



Pastor  
SEARCH

# Committee

by Leonard Hill



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# Your Work on the Pastor Search Committee

By Leonard Hill

## Introduction

“Being a member of our church’s pastor search committee was the deepest and most satisfying religious experience I’ve ever had.”

“It is fortunate that most people never have to serve on a pastor search committee. It is the most disillusioning, discouraging thing that can happen to a layman.”

These are two comments by two different people, why the differences in the pastor search committee’s experiences? Perhaps the words of another could shed some light: “Our committee would never have gotten into such a mess if someone had told us how to get off on the right foot. Some way should be devised so what one pastor search committee learns can be passed on to another.”

This is a good suggestion, especially since almost half of the people elected to serve on a pastor search committee have never served before. Many committees do not have even one member with prior experience.

But having served on a pastor search committee before does not guarantee that a person profited from the experience. As one deacon put it, “I don’t know how many pastor search committees I’ve been on, but we must not do a very good job or we wouldn’t have to always look for a new pastor in such a short time.”

This booklet is based on principles and suggestions growing out of an exhaustive survey of the practices followed by 2,000 Southern Baptist churches in securing a pastor. It is designed to be used as a tool to aid those in all churches charged with leading the search for the man God has been preparing to serve their church as pastor. It offers sound principles and practical suggestions; it should stimulate you to creative thinking and action on your part.

Serving on a pastor search committee is one of the most important assignments that can be given to a man or woman. Your work can prove rewarding and meaningful to you personally and be a means of blessing to your church. Not only can you help your church find the right man, but you can do your work in such a way as to help rather than hinder his ministry in the years ahead with your church.

To use this book properly, read it through in its entirety. Later, as the work of your committee progresses, you may need to refer to specific chapters. The chapter titles reveal the book’s content. A helpful step-by-step guide is outlined at the conclusion of the book.

While a book can share information on how a pastor search committee can do its work efficiently and wisely, there is one thing it cannot do. It cannot insure that you and your committee will seek and follow the will of God in each thing you do. Whether you depend on the leadership of the Holy Spirit in this important task is something you alone can determine.

## **Chapter 1: How to Get Off to a Good Start**

It was a few minutes before eleven o'clock. Outside a small town two cars pulled off the road and stopped in the shade of a tree. The occupants got out and huddled for a last-minute briefing.

"Now everyone remember," emphasized one driver, "don't go in at the same time. As soon as you're in the building, scatter out. If anyone speaks to you, give your name but don't tell where you're from. We're just 'visiting.' We'll meet back here as soon as it's over and decide our next move."

Was this a Jesse James-type gang about to hold up the local bank? No! On the contrary, it was a group of fine Christian men about to go to church. They were a pastor search committee going to hear a prospective pastor preach.

Then why the stealthy approach? Are pastor search committees actually out to steal preachers? If not, what is their job? Are they simply a necessary evil or can their work actually benefit a church?

The answers to the following questions help clarify what a pastor search committee is and what it should do.

### **What Is A Pastor Search Committee?**

A pastor search committee is a small group of people selected by a church to lead its search for a pastor. The average size for a committee is five people. (This number can easily travel in one car.) Smaller churches often use three-member committees. Seven to nine members should be large enough for any church.

The committee members should be selected primarily for their spiritual depth, familiarity with the Scriptures, understanding of their church, maturity and wisdom, and love for fellow members. The positions they hold in the church are of secondary importance.

The pastor search committee has the difficult, tedious, and very important task of screening prospective pastors, checking recommendations, investigating and contacting ministers – always trying to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Finally the committee brings to the church a recommendation that a certain man be called as pastor – telling why they have recommended the man and sharing information about him. The church listens to the committee and then prayerfully seeks to determine the will of God in the matter.

### **Is A Pastor Search Committee Necessary?**

Nearly every church can more effectively and efficiently look for a pastor if it uses a pastor search committee. The preliminary work involved in securing a pastor is too cumbersome and time consuming for the entire church membership to try to do it all.

It is disturbing enough when a few leaders have to be absent from their regular duties while on pastor search committee business. Imagine what it would be if the entire church spent that much time looking for a pastor!

In the small percentage of churches that do not use a pastor search committee, it is still left up to two or three members with the most influence to find a pastor. It is better for the church to officially name those given the responsibility and to decide what their duties are.

The pastor search committee should be a church committee selected by the church and making its reports directly to the congregation.

### **How Should a Pastor Search Committee be Selected?**

For most churches the more democratic the method of selecting committee members the better it is. In a few churches the pastor search committee is a standing committee responsible for filling all church staff positions. Some churches allow members to make nominations from the floor in a business

meeting. In others, the deacons or church nominating committee makes the initial nominations with the church having a final vote.

Perhaps the most satisfactory way is to have members list their choices on a secret ballot. If a five-member committee is desired, take the ten names listed most often and let the members vote for five of them – again by secret ballot.

Whatever method is used, the entire church should feel that it has had the final voice in the selection. To do its best work the committee must have the confidence of all the church.

It is not necessary for every church organization to be represented, nor is it wise for the heads of certain major church organizations to be named automatically on the committee. A few churches have actually gone to the ridiculous extreme of electing a member to their pastor search committee who held *no* church position in order that he might “represent those generally inactive among the membership.”

What is essential is that those serving on the committee know their entire church well, that they be respected members with mature, objective judgment and sensitive to the will of God.

The work of a pastor search committee is extremely important. As a committee member you should be committed to giving the time and devotion required.

### **How Should the Pastor Search Committee Organize?**

Elect a chairman if one was not designated when the committee was selected. A vice-chairman may be needed. A secretary is necessary for keeping records and handling correspondence.

It is not necessary to wait until the resigned minister has departed before the pastor search committee begins to function since the committee will be conducting its work on a confidential basis.

As its first step the committee should decide how it will do its work, keeping in mind any instructions of the church. Agree on how recommendations of prospective pastors will be received; decide what information to give the church in progress reports; determine the basic information needed about prospective pastors and the methods to be used in obtaining the information; decide whether unanimous agreement of the committee will be necessary before making a recommendation to the church; decide whether to consider only one man at a time.

Write down the guidelines agreed on for future reference.

Be considerate and sympathetic toward each other on the committee. From the beginning be frank with opinions but not domineering. Resolve to keep information concerning all discussions and action within the committee, except for the official reports to the church.

Above all, know that it is just as important that the Holy Spirit leads in these early steps as later on in the selection of a pastor. It is possible for a pastor search committee to nominate the “right man” yet hurt his ministry in the church because they did their committee work in the wrong way.

## **Chapter 2: How to Avoid Common Pastor Search Committee Problems**

Many pastor search committee problems begin early – and they may hinder everything the committee tries to do. Often the problems are simply a poor relationship between the committee and the rest of the members of the church. Sometimes friction develops between the committee members themselves.

An examination within one denomination of several hundred case histories of churches seeking pastors pinpointed basic trouble areas that often seemed to develop between churches and their pastor search committee during the search for a new pastor.

In many, the membership did not like the way the committee was selected. Others felt that the committee was too secretive and should have kept the entire church better informed about its progress.

Time was another factor causing tension. Church members wanted the committee to hurry and do its work and secure a pastor. Committee members wanted to take time enough to be sure they did not make a mistake when recommending a man.

As for pastor search committee complaints, committee members admitted they became upset when faced with paying all the expenses of the committee out of their own pockets. The committee also said it was hard for them to carry out the wishes of the church when the church had never made clear what it expected the committee to do.

But enough about church-pastor search committee problems. Here are suggestions to help avoid them.

### **Clarify What the Committee Is To Do**

Some churches have adopted a written description of what they expect their pastor search committee to do. A few pastor search committees in desperation have drawn up plans for doing their work and asked their church for approval before proceeding further.

But most pastor search committees are forced to wander rather aimlessly in a never-never land – bombasted on one side for exceeding their authority; sternly criticized on the other for not assuming enough responsibility.

This causes needless ill feeling. Avoid it by being sure both church and committee understand such things as:

- 1] It is critical that the committee examine the church's Bylaws and Policies and Procedures to see if there are any instructions concerning the Pastor Search Committee.
- 2] Is the committee responsible for obtaining pulpit supplies and/or an interim pastor?
- 3] How much is the committee expected to do toward securing a pastor? For instance, is it simply to locate men to preach before the church or is it to do whatever is necessary until it is ready to recommend one choice for pastor?
- 4] Concerning such things as salary, housing, moving expense, and so forth – how much is to be determined by church action and how much is to be left to the discretion of the committee? Are these to be decided before the search for a pastor begins or is the committee expected to make recommendations about such matters to the church at whatever time seems best?
- 5] Has the church outlined some basic qualifications a prospective pastor must have or is this to be left entirely to the wisdom of the committee?
- 6] How much money will the church provide for pastor search committee expenses? What kind of accounting for expense funds is expected of the committee?
- 7] Is there a limit on the amount of time the committee will have to do its work?

### **Determine How Reports Will Be Made to the Church**

Nothing is more upsetting to a church member than to feel that a favored few are getting “inside” information from the pastor search committee that is not available to him.

Reports should be made frequently to the church. Churches do not become nearly so impatient when they realize the pastor search committee is using its time well. Each time the committee reports it not only makes the church aware that the committee is working, but also serves as a time to enlist anew the prayers and concern of all the members.

It is not necessary to report what men are being considered, where the committee plans to visit, or who has been recommended to the committee.

But the committee should describe the way it handles recommendations (including those from members of the church) and can tell something about what is being done at the moment without spelling out specific names or actions if the time is not appropriate.

