

# Search Committee Handbook

## South Canadian Baptist Association of Churches

### WELCOME

Welcome to the challenge of searching, researching, finding and recommending to your Church the next man God has called to be your Pastor. This experience has the potential to be a wonderful, spiritual experience for everyone involved.

Here are some key points to know before you begin:

- First, it is very important to have a firm grasp on the concept of “calling” and what it means that one is set aside for vocational ministry.
- Second, each should understand the difference between simply filling a position and finding God's man. **There is a world of difference between calling a pastor and hiring a preacher.**
- Third, you must define the ministry position you seek to fill. It is very important to develop a Ministry Covenant or Job Description which includes clear expectations. It is also very important to develop methods of determining fair compensation as well as a fair process for periodic evaluation.

Remember throughout your search process that you have the opportunity to make a great impact on your community for the Kingdom of God. Expect the Holy Spirit to make a great impact on your life during the process as well.

#### Search Committee Step by Step

- † **PRAY** (see bottom of p. 3)
- † Review/Develop a Ministry Covenant or Job Description. (template on p. 4)
- † Formulate a Compensation Package. (see p. 5)
- † Solicit Names for consideration ([www.baptistmessenger.com](http://www.baptistmessenger.com), etc)
- † Evaluate Resumes (Rank: A list, B list, C list).
- † Prayerfully select the candidate God is leading the majority of the committee to consider.

#### **† Deal with only one Candidate at a time**

- † Check Primary AND Secondary References.
- † Ask your DOM to contact the DOM where the man is serving and get a detailed reference of his strengths and weaknesses.
- † Once a top candidate is chosen, then do the following:
  - ✓ Contact him and tell him who you are and ask IF he is open to talking with you.
  - ✓ Tell him how serious you are at that point.

- ✓ Don't ask more than a FEW questions.
- ✓ Tell him if you will contact him again and when.

### Getting Acquainted

- † Make a Preliminary Personal Visit. This should be at a neutral location, and pay his travel expenses. This will just be a "no strings attached--get acquainted" visit.
- † Hearing him preach should come late in the process and when you feel led that he is the man. It is not absolutely necessary that you go hear him preach in person if you can hear him online or on some type of media. **If you do go, be sure he is in agreement with your coming and he knows when that will take place because an unannounced search committee visit can be very traumatizing to the Church you are visiting.**
- † SPECIAL NOTE: Stay in Communication with the candidate. Check with him on a regular basis and keep him updated on your progress.

### Getting Serious

- † If everything is positive... A FORMAL interview should be scheduled.
- † Send the candidate information about Church including salary and benefits prior to your meeting.
- † Allow two to three hours with breaks.
- † Provide for his travel and accommodations.

### The Interview

- † Christian pilgrimage (saved, called, etc.)
- † Spiritual Gifts, Talents, Interests in Ministry
- † Personal Goals & Vision and Pastoral Ministry Patterns (past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior)
- † Personal Spiritual Discipleship
- † Goals In Ministry
- † **Leadership Style**
- † Family
- † Theology
- † Expectations

### Advanced Screening

- † Check on Detailed References
- † Explore Non-Solicited References
- † Do a Criminal Background and Financial history check.

### Moving Toward Completion

- † If you get to this point, you need to bring the candidate and his family to the Church and allow them to look and ask questions of the committee.
- † Job descriptions, compensation, leave and moving expense issues should be settled by the Church **before** the candidate comes in view of a call.

## Extending the Call

- † Present the recommendation to the Church: The Search Committee may wish to take an entire service prior to the Sunday the candidate comes just to share their hearts and the pilgrimage. This is especially effective in helping the Church understand the process and the expected outcome.

## The Vote

- † It should climax the weekend of planned opportunities for visiting with the candidate and his family.
- † Let him know the vote tally and give him time to prayerfully respond. It is preferable that the candidate and his family not remain on campus while the vote is taken. Allow them to return home and call him that night or the next day.
- † Voting by ballot is preferable.

## The Transition

- † The Church should pay all decided upon moving expenses.
- † The Search Committee should become the group in charge of transitions of moving and helping the new pastor get settled.
- † The Search Committee should make sure that everything promised by the Church is taken care of for the new pastor and keep themselves available for his questions.
- † Congratulations! You are now embarking on the next phase of the expression of the Kingdom of God is His Church!

## Supplemental Information:

### **PRAYER:**

Pray around the table today for God's direction. **You don't have to find a new Pastor; you just have to discover the Father's will.**

Pray specifically for the preaching ministry of your new Pastor.

