equal his Social Security/Medicare Liability. If this strategy is used then the taxes due from Form SE will have been met from withholdings reported from the W-2 on Form 1040.

SALARY WORKSHEET

Professional Development may include such items as Minister's Conference and the Mission & Ministry Summit

Note: Fringe benefits when paid directly by the church are not taxable income.

Note: Professional expenses may be reimbursed to the pastor with the proper receipts and/or contemporaneous records. If they are reimbursed they are not considered earned income since they were expenses. Some churches use this mechanism to reduce the 'take-home' salary of the pastor and thus reduce his tax liability. While this is legal it is not very fair to the pastor since the harder he works the fewer dollars he has to live on.

What does dual tax status mean for the reporting of a pastor's wages?

Under federal law most pastors have what is called a "dual tax status." Under dual tax status, a pastor is an employee of the church for federal income tax purposes and self-employed for Social Security purposes. The way the church should report the pastor's wages will differ based on whether the pastor is an employee or self-employed.

Federal Income Taxes = Employee Status

The majority of ordained, licensed, or commissioned clergy members are classified as **employees** for income tax reporting purposes under tests applied by the IRS.

Pastors who meet the IRS definition of a minister are not required to have federal income taxes withheld from their paycheck, which is a rule unique to clergy members. However, this does not mean they are exempt from paying taxes. To cover any other tax liability, the church can set up voluntary income tax withholding at the pastor's request. All withholdings should be reported by the church in box two of Form W-2 and forwarded to the U.S. Treasury.

The rare exception to the rule

It is possible, but much less common, for pastors to be designated as self-employed for income tax purposes. For example, if a pastor travels to a number of churches in the same year to work, that person may be treated as self-employed and issued a 1099 instead of a W-2. Before doing this, churches should seek the advice of a local attorney or tax professional. These returns are more likely to be audited by the IRS because they're often non-compliant. Improper reporting can result in back taxes and penalties.

SALARY WORKSHEET

Social Security Taxes = Self-Employed Status

For Social Security and Medicare (FICA) reporting purposes, the majority of pastors should be classified as **self-employed** with respect to income for pastoral duties.

FICA taxes should not be withheld by the church from the pastor's compensation. The pastor is responsible for paying into the Social Security/Medicare system through self-employment tax which should be reported quarterly on Form 1040-ES.

Voluntary withholding cannot be elected from FICA, but the pastor is allowed to withhold sufficient federal income taxes to cover any self-employment tax liability.

Example of Dual Tax Status

Pastor John is a full time, ordained minister that serves a local church in Anytown, USA. The church issues him a W-2, so he is considered an employee for federal tax purposes. According to the tax code he is self-employed for Social Security. The church does not withhold federal or Social Security taxes from his check. To satisfy his federal and Social Security tax liability, Pastor John makes quarterly tax payments using Form 1040-ES. Even though the church does not withhold federal income tax, they are required to submit the W-2 and necessary payroll filings.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Information

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A native of Oklahoma Dr. Franklin R. Dumond has served in a variety of ministry settings since 1970. He has served as pastor in rural, urban and county seat settings. His last pastorate of 16 years was spent in Mt. Vernon, Indiana where the church developed staff ministries, built buildings and expanded their presence in the community through weekday and weekend ministries.

He has served on the staff of General Baptist Ministries since 2004 where he has served as both Director of Pastoral Ministries (2004-2006) and as Director of Congregational Ministries (2006—present) as well as Chief of Staff (2011-20014). A graduate of Oakland City University (D. Min.), the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M. Div.) and Northeastern State University (B. A.), he is the author of *Legacy Churches* (2009), *Pastor Search* (2006, rev. 2015), *Mission One Plan Book* (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) and a variety of articles, booklets and promotional pieces. Currently he works closely with the Mission & Ministry Summit planning team and guides denominational communication through the General Baptist Messenger while also providing consulting services to churches.

He and his wife Winda met in college at the Baptist Student Union in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. They are parents to three grown sons and proud grandparents of one precocious grandson.

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