How the committee plans to report to the church and the general guidelines it plans to follow in its work can be outlined in an article in the church paper or bulletin, electronically such as emails or in a letter sent to each member-family. These would be in addition to verbal announcements.

### **Consider One Man at a Time**

This doesn't mean in the early stages your committee won't be investigating several leads on prospective pastors. It does mean that when a committee finds a minister that commands attention, it should forego considering others until it has determined whether he is the one to recommend.

This practice has two advantages. First, men are not measured against each other but against a common standard. This standard should be developed by your committee after studying the Scriptures and the needs of your church.

Second, it aids harmony and unity within the church. One preacher is not pitted against another, with some factions in the church desiring one man, the rest another. The situation is even more likely to promote disunity when more than one man is asked to preach in view of a call before the church makes a decision.

As one pastor put it, "They 'tried' more than one man at a time. This caused some never to work right with the pastor because they wanted the one they voted for."

If your committee does decide it is going to consider more than one man at a time, it should be sure to inform each prospective pastor that it is doing so.

### **Always Seek to Work within the Will of God**

Churches usually agree that securing a pastor is a joint task involving men and God. But they sometimes have difficulty balancing spiritual leadership and human methods.

One man said: "When looking for a pastor we don't do anything but hear different men preach, and pray that God will lead us to call the right man."

A pastor criticized another church's approach, saying: "Their pastor search committee was the most efficient I've ever seen. Yet their work seemed to be cold and mechanical, indifferent to any leadership of the Holy Spirit."

Neither extreme is best. From the beginning pastor search committees and churches should understand that God gives certain men the gifts to preach and a divine call to this ministry. Churches are expected to recognize this divine call and seek a man whom God has provided with the necessary gifts to serve their particular church as pastor.

Following the leadership of God and using wise methods devised by men are both essential ingredients as a pastor search committee searches for a pastor.

The first steps taken by a pastor search committee are important. Just a little initial planning can result in the pastor search committee members being on good terms with each other, with the other members of the church – and within the will of God.

## **Chapter 3: Plan Wisely for Period without a Pastor**

The usual chatter and the aroma of coffee filled the small downtown restaurant at the midmorning hour. The cluster of businessmen around the corner table was a familiar sight, but their conversation was not on one of the usual daily coffee break discussions.

The topic giving rise to heated debate was: “Does a church have to drop in attendance, offering, and spirit while without a pastor?”

The men finally agreed that a few churches seem to do better while without a pastor, but most do worse. Their conclusions are typical.

One denominational survey has revealed that in four out of ten churches, the members believe the work of their church suffered during the last time it was without a pastor. Members of five out of ten churches said they stayed about the same in attendance, offering, and general spirit. Only in one out of ten churches did members think they actually grew spiritually and/or numerically during the pastorless period.

One thing is certain. Most churches do experience being without a pastor. Southern Baptist pastors average changing churches every three years. The length of time churches are without a pastor varies greatly (as churches increase in size they average being without a pastor for a longer interval), but the average time is nearly three months. Therefore it is vital that a church plan well for the pastorless periods.

The pastor search committee should be vitally concerned about the interim period without a pastor. How the church carries on its work at that time not only makes the committee’s work harder or easier, it also may affect the ministry of the new pastor yet to be selected.

Why do certain churches do well without a pastor while others slow almost to a standstill? There are some answers.

For a church to grow spiritually – and even numerically – while it is without a pastor, two things must be done. First, eliminate as nearly as possible the problems which naturally arise while being without a pastor. Second, use to the fullest the advantages of being without a pastor.

Yes, there are some advantages to not having a pastor! And they can’t all be summed up in the old deacon’s remark, “Our church had such a sorry pastor last time that we couldn’t help doing better without him!”

But first, a look at the problems...

Interim problems usually center in three areas:

- 1) Poor relationships between the pastor search committee and the rest of the church;
- 2) Confusing methods used to secure supply preachers;
- 3) inadequate organization for the pastorless period.

These problems are sometimes magnified if unhappy circumstances prevailed at the time the former pastor left.

### **Secure the Supply Preachers**

More than one church has been embarrassed when two ministers appeared the same Sunday morning expecting to preach – one asked by the pastor search committee, the other by the pulpit supply committee. Because the pastor search committee needs to be free at any time to invite a prospective pastor to preach, it is important that the method used to secure pulpit supplies be closely coordinated with the work of the pastor search committee.

Another reason for this close coordination is to insure that the wrong person is not invited to supply.

The work of a church in North Carolina suffered from such a mix-up. The pastor search committee had spent much time in prayer and investigation before deciding that a certain preacher definitely was not the man to serve their church as pastor. Meanwhile the pulpit supply committee, unaware that the pastor search committee was even considering the man, asked him to supply one Sunday.

While preaching, the man let it be known he was interested in coming as pastor. The church members were so impressed with his sermon delivery that they turned a deaf ear to the pastor search committee's warning that the minister did not always practice like he preached. At the close of the Sunday night service they called him as pastor.

As one layman later put it, "We learned our lesson the hard way. Next time you can be sure any arrangements for supply preachers will be handled by our pastor search committee."

When a separate committee or individual is assigned this task, they should check names and dates with the pastor search committee chairman before issuing invitations to supply preachers.

### **Even Better, Secure an Interim Pastor**

For most churches the best solution to the supply preacher problem is a good interim pastor. Interim pastors can be found in the ranks of college and seminary teachers and students, denominational employees, retired preachers, and some laymen. Association staff members can sometimes serve in this capacity.

The interim pastor offers definite advantages. Having a person to assume in a limited sense some of the duties of a pastor helps relieve the pastor search committee of the pressure to rush too fast with its work. The right kind of interim pastor helps fill the leadership gap caused by the absence of a pastor. He can also help stabilize the church when pastor search committee duties force some of the more experienced leaders to be absent.

An interim pastor can often help unite church members if friction has developed and help in other ways to prepare the way for a new pastor.

Even more important, an interim pastor can give continuity and meaning to the preaching program of the church.

When a different supply preacher is secured each week, he usually delivers his two "best" sermons without thought of what was preached the preceding Sunday or what will follow. A Texas church found this out when it suffered through hearing three different supply preachers use the same text on consecutive Sundays. It wouldn't have been so bad if two of the men hadn't used almost identical outlines!

When a church has an interim pastor, it helps discourage men who would like to parade their talents before the church under the guise of supplying the pulpit. For this reason the interim pastor should be a man not available to the church as pastor.

An interim pastor also helps keep the pulpit from becoming a battleground for conflicting interests. Discord quickly develops when various factions in the church are maneuvering to wrangle a supply invitation for a friend.

How much an interim pastor will be expected to do will depend on such things as who is available to serve in the interim, the size of the church, size of church staff, and availability of nearby pastors to assist with such things as funerals and weddings.

The important thing is that the church definitely and clearly, assigns the duties normally done by the pastor either to members of the church or to an interim pastor, or both.

A good way to insure that this is done is to have all duties and their assignments actually written down. "You'll be surprised at how long the list gets to be," warns a deacon in a church that tried it.

The interim pastor should not only clearly understand what he is expected to do, but should know what to expect from the church for salary and expenses.

If authorized by the church, the pastor search committee can make the agreement and invite the person to serve as interim pastor. Otherwise, the committee can recommend that the church take final action after considering the matter.

## **Magnify the Advantages of Being without a Pastor**

The idea may sound preposterous at first, but there are some advantages to not having a pastor. They are not permanent advantages, but they can be magnified during the pastorless interval for the good of the church.

### **When without a pastor:**

1. Members are more likely to feel personally responsible for the work of the church. They realize there is not pastor and someone must do the work. Often when more is expected of person, especially in a time of crisis, he responds to the hour and does more. It is a time to call on each member without apology to give an extra effort – and many will!
2. Members are usually less demanding of perfection. While without a pastor many church leaders perform jobs they are not used to doing. The members understand and over look mistakes that would bring criticism and complaints at other times.
3. Members can be led to seek more earnestly the leadership of the Holy Spirit. As they seek God's guidance in securing the right pastor, they can also be led to renew their dependence on God's leadership in all areas of their life.
4. Members can be led to answer the question, "Why does our church need a pastor?" Do they want a preacher of sermons, an administrator of organizations, a counselor, a community servant – or a combination of these and other things? Answering this question will help church members seriously think through what the office of pastor truly should be and will aid the pastor search committee in its work.
5. "What kind of church are we asking a man to come serve?" is another question to be answered. Members can look carefully at their church, examining its handicaps and potentials. Pastor search committee members in the course of their work will discover that other churches also have problems and can compare the work of their own church with what other churches are doing. A good look at the church situation as it really is can be a big step toward a better future.
6. And last, but not least, some of the members will be better able to appreciate the work of the new pastor for having done some of it before he came. It will be painfully apparent to them that a pastor does much more than sit in an office, be friendly, and preach one or two sermons a week!

The formula for growing a church during the interval without a pastor is simple. "Minimize the problems; magnify the advantages." Doing this requires much planning, prayer, and work on the part of church leaders.

Using this formula will not guarantee that a church's attendance or income will climb, although it may, but it will help make it possible for a church to experience deeper spiritual growth. Fortunate indeed is the new pastor who comes to a church with a deep spiritual foundation on which to build.

## **Chapter 4: Take a Good Look at Your Church**

How much should a pastor search committee member know about his church? The answer is simple, “As much as possible!”

Acquiring the information is not always so simple. But it is worth the effort for the information will be doubly useful.

First, your committee will have a better understanding of your church and the qualifications (gifts) a man would need in order to serve effectively as pastor.

Second, this information can be given to any minister the committee seriously considers as a prospective pastor. It will be invaluable information as he considers his own capabilities, the needs of your church, and the will of God.