Pray specifically for the Pastor's family.

Pray specifically for the Pastor's leadership, study and preparation time, administration, counseling and many other hats he will wear.

Take time to circle up in the parking lot and pray for his ministry to your community.

Take time to pray every day for:

- † Your submission to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
- † Your unity as a Committee.
- † The preparing of your new Pastor's heart that God is doing right now.
- † The preparing of your congregation to receive and follow your new Pastor.
- † Transition/adjustment that the new Pastor and his family will be making.
- † That you will not let down during the interim time, but will be busy as a Church.

## Ministry Covenant (Job Description) Template

1. The Senior Pastor will be a man called of God and set apart to the gospel ministry, evangelical in theology, and committed to living and serving in a manner consistent with the standards set forth in Scripture for such a leader. The Senior Pastor must be a man who exemplifies a godly character, is compassionate in recognizing and meeting the needs of others, and demonstrates a high level of competence.
  - a. The Senior Pastor will be called by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by a body of believers through ordination. (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:1)
  - b. The Senior Pastor will equip, educate, and edify the church as mandated in Ephesians 4:11-13.
  - c. The Senior Pastor will conform himself to the ministry expectations set forth in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.
  - d. The Senior Pastor will lead and serve in accord with the expectations set forth in 1 Peter 5:1-3.
  - e. The Senior Pastor will exercise biblical authority and carry out a Christian witness as set forth in Hebrews 13:17 and as directed in 2 Timothy 4:1-5.
  - f. The Senior Pastor will be qualified to minister in the church as required in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
2. The Senior Pastor is responsible to the church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to teach the biblical revelation, to engage in pastoral care ministries, and to provide oversight of all areas of church life and the ministerial staff.
3. The Senior Pastor will be called to lead the church to understand, embrace, and accomplish its mission to make disciples both locally and globally.
4. The responsibilities of the Senior Pastor may be outlined in terms of his primary biblical roles as follows:
  - a. Overseer: the principal leader and vision caster of the church (cf. Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
  - b. Evangelist: models the practice of personal evangelism and ensures that the church is challenged and equipped to be obedient to the Great Commission (cf. II Timothy 4:5; Matthew 28:19).
  - c. Shepherd: models the heart of the Chief Shepherd and ensures that the church is well led, cared for, and protected (cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
  - d. Preacher/Teacher: the principal communicator of God's Word in public worship and ensures that the Church is growing to maturity in Christ (cf. Acts 6:4; Ephesians 4:11; II Timothy 4:1-4; Titus 1:9).
  - e. Equiper: partners with other leaders to empower and equip maturing members for significant service and ministry by discovering, developing, and deploying their spiritual gifts (cf. Ephesians 4:12; II Timothy 2:2).
5. The Senior Pastor will participate in the planning of worship services and events and equip staff and lay leaders to successfully coordinate those services and events.

## Developing a Compensation Package

**When setting a salary, please note the IRS has declared the “here’s your package, divide it as you wish” policy to be unlawful.**

Ordained Pastors are one of the very few “dual status” taxpayers in the United States Tax Code. As such, their tax situations are often unique. For example, the Pastor is an “employee” for Income Tax purposes and “self employed” for Social Security purposes.

This means that it is unlawful to withhold and match Social Security and Medicare on an Ordained Pastor. It is possible (and encouraged by CPA’s) that the Ordained Pastor request the Church withhold Income Tax for him in sufficient quantities to cover both his Income Tax and Social Security obligations. This is completely legal and of great assistance to the Pastor but the Church cannot do this unless requested to by the Pastor. **The Pastor must receive a W-2 from the Church each year.**

### Compensation for an Ordained Pastor falls into three categories

(Churches may not be able to fund all three categories; however, if it is possible to do so, these are the preferred and legal methods for developing the package.)

#### 1. Salary and Housing Allowance

This is what the Pastor actually makes. He is free to divide a total amount available to him as Salary and Housing Allowance among those two categories. This makes no difference to the Church since he is bound by law to account to the IRS for these funds. The Church Budget should reflect the amounts the Pastor assigns to each of these two categories each year. Being able to designate part or all of his Salary as Housing Allowance is one of the only ways a Pastor can make up some of the losses he will incur because he is Ordained.

Go to [www.compstudy.lifeway.com](http://www.compstudy.lifeway.com) or call SCBAOC to discover what Churches your size are compensating Pastor for in the Salary/Housing areas.