Some of the things a pastor search committee needs to know about the church are listed below. The list can be adjusted to apply to a church of any size. A committee may want to compile the information into a typed report to be shared with prospective pastors as needed.

### **History**

Give a brief summary of origin and development of church’s history. Consider listing factors in the past which affected growth and development. Give a general description of the work of former pastors; their length of service, etc.

### **Statistics**

Share the size of the present membership, including number who are nonresident or inactive; chart showing growth or decline of membership during past twenty years.

Number of additions by baptism, church letter, and other public decisions registered in recent years.

Enrollment and average attendance at meetings of all church organizations; comparison with figures for past several years.

Average attendance at worship and midweek services now and comparison with past several years.

Number and size of missions and whether they are considered as permanent missions or prospective churches.

Amount of church budget with items listed in details.

Financial report showing actual income and expenditures, including total gifts for missions and gifts through the Cooperative Program.

Amount of church debt and how it is financed.

Increase or decrease of attendance and offerings during last few years.

### **Physical Property**

Size and arrangement of buildings and parking area.

Property limitations and possibilities for future expansion.

Description of parsonage.

### **Organizations and Objectives**

List and give a description of all church organizations, committees, etc., with explanation of how they are financed, staffed, and related to one another.

Description of weekday programs and special projects.

List of paid church staff, including job descriptions and relationship to pastor.

Comparison of number of volunteer workers to number of jobs to be filled.

Church calendar, including long-range plans adopted or under consideration.

## **Description of Membership**

Size and special needs of various age groups  
Occupations, education, income, interests of members  
Number of tithers; depth of commitment  
Leadership abilities of membership

## **Demographics of the Community**

Population: whether growing, declining, or static  
Rural or urban; downtown or residential; or in transition  
Ethnic groups  
Sources of income of people  
Cost of living  
Schools, hospitals, other institutions  
Other Baptist churches; churches of other denominations  
Number unchurched, unsaved  
Extent of territory from which church draws members with map indicating location of member families in relation to church.  
Anticipated changes: business expected to move in or out, expand or decline; new highways in area; urban renewal plans.  
Special problems or opportunities in community.

## **Attitudes of Church Members**

Interest in evangelism, missions, stewardship, ministry  
Outlook on building expansion, expansion of church staff or church organizations  
Willingness to cooperate with other Baptist churches in the association, state convention, and Southern Baptist Convention.  
Outlook on cooperating with other churches in the community  
Attitudes toward contributing through the Cooperative Program.  
Attitudes toward ministering to all races, meeting community needs  
Factors tending to weaken or strengthen the unity and fellowship of the church  
Whether progressive in spirit or slow to accept changes  
Customs peculiar to the church or community  
Realistic appraisal of freedom and restrictions of office of pastor  
What members expect of a pastor, his wife, his family

## **Provisions for Pastor**

Whether called for definite or indefinite period of time  
Salary  
Participation in denominational retirement plans and Social Security  
Medical insurance  
Amount for moving expense  
Allowance for car, books, telephone, convention travel, etc.  
Length of vacation  
Time allowed for revivals and other speaking engagements  
Policy concerning study leaves  
Provisions for home; policy on payment of utilities  
Provisions for time off during weekly schedule  
Time allowed for school or secular work  
Policy concerning securing and payment of pulpit supplies and evangelists

What agreements with pastor to be written out; which ones to be voted on by church

Plans for presenting its recommendation to the church; whether more than one man will be voted on at one time.

When they come to the point of being ready to make a recommendation to the church, committee members should be able to tell both the prospective pastor and the church why they feel led by the Holy Spirit to make such a recommendation.

The information should be gathered and analyzed as objectively as possible. It should tell the good and the bad. Even so God will have a man who will hear and answer the call to “come and serve us.”

## Chapter 5: Where to Look for Prospective Pastors

A man serving as pastor search committee chairman for the first time frantically wrote a denominational worker.

“Dear Sir: Our pastor resigned last Sunday. We want to get another one right away, but we don’t know how to start. Please send us a list of all the available preachers!”

It is doubtful if any one person knows all the “available” preachers in any one denomination. But the chairman was on the right track. He was seeking help in finding prospective pastors.

In days gone by, knowing where to look for a pastor was not so great a problem. Churches simply examined their own congregation and called out a man.

Very few churches today are able to find a man to minister to their needs from within their own membership. Most have to look further a field. The demands for education and experience, as well as modern communication and transportation methods, have combined to make it so.

Now the pastor search committee member who has been waked at all hours of the night by telephone calls – to say nothing of the flood of letters and telegrams – may be aghast at the thought of needing assistance in locating prospective pastors. “All we have to do is sift through the many suggestions which come unsolicited,” he says.

But just because a church receives many recommendations of prospective pastors does not mean it is receiving all the assistance it needs or wants.

After going through all the unsolicited suggestions – or even before – a church may wish on its own initiative to seek help from persons in whom it has special confidence.

When a church is ready to begin looking for a pastor and needs the names of one or more men to consider, here are some sources that may be able to offer help.

*Associational Workers:* Directors of Missions and other full-time association or city missions staff members.

These are easily contacted and should know your church quite well. They also usually have contacts with many ministers.

*State Denominational Workers:* Executive Director and other personnel in the state convention office.

Most churches know one or more of their state workers personally. Many of these men are in contact with the work of a large number of pastors.

Some state conventions have made special provisions for helping churches secure information about prospective pastors. The executive secretary’s office could give information on whom to contact in states where this is true.

*Baptist College and Seminary Faculty and Administrators:* A good source to contact if a church is interested in a man just beginning his ministry. Those serving in these institutions also have contact with former students and others whose work they have watched through the years.

Some seminaries have a person or an office to assist churches seeking a pastor from among their students or former students.

A church will not necessarily need to contact every source listed above. In determining where to go first for help, consider one experienced pastor search committee man’s statement: “The best source to turn to for prospective pastor suggestions is one that knows your church well, knows the men he suggests well, and has contact with a fairly large number of preachers.”

Another said: “I would first ask the advice of a man whose judgment I had confidence in, one who I thought would be more interested in the welfare of my church and the will of God than in just finding a position for a preacher.”

As you contact sources to get suggestions for prospective pastors, some will suggest only one man, strongly recommending him as being the type person they think you need. Others will suggest the names of several men in whom they have confidence, expecting your committee to determine if they are suited

to serve your church's specific needs. In every case it would be expected that the church would be seeking the will of the Holy Spirit in each step it took.

Churches with limited budgets or in isolated places often ask, "How are we going to get in touch with people to ask for help in locating prospective pastors?"

Letters are inexpensive, and airmail quickly puts one in touch with any part of the country. Telephone calls, even long distance for several minutes, are cheaper than a fairly short trip in a car. And a telephone call for information on where to begin looking for a prospective pastor might save a church time and many heartaches. Email is often used today as a source of communication. Email is fast and documents can be easily attached.

To obtain addresses, use your associational minutes for association workers; state convention annual and denominational annual, such as Southern Baptist Convention Annual, for names and addresses of denominational workers and colleges and seminaries. If your church office does not have a copy, check with a nearby pastor or your association's superintendent of missions.

## Chapter 6: How to Evaluate Recommendations

“When we first got the letter of recommendation we thought we’d found the ideal pastor. But then we discovered the man recommending him was his brother-in-law!”

“Our committee got twenty-five letters of recommendation for the same man. But when every letter sounded almost the same, we wouldn’t have called him to be our janitor!”

“What is a church going to do when you can’t even trust preachers? Two pastors recommended a man to our church that further investigation revealed had been fired from his last two pastorates for immoral conduct.”

“It was a glowing letter of recommendation. But it should have been. The man wrote it about himself.”

As you might guess, these are the disgruntled comments of stressed pastor search committee members who’ve sifted through dozens of letters of recommendation trying desperately to separate the wheat from the chaff.

And often it is not easy.

There are two reasons: One, many people who write recommendations don’t know how. Two, many committees who receive recommendations don’t know how to make the best use of them.

According to the dictionary, “to recommend” someone is to “commend” them another person. This in itself creates a problem for pastor search committees. Too often the writers of recommendations follow the philosophy, “If you can’t say something good about a person, don’t say anything.”

As a result, everything they say about a person is good or complimentary. But that which is left unsaid may be even more valuable to a committee that already knows the “perfect pastor” is not to be found this side of heaven.

What we normally refer to as a “recommendation” should actually contain three parts – information about the person, evaluation of the minister’s abilities in light of the needs of the church, and commendation of the man to the church if the situation warrants it.

It is possible for a recommendation simply to commend a man to a church. But the best recommendations also give the necessary information to explain why the recommender is willing to commend him.

A pastor search committee should recognize that recommendations come in various weights and sizes and are not of equal value.

Here are two recommendations:

1. “I have known for many years the prospective pastor your church is interested in and am well acquainted with his strong points and weaknesses. I also know your church very well. I would not hesitate recommending that you call him as pastor if you feel so led by the Holy Spirit.”
2. “I’m glad to recommend the preacher you asked about. Although I don’t know him well, I’ve never heard anything bad about him, and as far as I know he always pays his debts.”

Two recommendations: both helpful, but very brief, both incomplete. But the first should be given a great deal more weight in the consideration of the pastor search committee.

Some pastor search committees have the mistaken idea that one should never recommend a man to a church unless he feels satisfied deep down in his soul that the preacher is the one man God would have the church call.

But this need not be so. It is possible for a person to have this conviction when he recommends a man. If true, he can say so, acknowledging that the final judgment of God’s will in the matter must be left up to the church and the prospective pastor.

But the vast majority of recommendations do not presume to know what the final will of God will be. With the welfare of God’s kingdom at heart, they are simply trying to inform a pastor search committee about a minister the recommender knows and thinks is a good person for the committee to examine closely.

In fact, some denominational workers and pastors refuse to recommend a man to a church. Instead they prefer to give all the information they have on several suitable men, saying to the church, “You take it from here and find out God’s will in the matter as you learn more about the men.”

If recommendations can have from one to three elements (information, evaluation, commendation), and if they can vary in their value to a pastor search committee, what are the characteristics of an ideal recommendation? Here are some suggestions.

## **General Characteristics**

A good recommendation will indicate interest in the welfare of your church – more than a desire to simply help a preacher find a position.

A good recommendation recognizes that churches select their own pastors. It recognizes that a man needs to have certain qualifications and abilities, and a divine call, to be a pastor. It recognizes that a pastor is to serve the church, which in turn is to carry out the ministry of Christ. It is also aware that a church needs to be led and unified by the Holy Spirit as it makes its selection of a pastor.

## **Specific Characteristics**

An ideal recommendation:

1. Will be made by a person whose integrity and judgment the church can trust; one who is well enough acquainted with the man he is recommending and the pastorless church in order to make a judgment.
2. Will reveal how much the person making the recommendation knows about the prospective pastor; how close a contact he has with him and his past and present work.
3. Will indicate how much the person making the recommendation knows about the church seeking a pastor – its needs and opportunities.
4. Will reveal the prospective pastor’s strong points and weaknesses; giving specific as well as general information.
5. Will explain why, in light of the recommender’s knowledge of the prospective pastor and pastorless church, he thinks the man is suited to the church.
6. Will not attempt to place the Holy Spirit’s stamp of approval on the man recommended unless the recommender has a definite, deep-seated conviction he should do so.

Not all recommendations will be ideal. But each one can be examined for the above factors in order that a pastor search committee might know how much confidence to place in them.

When a committee becomes definitely interested in a man, it will do well to secure recommendations about him from many different sources. Each one will add to his store of knowledge and will give a better understanding of what others think of him.

As a practical step the pastor search committee should ask that all recommendations be written – including those given by their own church members. This makes it easier to file information on prospective pastors and requires a person to take a moment to think of what he wants to say when making his recommendations.

The committee should also make it clear that all recommendations will be kept absolutely confidential – perhaps agreeing to destroy them after a pastor has been secured by the church. In no case should confidential information be made available to others without the consent of the person giving the information.

## Chapter 7: What You Should Know About a Prospective Pastor

A certain Baptist church in a small town found itself suddenly without a pastor. During the following week the chairman of deacons learned that a man shopping in his hardware store was a preacher, visiting in town for a few days.

“Won’t you preach for us?” he inquired.

In order to assist the church, the man agreed. The congregation was so impressed with his preaching that after the evening service, on an impulse, they voted unanimously to call him as pastor.

“Oh!” replied the startled man, when informed of the action, “I thought you knew. I’m a *Methodist* preacher!”

Now it may be unusual for a church to call a man without knowing which denomination he belongs to, but unfortunately too many churches call a man about whom they know very little else. This was revealed in a study of how Southern Baptist churches secure a pastor.

Two out of ten churches said that when they called their last pastor, they did not know such elemental things as how much experience he had, what he believed, and what ability he had to preach.

More than one half of the churches did not know about the man’s conversion experience, his family, whether he paid his debts or could control his temper. Yet the New Testament clearly points out that before a man is asked to serve as pastor he should meet definite qualifications in each of these areas.

The time to gather information is before deciding to call a man to serve your church. Any church can discover whether a man is qualified to serve them after he begins his work as pastor! By then it may be too late.

More than one pastor search committee has even found itself in sticky circumstances because it waited until after the church heard a man preach in view of a call before checking on his qualifications.

Learning as much as possible about a prospective pastor before calling him is not an optional matter. How else can a church determine whether a man meets the qualification of pastor spelled out in the New Testament?

First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 indicate that a pastor is to have a good reputation in his church, in society, and in his own home. Stated negatively, he is not to be self-pleasing, quick-tempered, or given to wine or money. Stated positively, he is to love people, love God, and be sensible, mature, and Christlike.

In regard to the experience a pastor is expected to have, according to the New Testament, he is not to be a novice or new Christian, but his character and Christian experience should have stood the test of time. He should show he is able to manage his own household well. He must be a skilled teacher.

In addition, the Scriptures indicate that a church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is to examine a man further to see if he has the God-given gifts needed to minister to the specific needs of their fellowship.

While the basic qualifications expected of a pastor do not vary, the gifts a man needs to serve a church well will not be the same for every church.

As an obvious example, a Spanish-speaking church might have a requirement that any prospective pastor would need to speak both Spanish and English.

Pastor Search Committee members would do well to set up a checklist to follow when seeking information about prospective pastors. The following is a suggested guide. The list does not cover everything a church may need to know about a prospective pastor, but it does give some ideas as to types of information to secure.

You won’t find a perfect man to serve your church, but you can find the right man.

### **New Testament Qualifications for a Pastor**

Here are some spiritual and character qualifications that, according to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, every pastor should possess.

### *Outward Reputation*

Have a good reputation even when his life is lived as an open book (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7).

Be well thought of, even by those outside the church (1Tim. 3:7)

Be irrefutable in his marital relations (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)

In other words, a pastor is to be a man who has a good reputation in his church, in society, and in his home.

### *Inner Disposition*

Not selfish, quick-tempered, intemperate, violent, or overly interested in material things (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7).

Have a love for people and for that which is good (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8).

Be sensible, mature, well-balanced, and self-controlled (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)

Be Christlike and devoted to God (Titus 1:8).

A pastor with the right kind of inner disposition should have right attitudes toward himself and toward God and should reflect Christian maturity.

### *Christian Experience*

Not a novice or new convert (1 Tim. 3:6).

Prove himself faithful and able to guide others by managing his own household well; should have believing and obedient children (1Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6).

Be a skillful teacher (1 Tim. 3:2), one who has been taught what is true and knows how to teach it to others (Titus 1:9).

### *Checklist: Information to Secure Concerning Prospective Pastors*

1. What do members of his former church (or churches) think of him?
2. What do his neighbors and people in his community think of him?
3. If there are others on his church staff, what do they think of him?
4. How do other pastors and denominational workers regard his work and him personally?
5. What kind of husband and father is he?
6. What is his wife like? What are her abilities as a church worker and homemaker?
7. Are his children well behaved? Are they Christians?
8. How does he get along with other people?
9. Does he control his temper?
10. How old is he?
11. What experience has he had as a pastor? Were the churches he has served large or small, new or old, urban or rural, growing or declining? Was his ministry effective in light of the opportunities and circumstances?
12. What are his personal habits in regard to cleanliness, amusements, etc.?
13. How wise is he in handling money? What is his attitude toward money? Does he pay his debts?
14. How concerned is he with helping others?
15. What types of people does he work with best? How well does he minister to the sick, the needy, people in trouble?
16. What is his moral record?
17. What does he believe about what the Bible teaches?
18. What ability does he have as a preacher? How does he make use of the Bible in preaching? What are his study habits?
19. Why does he want to preach and be a pastor?
20. What ability does he have in personal evangelism?

21. What ability does he have as a teacher? How does he plan to find, enlist, and train church workers?
22. What are his ideas about worship?
23. How much education does he have? Where was it obtained? Why did he select the schools he attended? What quality of work did he exhibit in school?
24. Is he able to lead people? Can he plan? Does he follow through? How does he work with deacons; other church leaders?
25. When was he converted? What did the experience mean to him?
26. What is his attitude toward supporting missions; use of the denomination's financial plan, such as the Cooperative Program?
27. What methods does he use to appeal to people regarding stewardship and finances?
28. What is his attitude toward cooperating with other churches in the denomination; with other churches in the community?
29. Does he attend meetings of the association; share in the work of the association?
30. How is his health?
31. How active is he in organizations in the community other than the church? Is his influence felt in the community in general? How does he deal with controversial issues?

## Chapter 8 – How to Secure Information about A Prospective Pastor

To get the information your pulpit committee needs about a prospective pastor, just follow a simple formula: *Ask the right people the right questions!* Many churches reveal, however, wide differences of opinion as to who are the right people and what are the right questions.

Some churches don't ask anybody anything! Others have gone so far as to hire private investigators. Which is right?

The answer probably lies between the two extremes. A layman whose church did not investigate the last pastor it called had this to say. "Our trouble started when we didn't take time to inquire about the man. We have learned from this experience, believe me!"

A preacher who was investigated by a private firm stated: "I believe the church could have found out just as much by using other channels, and at less cost to the church."

Any church can obtain information about a man it is interested in. "Too small" and "too poor" are not valid excuses for a church's failure to find out about a man. This is a day when an email can put you in contact with any place in the world within a few seconds, and long-distance telephone calls can help you get "instant information" at a relatively low cost.

The last chapter indicated the type of information a church needs about a man before calling him as pastor. Here are some sources to contact to obtain that information.

### Contact the Man Himself

1. *Extended personal contact.* One of the best ways to learn about a man is to have close contact with him and his work over an extended period of time. But very few churches have this opportunity – calling a man who has been a member of the church, lived or served nearby, or has been in the church on numerous occasions for revival meetings and the like.

Even when a church does know a prospective pastor quite well, it is wise for the pastor search committee to use its checklist in examining his qualifications to be sure it has as much information as it thinks it does.