**Salary is included in Box 1 on the Pastor’s W-2 but Housing Allowance is not.**

#### 2. Employer Provided Benefits

These are owned and managed by the Church. Examples include:

- Church Parsonage and Utilities
- Health Insurance (subject to current government regulations)
- Retirement Contributions
- HRA Contributions

These benefits are not taxable and not reported on the Pastor’s W-2 at the end of the year.

#### 3. Reimbursement Accounts

This is an account that is fully funded by the Church to reimburse the Pastor for travel and other related expenses. **It is unlawful for this account to be funded from 1 or 2 above;** the funds must be separate and provided by the Church.

Examples include mileage and/or meal reimbursement as well as reimbursement for conferences, conventions and books/software.

The specifics of this account **should be agreed upon in detail and in writing before the Pastor comes** to the Church. Reimbursement accounts should only be paid out when substantiated by mileage log, receipts, etc. Under some circumstances, a Pastor may check out funds in advance but full accounting is required with 60 days of return.

Reimbursement accounts are not taxable and not reported on the Pastor’s W-2 at the end of the year.

## Additional Information

The Pastor is required to pay the full 15.3% Social Security/Medicare obligation on the Fair Market Rental Value (FMRV) of the Parsonage if one is provided and on the utilities for the parsonage if the Church pays them. For example, if the FMRV is \$4800 and the annual utilities are \$2400, for a total of \$7200; the Pastor is obligated to pay 15.3% which works out to **an additional \$1101 out of his pocket up and above his regular Social Security/Medicare payment** to satisfy this Social Security/Medicare obligation.

Additionally, since the Church (by law) is not allowed to “match” the Social Security/Medicare obligation on the Pastor’s Salary, this means the Pastor is paying the 7.65 % (employer part) of his Social Security/Medicare obligation out of his own pocket. For example, if the Pastor's Salary is \$25,000/year, **he must pay an additional \$1912 out of his pocket up and above his regular Social Security/Medicare payment to satisfy this Income Tax obligation.**

These additional obligations (using the above examples) would result in the Pastor having to reduce his spendable income by \$3013 or over \$250/month just to satisfy these obligations. It is obviously not a great benefit financially to be an ordained Pastor.

Allowing the Pastor to designate part or all of his Salary as Housing Allowance is one of the only ways a Pastor can make up some of the additional Social Security obligations he will incur because he is Ordained. Housing Allowance monies are accounted for by the Pastor to the IRS and do not appear on the W-2. He is exempt from Income Tax on these monies but must still pay Social Security and Medicare on them.

## Sample Interview Questions

1. Please describe your conversion and call to the ministry.
2. Could you please describe your relationship with Christ right now? Where has your greatest spiritual growth come from recently?
3. Share your most rewarding experience in ministry.
4. Share your greatest disappointment in ministry.
5. Describe your philosophy of ministry as it affects the following areas:
  - a. Personal relationships
  - b. Developing Leaders
  - c. The role of the Pastor and the layperson
  - d. Discipleship
  - e. Measuring success in your area of ministry
6. List what you believe to be some of your God-given strengths
7. Give examples of how you use those strengths effectively in ministry
8. What does a typical day in your devotional and prayer life look like? How does your personal spiritual life affect your ministry?
9. Where do you find accountability in your personal spiritual life?
10. How would you describe your leadership style?

11. What do you consider to be your strongest leadership skill and how would it help you to Pastor effectively?
12. What is your method of operation in dealing with volunteer leadership?
13. Would you describe yourself as "goal-oriented"?
14. If you were called to this position, how would you go about setting goals for your ministry?
15. What methods have you used to incorporate your ministry into the ministry of the Church as a whole?
16. What do you perceive to be the most vital ministries of the Church? Why?
17. How do you stay current with the latest information and ideas regarding ministry?
18. How is your approach to ministry affected by ministry trends.
19. How should a Sunday School program be organized, and who should make decisions concerning curriculum, etc?
20. Could you please describe the ideal worship service?
21. How does your spouse/family fit into your ministry?
22. What challenges have you faced in balancing personal and professional life?
23. How have you overcome those challenges?
24. What boundaries have you set to guard the health of your family relationships?
25. How do you handle the pressure when several projects or assignments are pressing you?
26. Has there ever been a time in your ministry when you were asked to resign your position or chose to resign without having been called to serve somewhere else? If so, please explain the circumstance surrounding that decision.
27. How would you describe your current Church to a visitor considering joining?
28. Based on the information you have, what are your impressions of this Church?
29. What is your plan for the first six months of your ministry should you be called to this position? How would you spend your time? What would you try to accomplish in that time?
30. What questions do you have for us?