2. *Personal interview.* If at all possible, talk frankly with the preacher himself about such things as his background, his beliefs, his abilities, and his attitude toward the office of pastor. (This is described in more detail in chapter 9). Your committee will probably want to contact other sources first, but it will find most pastors appreciate and are responsive to this direct approach.

When it is not possible to talk to a man personally, use a letter, questionnaire, or telephone.

### Contact His Church Field

1. *Members of churches he has served.* A good way to find out about a man's ability is to ask people who have had him for a pastor. They will know whether he visits, is active in personal evangelism, preaches well, is a good leader, and the like. Get their appraisal both of his weaknesses and his strong points.

Try to get a balanced viewpoint by checking with a number of different people.

2. *Members of his church staff.* Staff members who have served with a minister in other churches can be contacted about how good an administrator he is, how he works with other church leaders, and the type of church program he likes to develop.

3. *Others in the church's community.* Don't overlook what people in the community who are not members of the church think of the minister. What is their opinion of him as a man? As a man of God? What kind of neighbor is he?

Here again several people should be contacted. One pastor search committee visiting the town of a prospective pastor almost turned around and headed for home after getting an unfavorable report from the first man they asked to give his opinion of the preacher. Fortunately they learned just in time that they had been talking to the town's liquor dealer!

## **Check with Pastors and Denominational Workers**

1. *Pastors.* If the prospective preacher is not presently serving a church, be sure to contact the pastor of the church of which he is a member. How faithful and active a church member a man is while a student or between pastorates can be quite revealing.

Pastors who have served nearby churches or have been in revivals with the prospective preacher or have other contacts with him can give helpful information about the man.

2. *Associational workers.* Often no denominational worker is closer to a pastor than the associational missionary or superintendent of missions. He can especially give information on whether a man takes an active part in the associational program, how missionary minded he is, and whether he is able to accept and follow through on responsibilities assigned him. Sometimes a man may have served several churches in the same association, and the missionary can report on the general pattern of his ministry.

3. *State and convention workers.* Through personal knowledge of files of information sometimes maintained, these workers have a wide range of contacts with pastors within a state. They can also assist pastor search committees by giving them advice on other sources to contact for information.

4. *Church-pastor relations committees.* Some state conventions have a special committee, or office, ready to assist a church seeking information about a minister.

## **Check Schools and Records**

1. *College and seminary personnel.* It is possible to learn more than the grades a man made and his courses of study – important as they are – when contacting school personnel. They can also report on a man's diligence, ability, and outside activities while in school.

Do not make the mistake of assuming that when a school grants a man a degree, it is also willing to give him an unqualified recommendation to any church that is interested. Because a man has a diploma from a certain school does not automatically qualify him to serve your church.

It is sometimes wise to find out what kind of school granted the degrees a man has.

2. *Records.* Associational records, school records, credit ratings, and the like can give additional information about prospective pastors.

How a pastor search committee contacts sources of information will vary according to circumstances. Personal contacts are best. Visit the preacher's church field. Spend time with him. Talk with his friends and fellow workers. If time or money does not permit this, use correspondence and/or telephone.

There is no need for a church to go beyond its lines of communication to secure a pastor. Information can travel just as far as a preacher can!

Sometimes others can help. A church in a remote pioneer area once commissioned a state denominational worker to investigate a prospective pastor for them during a trip he made to a meeting in a distant state.

To get the most help from the various sources of information, a pastor search committee would do well to use a checklist similar to that in the preceding chapter. This list can serve as a guide in asking questions.

Up until now no mention has been made of the one method used most often by churches to obtain information about a minister. Ninety-five percent of the churches have him preach in their church.

This is one way to learn something about a man. But it might well be used in the same order as it has been listed here – last! Let the pastor search committee first contact other sources mentioned and satisfy itself that the man is indeed a good prospect for pastor.

## Chapter 9: How to Confer with a Prospective Pastor

In the beginning your committee may need to gather preliminary information about a number of men. But as soon as possible it should narrow its attention to one man who seems more satisfactory than any other. Unless it is decided he is not the man for your church, no other prospective pastor should be considered from that point on.

When the committee is agreed concerning the one man it wants to investigate further, the following steps are in order.

### Visit His Church Field

1. *Is the trip necessary?* Some pastor search committee travel is unnecessary. Committees often think they need to make several trips early in their work to become acquainted with several ministers in order to have some basis for comparing prospective pastors. Such “comparison shopping” for the best spiritual bargain is not needed if your committee first establishes a standard against which to measure prospects. Such a standard of measurement would include the New Testament qualifications and the specific God-given abilities and attitudes you believe a man should have to serve a church like yours.

Much gas and oil money, not to say time, would be saved if pastor search committees exhausted some other avenues for obtaining information before considering whether to visit a man’s church field.

If information obtained from other sources reveals that the man is not suitable for your church, an unnecessary trip is avoided. If the preliminary checking produces favorable information, you can make the trip better prepared to interpret the additional facts as you gather them.

Unnecessary visits to other churches should be avoided because of the effects a pastor search committee’s visit sometimes has on the church members there and on the pastor’s ministry.

If a congregation likes its pastor, it is not usually pleased for another church to show interest. “Visiting committees get our people all excited about losing our pastor,” said a layman. “Even if he doesn’t go, we get the impression that he is at least interested in leaving.” (On the other hand, if there is serious friction between pastor and members, the church may welcome a visiting committee with open arms!)

It is hoped that church members will come to understand that a visit by a pastor search committee does not necessarily mean the committee has made up its mind and that their pastor has agreed he is interested in leaving. It should mean that the committee is trying to do its work carefully as it seeks the will of God.

When a committee goes to a church in the right spirit and at the right time in its investigation, it has no apologies to make. Members of the church being visited should join them in prayer that God’s will would be made clear. When God’s will is known, it will be what is best for the pastor search committee, the prospective pastor, and both churches.

2. *When such a visit is impossible.* If the man is not currently serving a church, or if for some reason, the pastor search committee cannot travel to where he is serving, a substitute move is possible. Arrange for the prospect to be given an opportunity to preach as a supply in a nearby church – on a Wednesday night if not on a Sunday. The associational missionary or a pastor friend can help with this.

Take care of any expenses in such an arrangement. Be sure all arrangements are clearly understood by the prospect, the nearby church, and your committee.

3. *Participate in worship.* When you visit a prospective pastor’s church and worship under his leadership, try to enter into the service. Don’t go simply as critic and judge.

It is a fact that few pastor search committees go undetected as they visit – the pastor and usually some of the members recognize its presence. Still, your committee should do its best not to disrupt the

spirit of the service. Do not all enter at the same time or sit together. Be on time. Be courteous and friendly. However, it is not necessary to state to any member of the congregation that you are a pastor search committee from another church.

In the worship service observe such things as the atmosphere of reverence, orderliness of the service, music, how the people respond, participation of others, what the man says in his message, his voice, his earnestness.

One sermon and one worship service are not enough to judge a pastor's abilities. This can be especially true if he preaches in a "barrowed" church with unfamiliar surroundings. The impressions from such a visit should be only one of many factors which will finally influence your decision.

4. *Talk with the man personally.* If the committee is still favorably impressed after the worship service, it should request a conference with the minister at his home or some other place at a convenient time. Invite the minister's wife to be present also. Allow plenty of time for an informal, unhurried meeting.

Use the checklist in chapter 7 as a general guide for questions you may wish to ask the minister.

Also tell the pastor about your church. Provide the information already compiled by the committee. Encourage him to ask questions.

Pastors complain that some pastor search committees fail to reveal significant facts about their church. "They wanted to know all about me," said one minister, "but they kept hidden some troubles they had in regard to finances and the fellowship of the church. I also felt they should have shared their thinking about some future plans for the church."

Hiding significant church problems will not help get the right man as pastor. Revealing them may help some men realize they are not adequate to face the problems. But the right man will be challenged. He will respect the frankness and confidence of your committee's sharing with him the complete information – good and bad.

(Often a preacher will obtain the information about your church anyway from other sources, and the only result is that he comes to have less confidence in the pastor search committee which tried to keep significant facts hidden.)

Discuss what your church expects of a pastor, and clearly outline the basic working and living conditions. If the church has already decided on a salary, vacation schedule, retirement benefits, and so forth, share this information with the minister. Otherwise, let him know what the policies and practices have been in the past. This is not the time to reach an agreement on such items – this comes later if your committee and the prospective pastor continue in their interest in each other.

Find out if the minister would consider leaving his present work and serving a church like yours, but don't ask: "Will you come if we call you?" A minister can indicate his willingness to consider a church, but he should not be asked for a final answer before he has been formally called by the church. Even the spirit of the church at the time of the vote can influence a man's decision whether to accept a call.

5. *Talk with church members and others in the community.* People who may provide helpful information are described in chapter 8. Get opinions from several people regarding the minister and his work, and discount any picture which presents him as too much saint or too much sinner.

*If your committee decides not to consider the man further, notify him.*

### **Invite Him to Your Community**

If the minister is still interested, and your committee's opinion is still favorable, make arrangements for the man and his wife to visit your church.

1. *Be a good host.* Your committee should take care of all expenses – including travel, meals, lodging, and perhaps the securing of a supply preacher for his church. If for some reason your church is unable to do this, it should be made plain to the minister in advance.

Plan wisely how to best use the time. See that someone meets the minister and his wife when they arrive. Arrange in advance for a place to stay – usually a motel or hotel is preferable. Make them welcome as guests. Give them an idea of what their schedule will be.

Let the couple view the church facilities, community, shopping area, schools, neighborhoods, and parsonage. Conducting such a tour is the job for one host, not the entire committee. Include some time for the minister to look around the church and community on his own. Occasionally, more than one visit is needed.

2. *Discuss the pastor-church relationships frankly.* The committee and prospective pastor should confer further on details of the relationship between pastor and church. The discussion should be quite open and frank. The man is being called to a spiritual task, but spelling out what the church will expect of its pastor and what the church plans to do for its pastor should be done in an orderly, businesslike way.

A tentative understanding, subject to final approval (if required) by the church, should be worked out concerning such things as the following:

- Salary
- Car expense
- Book expense
- Church's part in retirement plans
- Church's part in moving expense
- Amount of vacation
- Convention expense
- Parsonage or housing allowance
- Plan for maintenance of parsonage
- Policy regarding payment of utilities
- Telephone
- Any improvements or decorating (home and office) to be done before arrival of the new pastor
- Number on church staff and their relationship to the pastor
- Time allowed for secular work or attending school
- Study leaves or sabbaticals
- Time allowed for revivals and similar engagements
- How supply preachers are to be selected and paid

This is not a time to shop for bargains or to pick a preacher at his lowest available price. It is doubtful if this is ever good business practice, and it definitely is not the Christian way to secure a church leader.

The criteria should not be “how little can we get by with,” but “how can we fairly share in the physical needs of one we ask to lead us full time in spiritual tasks?”

Minor adjustments may need to be made as committee and pastor discuss these matters. Special needs, such as the size of a minister's family, may call for changes to be made in the original salary and expense estimates.

Other items will need to be agreed on, varying according to the special circumstances and interests of the church and prospective minister. (One church called a bachelor as pastor, and it was agreed he would not date girls in the church community!)

The committee should tell the prospective minister what the church expects in terms of funerals, weddings, visitation, worship services, evangelism, missions, denominational cooperation, presiding at business meetings, and the like.

Be sure that both the committee and the minister understand any agreements tentatively made, and whether they are subject to review and final action by the congregation before taking effect.

3. *Arrange meetings with various groups.* Informal meetings can be arranged with specific groups of church leaders such as deacons and/or leaders in church organizations. In a relaxed atmosphere, matters

of mutual concern can be discussed. A fellowship can be planned to provide for informal contact with the entire congregation.

4. *Decide whether the minister should preach in your church.* Some churches have discontinued having a prospective minister preach for the congregation before extending him a call. They prefer to base their final judgment on the report of the pastor search committee which has much more than simply hearing one or two sermons on which to base its report.

## Chapter 10: How to Call and Install a Pastor

After a minister has been presented to your church through leading a worship service or in informal meetings with members – or both – your committee should meet and decide whether to recommend him as a pastor.

If the committee is enthusiastically in favor of such a recommendation, the church should be notified. If the decision is negative, the man should be notified.

1. *Inform all church members.* Be sure all members know well in advance when the recommendation of a pastor is to be made to the church. Set a time when the most members can be present and participate in the decision. Sunday morning is a good time in many churches.

Prepare a written recommendation. It should clearly state the facts about the minister and his qualifications and experience, what he is expected to do as pastor, and what the church promises to do for him.

It should include a brief biographical sketch relating his background, education, experience, spiritual qualities, and abilities. Tell why the committee was favorably impressed, why you think he can serve the church well, why you believe the Holy Spirit has directed you this far.

Any tentative agreements between the pastor search committee and prospective pastor should be revealed. Those requiring church action should be included as a part of the recommendation to be voted on by the church.

After your committee chairman has presented the recommendation, moved its adoption, and obtained a second, allow time for questions and discussion.

When all questions in the minds of the members have been answered regarding the man and the terms of the call, it is time to vote.

2. *Encourage all to vote.* In taking the vote keep in mind two things. (1) Every member should be urged to vote. (2) The method of voting used should allow every member to truly express himself. It may be best to vote by ballot so no person will be reluctant to register his feeling on the matter. The pastor search committee should note not only how many are for or against calling the preacher, but also the number who do not vote. The spirit of the service and the attitude of the membership are just as important as the count. Note: Check your church's Bylaws for any specific requirements in voting for a pastor.

3. *Give the minister a complete report.* As soon as the church has voted to call a man, let him know immediately. Call him by telephone if possible. (It is usually best to take the vote when the prospective pastor is not on the church field.)

Follow up the phone call with a letter outlining again the details of the call, the spirit of the membership at the time of the vote, the percentage of the active membership present in the service, and the vote count.

If the church took a second vote in order to extend a unanimous call, let the preacher know the count of the first vote.

List the agreements the church has authorized.

If you expect a man to follow God's will in the matter, give him time to seek and determine God's will. Join with him in prayer for the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

If the pulpit committee has investigated well, adhered to New Testament standards, presented the prospective pastor fairly to the congregation, obtained a clear understanding of the will of the members, conveyed the call and other details agreed upon to the preacher, and through it all sought the will of God, it can truly rejoice when from the man come the words, "I accept."

Even so, the work of the committee will not have ended!

4. *Don't stop before you are finished!* Report the minister's formal answer to the call to your church. The work of your committee continues until the minister is received on the field and installed as your pastor.

If you have an parsonage be sure the parsonage is ready, repairs made, utilities connected, redecoration completed. Help with moving arrangements if necessary.

Be sure the pastor's study is in complete readiness.

Introduce your pastor and his family to the community through an article in your local newspaper. Similar information can be shared through the state denominational paper.

Present the new pastor to your congregation at the first worship service he conducts. Some churches arrange several receptions during the first few weeks for members of the church and to introduce him to others in the community.

If your church has a formal installation service, the pastor search committee can work with the deacons or other committee involved in planning this event.

When the pastor search committee's work is finished, it should be discharged with thanks by the church at the next regular business meeting unless it is a standing committee.

Destroy all confidential papers concerning prospective pastors or return them to their original source. Be sure all pastors previously contacted by the committee have been notified they are no longer under consideration.

A summary report of the committee's work should be given the church clerk for inclusion in the minutes. Any unpaid expenses to be paid by the church should be indicated.

Though your work as a pastor search committee member ends, your responsibility as a church member continues. You cannot delegate the ministry of your church completely to your new pastor. He is to lead your church in its spiritual ministry. Your continued love, respect, and support will help determine the effectiveness of his leadership in the years ahead.

## For Consideration by Pastor Search Committee

1. The most important thing is prayer, and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
2. What is your place in this task?
3. What procedures are required in our constitution and by-laws in the calling of a pastor?
  - A. Quorum of resident membership?
  - B. Percent of vote required?
  - C. Secret ballot, any member present and abstaining should be considered a (no) vote.
  - D. Vote should be taken immediately following his sermon.
    - \* Reasoning: If one person with influence does not like him; that person could go home and spend an afternoon on the telephone telling people his dislikes before the vote would be taken that evening, and that would influence the results, and yet it would only be one persons opinions influencing any change. Also, some may come to vote because of the phone call who did not hear the man preach and vote (no). The opposite could be true in an affirmative vote.
4. Be certain that all matters concerning salary and benefits have been defined, reported and agreed upon by the church.
5. What procedures will be used to move the pastor and family?
6. What procedures will be used to acquaint the congregation with the new pastor and his family?
7. Securing the pastor for your church:
  - A. Seek the direction of God to find His man.
  - B. See clearly the needs of the church
  - C. Consider the names recommended
  - D. Decide on one man to pursue
  - E. Investigate the man thoroughly
  - F. Hear the man preach, preferably not at your church service
  - G. Check morals, especially does he pay his bills
  - H. Interview the man
    - a. Get his view about doctrine, church program method of work, etc.
    - b. Give your views and the program of your church
    - c. Discuss finances with the man
      1. Cost of and method of moving to the field of service should the church extend a call
      2. Housing, where and means of securing
      3. Salary and allowances
  - I. Meet prayerfully as a committee to discuss. After much consideration come to a decision. Is this God's man we can agree on as a committee?
  - J. Invite the man to preach in view of a call at your church.
  - K. At a church special business meeting, called and publicized for the purpose of calling a pastor, consider and take action on the recommendation of pastor search committee.

## Pastor Search Committee Questionnaire

Please give prayerful consideration to the question below, complete the questionnaire and return it this Sunday night.

1. About what age person would you like for our next pastor to be, assuming that other characteristics are favorable?  
Under 30 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50 up \_\_\_\_\_
2. Education background:  
Seminary degree: Unnecessary \_\_\_\_\_ Desirable \_\_\_\_\_ Essential \_\_\_\_\_
3. In thinking of our church's needs, which of these activities should a pastor ideally spend the most time? (number top 5 you feel are most important)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Preparing sermons and preaching ability  
\_\_\_\_\_ Visiting church members  
\_\_\_\_\_ Counseling, advising members  
\_\_\_\_\_ Visiting prospective church members  
\_\_\_\_\_ Hospital visitation  
\_\_\_\_\_ Office work, administration  
\_\_\_\_\_ Personal evangelism and soul winning  
\_\_\_\_\_ Personal prayer and Bible Study  
\_\_\_\_\_ Denominational work (state, associational leadership)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Youth leadership  
\_\_\_\_\_ Community leadership
4. What is the greatest need you feel our church has today?
5. What personal characteristics or traits do you feel are most needed in a pastor to help us to meet this need?
6. What is the present personality of the church?
7. What direction do we want our church to go?
8. What needs in our community can become a ministry for our church?
9. What do you see as the duty of the pastor?

## Inventory of Needed Skills for Ministry In This Position

PLEASE CHECK EACH OF THE SKILLS LISTED BELOW TO INDICATE PRIORITY NEEDS. CHECK EACH ONLY ONCE.

	MUST HAVE	NEEDED	AVERAGE NEED	LESS NEED
1. Preaching, Worship Leader				
2. Organizer/Administrator				
3. Bible Teaching				
4. Counseling				
5. Pastoral Care				
6. Visitation				
7. Missions Oriented				
8. Community Conscious				
9. Family Ministry				
10. Ministry to Senior Adults				
11. Ministry to Singles				
12. Ministry to Youth				
13. Ministry to Children				
14. Social Ministry				
15. Denominational Leader				
16. Evangelism & Outreach				
17. Recreational Skills				
18. Choral Director				
19. Youth Music				
20. Soloist				
21. Organist				
22. Pianist				
23. Outreach				
24. Leadership Education				
25. Foreign Language Skills (list)				

**Please return to:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Pastor's Profile

- Able to “Visualize into the future”
- Believes that God will accomplish great things through him
- Is a “Self Starter” and is able to build from nothing
- Is committed to excellence
- Has the ability to instill ownership of ministry into others
- Is able to win people over to his vision
- Has the ability to see the potential in others
- Has a deep burden for the lost to be saved
- Has a special ability to communicate to the lost and unchurched
- Is able to move into a personal level relationship with the unchurched
- Has great wisdom in handling the crisis of the unchurched
- Has a partnership relationship with his spouse
- His spouse feels the same commitment to the church call
- Your marriage is a good model for other couples to follow
- You display godly love and compassion for others
- Shows appreciation easily
- Is willing to work to seek a vision without accepting a shortcut “Quick Success”
- Is able to work through step-by-step plans
- Is able to avoid becoming a maintenance type ministry
- Is able to keep his eyes focused on the goal
- Is able to overcome obstacles
- Is good at trouble-shooting problems
- Is able to stimulate others into action
- Is able to build group cohesiveness
- Has patience while allowing others to become adequately prepared to accomplish their tasks
- Is able to cope with abrupt changes
- Is easily forgiving toward others as-well-as self
- Is able to put together a nucleus core group
- Can assimilate new comers easily into core group
- Is able to mentor and discipleship others
- Is effective in explaining tasks to others
- Rebounds from disappointments and failures quickly
- Is a positive based leader
- Is willing to wait for God's answer to specific prayer requests
- Who knows his strengths and weaknesses
- Is willing to “stay the course” to God's vision in the flesh
- Is able to exercise faith even during the most challenging of times
- Has a strong prayer life
- Committed to church growth
- Is able to feel the heartbeat of the community

Do not expect the pastor to have all of these qualities. Look for a well rounded person who has a visionary capacity to see God's plan, who is self motivated, who is strong in seeking the lost, and is able to assemble a core group of people who partnerships together into building a strong reproductive church.

# Pastor's Profile Information-1

## Basic Biographical Data

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle Initial Title (Pastor, Rev., Dr.)

2. Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Where you desire correspondence to be sent.)

3. City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

4. Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Y N Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Y N  
(May we call you here?) (May we call you here?)

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

5. Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

6. Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Country

7. Marital Status: \_\_\_ Single \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Widowed \_\_\_ Separated/Divorced  
\_\_\_ Remarried (If separated/divorced/remarried, please explain on a separate sheet.)

8. If married, give spouse's full name \_\_\_\_\_  
First Maiden Last

Has spouse been previously divorced? \_\_\_ Y \_\_\_ N (If yes, please explain.)

9. Give names and year of birth of your children.

Name	Date	Name	Date
a. _____	_____	d. _____	_____
b. _____	_____	e. _____	_____
c. _____	_____	f. _____	_____

10. Your education (above high school).

School	Degree/Certificate	Date
a. _____	_____	_____
b. _____	_____	_____
c. _____	_____	_____
d. _____	_____	_____
e. _____	_____	_____

11. Are there any special health needs in your family?  Yes  No (If yes, describe)

Family Member	Health Need
a. _____	_____
b. _____	_____
c. _____	_____

12. Your current church: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Position	_____
Membership	_____
Average Church Attendance	_____
Sunday School Attendance	_____
Church Budget	_____
Annual Giving to Missions	_____

13. Prior Churches Served:

Church/Organization	Location	Dates	Position
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

14. What are your special interests and hobbies?

15. Have you ever been involved in or convicted of child abuse?  Yes  No

16. Have you ever been involved in a homosexual lifestyle?  Yes  No

17. Have you ever been accused of sexual harassment?  Yes  No

18. Please enclose a recent picture of yourself and, if possible, of your wife and family.

### Ministry Experience

On a separate sheet of paper, please answer the following questions:

1. Give a brief summary of your conversion experience.
2. Give a brief summary of your call to the ministry.
3. In what order would you rank your strengths in ministry?

Preaching _____	Personal Counseling _____
Pastoral Care/Calling _____	Evangelism _____
Missions Promotion _____	Leading in Worship _____
Christian Education _____	Discipling Laymen _____
Youth Ministry _____	Church Growth _____
Church Administration _____	Equipping Believers _____

Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you believe is your greatest personal strength?
5. What do you see as your ministerial weaknesses that will need support from other staff or laymen?
6. Have you ever been asked to resign from your church? If so, please give details.
7. Overseas or cross-cultural ministry experiences:
8. What is your method of preaching?
  - 1) Manuscript, notes, outline, without notes
  - 2) Topical, expository, textural, other
9. In your pulpit ministry, how do you apply scripture to life needs?
10. Describe the place that worship should have in the church program.
11. How do you see your ministry in equipping the saints?
  - 1) From the pulpit
  - 2) In small groups
  - 3) In personal discipling
  - 4) Other
12. What are your spiritual gifts?
13. How do you feel about the more controversial gifts of the Spirit?
14. What is your view (and that of your spouse if it is different) concerning women in positions of church leadership?
15. What is your view and practice (and that of your spouse if it is different) concerning the use of tobacco and alcohol?
16. What role do contemporary theological and ethical issues play in your ministry?
17. What do you see as the important social issues the church faces today?
18. What place does world evangelism have in your overall pulpit ministry?

## Potential Pastor Profile-2

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Home Phone Number

Work Phone Number

Age            Birthdate                            Seminary Student    Yes    No

Married     Single     Divorced (explain circumstances)

Children:

Name

Age

Birthdate

1] When did you come to know the Lord? (give full testimony on a separate sheet)  
Explain your understanding of a "call to ministry." What confirms that call to you?

2] How have your gifts manifested themselves in the body of Christ? Explain















## **Job Description for Pastor**

**Principal Function:** The pastor is responsible to the church for providing administrative leadership for the church and for using his skills in proclamation and pastoral care in meeting the needs of persons in the church and community.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Provide administrative leadership for the total church program.
2. Serve as chairman of the church council.
3. Proclaim the gospel and lead the church in proclaiming the gospel to the church and community.
4. Care for persons and lead the church in caring for persons in the church and community.
5. Lead congregational services; work with the congregational services planning group to plan, coordinate and evaluate congregational services.
6. Supervise other members of the church staff according to the staff organization set forth in the church organizational chart or manual.
7. Provide leadership for the observance of church ordinances.
8. Conduct funeral services and wedding ceremonies.
9. Counsel with and assist in training deacons for their responsibilities.

## Questions During Interview

1. Ask for the account of his conversion testimony.
2. Ask for the account of his call to ministry.
3. Ask about stewardship of possessions:
  - A. Do you tithe?
  - B. Do you give above the tithe to other offerings?
  - C. Do you pay your debts?
  - D. Have you ever filed bankruptcy?
  - E. What are your beliefs regarding tithes and offerings?
4. Ask about stewardship of time:
  - A. How do you compute your time responsibilities to the church?
  - B. Do you believe in maintaining regular office hours?
  - C. Do you support a scheduled weekly outreach program?
  - D. On what basis do you establish priorities regarding the allocation of your scheduled work day?
  - E. Using the following interconnected and interrelated tasks to express the major and significant things a pastor actually does, how would you allocate your time in the fulfillment of the full scope of ministry?
    - a. Proclaiming
    - b. Leading
    - c. Caring
  - F. What would a church be doing with its time if you felt it were effective and successful?
5. Ask about commitment to Southern Baptist work:
  - A. Are you a Southern Baptist?
  - B. How long have you been a Southern Baptist?
  - C. What other denominations or parachurch groups have you served?
  - D. What do you like about Southern Baptist?
  - E. What do you dislike about Southern Baptist?
  - F. Which doctrine, or teaching of our faith means most to you?
  - G. Do you have strong beliefs relative to the various translations of the Bible?
6. Ask about his approach to Church administration and government.
  - A. Do you believe in business meetings?
    - a. How often?
    - b. Who should moderate?
  - B. How do you feel about definitive church constitutions?
  - C. How do you feel about using committees, including the church council?
  - D. What style of leader are you?
    - a. Dictatorial
    - b. Democratic
    - c. Laissez Faire

- E. Have you ever attended personal and professional growth conferences?  
If so, please indicate results of testing as it relates to your physiological makeup.
- F. Do you like administration?
- G. What is your understanding of the Biblical qualifications of deacons?
- H. Do you prefer a church with lots of written policies and procedures or a few or no written policies and procedures?

7. Ask the prospective pastor the following questions:

- A. What do you and your family enjoy doing together?
- B. Do you believe in a pastor's involvement in community activities?
- C. Who are your closest friends?
- D. Have you ever been married before?
- E. How do you measure success?
- F. Do you know when you have done a good job or a bad job?
- G. Are you in good health?
- H. Do you counsel?
- I. Do you like visiting in hospitals?
- J. Can you keep a confidence?
- K. What do you consider your strong suit?
- L. What are your weaknesses?
- M. Rank the following Southern Baptist Church organizations in order of importance to the accomplishment of the mission of the church, in your opinion.
  - a. Sunday School/Bible Study
  - b. Church Training
  - c. Women's Missionary Union (WMU)
  - d. Men's Ministries
- N. What, in your opinion, should determine the number of organizations within a church?
- O. What is your understanding of the scripture relative to women serving in positions of leadership in the church?
- P. Do you use tobacco, in any form?
- Q. Do you use alcohol or any type of narcotic?

8. Ask the prospective pastor's wife the following questions:

- A. Do you support your husband's work?
- B. Have you been married before?
- C. What do you like the most about being a pastor's wife?
- D. What do you dislike the most about being a pastor's wife?
- E. Are you a Southern Baptist by conviction?
- F. Ask for the account of her testimony.
- G. How do you measure success?



4] List strong points

5] List weak points

D. Invitation  
a. Content

b. Organization

E. Utilization of Lay Persons in worship services

3. Identify the one thing which impressed you the most about the worship service.

4. Check as many of the following mannerisms and characteristics that you detect

- A. Friendly
- B. Loving
- C. Caring
- D. Willing
- E. Believable
- F. Commanding
- G. Joyful
- H. Sensible

5. Indicate your overall rating of prospective pastor's preaching ability

- A. Outstanding
- B. Excellent
- C. Good
- D. Fair
- E. Poor

# Survey of Church Records and Attitudes

## Who Are We?

\_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Total number of members \_\_\_\_\_ Resident members \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age make-up of church membership:

Ages 12 and under _____	Ages 41-50 _____
Ages 13-16 _____	Ages 51-60 _____
Ages 17-24 _____	Ages 61-70 _____
Ages 25-30 _____	Ages 71 and up _____
Ages 31-40 _____	

3. Number of Sunday School departments and classes:

Ages 12 and under	Departments	Classes
Ages 13-16	_____	_____
Ages 17-24	_____	_____
Ages 25-30	_____	_____
Ages 31-40	_____	_____
Ages 41-50	_____	_____
Ages 51-60	_____	_____
Ages 61-70	_____	_____

4. Sources of new members:

5 years ago	Baptisms	By letter
4 years ago	_____	_____
3 years ago	_____	_____
2 years ago	_____	_____
1 year ago	_____	_____

5. Do we have a weekly visitation plan to reach new members?

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

6. Breakdown of church budget:

Amount for salaries and personnel benefits	_____
Amount for Cooperative Program	_____
Amount for other mission causes	_____
Amount for service and ministry	_____
Amount for building indebtedness	_____
Other expenditures	_____
TOTAL BUDGET	_____

7. Where do our members live?

One (1) mile from church building (number) \_\_\_\_\_

Two (2) miles \_\_\_\_\_  
 Five (5) miles \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ten (10) miles \_\_\_\_\_  
 More than 10 miles away \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do we have the following?  
 Church Council (meeting monthly) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Stewardship emphasis (annually) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Weekly evangelistic outreach \_\_\_\_\_  
 Annual planning meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
 Long-range plans \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have we studied the use of our educational space during the past five (5) years?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

10. List three (3) difficulties inside the church membership which could impede its growth:  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

11. List three (3) difficulties outside the church membership which could impede its growth:  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

12. List three (3) strong points of the church:  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

13. List three (3) weak points of the church:  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

14. Length of tenure of last five (5) pastors:  
 Last pastor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Next to last pastor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Third pastor ago \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fourth pastor ago \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fifth pastor ago \_\_\_\_\_

15. What is the greatest need for our church's membership at this time? (list in order of priority – number 1 through 6)  
 Evangelism \_\_\_\_\_

Mission Emphasis \_\_\_\_\_  
Ministry to church members \_\_\_\_\_  
Stewardship development \_\_\_\_\_  
Attendance emphasis \_\_\_\_\_  
Managing conflict \_\_\_\_\_

16. What is the major church growth strategy adopted by the church at the present time? (if none, write "none")

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

17. Further definition of church membership:

Number of married adults \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of single adults (never married) \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of single adults (divorced) \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of single adults (widow/widower) \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of youth, ages 13 – college \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of children, birth – age 12 \_\_\_\_\_

# Summary of Selected Church Data

Church Totals	19__	19__	19__	19__	19__	19__	19__	20__	20__	20__
1. Total membership										
2. Resident membership										
3. Baptisms										
4. Baptism rate per 100 enrolled in Sunday School										
5. Other additions										
6. Enrollments:										
A. Sunday School										
B. Discipleship Training										
C. Women's Missionary Union										
D. Brotherhood										
E. Church Music										
7. Sunday School average attendance										
8. Total receipts										
9. Per capita receipts										
10. Gifts to missions										
11. Per capita missions										
12. Gifts to Cooperative Program										
13. Per capita Cooperative Program										
14. Gifts to association										
15. Per capita association										

# Pastor Search Committee Process

## Phase 1

- The Pastor Search Committee is formed with 5 members**
- The PSC meets with the Director of Missions receiving an overview of responsibilities.**
- Begin seeking Perspective Pastors Resumes.**

*(Resumes are available from the Sacramento Region Baptist Network Office)*

## Phase 2

- Church holds a Special Prayer Meeting.**
- After receiving the Congregations Pastor Search Congregation Surveys, work up a document to be handed out to the perspective pastors.**  
*(Physical aspects of the church, the surrounding community, Church Membership Characteristics, strengths & weakness, style of the church, Etc.)*
- The pastor search committee will come to a unanimous agreement as to the type of personal traits & qualifications they will be looking for in their new pastor.**
- Begin to develop a financial compensation package to be given to the perspective pastor.**
- [1<sup>st</sup> Cut] Upon receiving a stack of Pastors Resumes the pastor search committee will begin reviewing the resumes, removing those who do not meet the traits & qualifications that the church is looking for.**
- [2<sup>nd</sup> Cut] The Pastor Search Committee will narrow down the list of possible candidates.**
- [3<sup>rd</sup> Cut] The Pastor Search Committee will then narrow down this list of resumes into a “Short List” of a Group of 6 to 12 candidates.**
- From this “Short List of 6 to 12 Candidates”, the pastor search committee will send out a Church Profile giving the Short List Candidates a better picture of what your church, community, and your strengths & weaknesses looks like.**
- Along with the “Church Profile”, the pastor search committee will also send out a “Pastor’s Profile Information Form” to each of the short list candidates, asking them more detailed information about themselves.**

*(Candidates Biographical information, Lifestyle, Ministry information, What If... Question Case Studies, Etc.)*

## Phase 3

- [4<sup>th</sup> Cut]Next, the pastor search committee will narrow down the list to the final 3 Candidates.**
- Begin doing a detailed background check of the 3 candidates.**  
*(Reference Checks & Director of Mission Background Check)*
- We then will request a sermon tape from each of the 3 candidates.**
- Church holds a Special Prayer Meeting.**
- Hold an Initial Telephone Interview with each of the 3 selected Candidates.**  
*(This is NOT an in-depth interview, it is only a reading of the candidates personally, and how he communicates, etc.)*
- Pastor Search Committee reviews the results from the casual interviews.**
-

## Phase 4

- The Pastor Search Committee narrows down to (1) Candidate.**
- Church holds a Special Prayer Meeting.**
- Hold a detailed Telephone Interview with the 1 selected candidate.**  
*(This is an in-depth interview asking detailed pastoral questions.)*
- If the pastor search committee desires to move ahead, the candidate is invited to come out here to meet and visit with the Pastor Search Committee ONLY.**  
*(Private interviews with Pastor Search Committee; Pastor Search Committee will hear him preach on Sunday Morning at a nearby church service; privately show the perspective candidate around the community, city and Church facility. Afterwards, the candidate returns home.)*
- Church holds a Special Prayer Meeting.**
- Pastor Search Committee reviews & determines whether or not to bring the candidate out again “In lieu of a call” before the church.**

## Phase 5 - Final

**~This needs to be a recommendation to be brought to the business meeting for a Vote~**

- The Pastor Search Committee brings a recommendation to bring out the candidate “in lieu of a call” to possibly become the new pastor.**
- The candidate is invited to come out to meet and visit the leaders & congregation. The Candidate meets with the Director Of Missions, Etc... The candidate preaches at the Morning & Evening Sunday Worship Services. After-which, the candidate returns home.**
- The Church goes into a One Week of Prayer.**
- The following week hold a “Special Business Meeting” to VOTE to issue a call.**  
*(At the business meeting, NO Opinions, NO Comments, NOR Discussions will be taken during this business meeting. Only a ballot YES or NO vote will be taken. After the voting, the votes will be totaled up and the results will be immediately revealed. If the vote is more than \_\_\_\_\_% but less than 100%, a unity vote will be taken to unify the church saying that they all will unite together to support the new pastor. Refer to your Church Bylaws for the %.)*
- After the business meeting, the pastor search committee chairperson will call the candidate to reveal the vote. If the church voted YES, the candidate is asked to give the Church his decision.**
- The Pastor Search Committee follows up by sending an Email and a letter to the called candidate detailing the calling from the church and the financial package offered.**
- The following Sunday Worship Service, the pastor search committee Chairperson reveals the decision of the Pastor’s response to their call.**
- If the candidate accepts the call, the church assists the new pastor by helping him & his family to move and find a place to live, Etc.**  
*However, if the Church or the Pastor turns down the Call to be our next pastor, we return to Phase Three re-focusing our attention on one of the remaining two candidates.*
- The final job of the Pastor Search Committee is to destroy all information gathered from the months of seeking the new pastor. Don’t save anything except general information for future pastor search committees.**
- Hold a Week of Prayer Praising The Lord For The New Beginning With A New Pastor.**
- The End Of The Pastor Search Committee!**