

Simple Search

Best Practices for Your Pastor Search Committee

By

Karl F. Fickling, PhD
Coordinator
Interim Church Services
Baptist General Convention of Texas
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karl.fickling@texasbaptists.org
214/887-5419

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INTRODUCTION

There are many fine guidebooks to help pastor search committees (PSC)*. One or two are exhaustive and fine books for denominational workers and researchers. Others give detailed attention to various steps or tasks of the search process, including many forms in appendixes that tend to be longer than the text itself. Unfortunately, many are outdated and the volume of their content can be overwhelming to the average search team member.

This manual is designed with one purpose: To simplify the pastor search process using clear illustrations so a search committee can develop its own model for finding a pastor. The illustrations, whether they are positive and negative examples, are based on real situations. The exact circumstances, and/or characteristics about the churches, have been altered to disguise the original churches' identities.

I want to thank the many churches which have opened their doors to our help, for we have learned much from them. And I want to especially thank the many interim pastors who have walked with us in this unique ministry. They have supplied stories, examples, and ideas that will help your church find your next pastor.

Please read this entire manual before starting. It is our hope that this manual will help you *“know God’s will and then do God’s will—nothing more and nothing less.”*

*PSC will be used as the standard abbreviation for this manual. You may prefer PST, if you call this group a “team.”

BEFORE THE SEARCH

As you read this, you are probably already serving on an active pastor search committee (PSC). You are ready to find God's choice of a pastor for your church. Just in case the search committee is not yet formed, or is not too far down the road to look at these subjects, or in the event that you are willing to address mistakes that may already be impacting your process, here are some critical pre-search subjects.

Slow Down/Calm Down

It does not matter why your pastor left. If he left under good circumstances or in scandal or somewhere in between, the church has entered into a *wilderness journey*. Where are we going? Who's going to lead us? What are we going to do? These are common questions demanding immediate answers from most members of your church. Their unofficial and unspoken new church mission statement is: **Get a Pastor Faster!** "If we just call a pastor, all our problems will be over," they say.

As a search team, one of the most helpful things you can do is to help calm the people. This search process is easily going to take a full year, in most cases, so everyone needs to settle in and get comfortable. Seek God, trust God, and know that God is there with you — if you'll let Him in.

It is not an unusual occurrence for the PSC to say to the church, "We are not ready to look for our next pastor." In these occasions, the PSC sometimes leads the church to consider entering into the Intentional Interim Ministry process. This process helps church address issues that need taking care of before the next pastor is called. Common reasons for interrupting the search process to engage in the Intentional Interim Ministry include:

- The church is plateaued, or in decline, having lost energy and vision. A "health check up" would be a wise step at this time.
- The former pastor had a long tenure (generally, ten years or more), so the next pastor is likely to be an "Unintentional Interim Pastor" who will fail after having a difficult role in being accepted in the pastor's position.
- The church is in, or has just been in, significant conflict.
- The PSC's recommendation for the next pastor was rejected by the church.

If any of these conditions exist in your church, it would be an act of grace and wisdom to contact our office for a consultation.

The Search Committee's Composition

The typical church selects a PSC in the following manner. Every member of the church gets a slip of paper with seven slots (it has to be a biblical number), and members can vote for up to seven people to serve. The seven with the most votes become the PSC. This sounds fair and reasonable, and it is certainly traditional.

If percentages are checked, however, it is quite probable than not a single member of the PSC got over 51% of the church members' votes. This means that the PSC is made up of people that MOST members did NOT vote for. God can certainly work through such a group, for He is a redemptive God. But it may be crucial that the PSC examine itself to see who might be missing?

- Does the PSC have a good range of ages?
- Are both genders fairly represented?
- Does the PSC look like a cross-section, or microcosm, of the church?
- Are there major groups, ministries, or issues that aren't represented?

If the PSC is not already chosen, it could be that this can be addressed before the day of selection. Some options to work towards a more balanced team are:

- Divide the church into age categories, and allow everyone to vote for one man and one woman from each category.
- Allow Sunday School departments (or other major groups) to select their own male and female representatives.
- Use an *ad hoc*, personnel, or nominating committee to present a balanced group for church approval.

If the PSC is already selected, and a good blend is missing, the PSC could possibly lead the church to fix this concern. The PSC could ask for addition persons from the missing population. Or, the PSC could appoint and consult with an advisory team from the missing populations to insure those groups have some feeling of ownership in the search process.

When Pastor Brett arrived on the field, he was quickly aware of the cold reception he was receiving from the adult children of the senior citizens in the church. As he analyzed the situation, he eventually discovered what had happened. These adult children had grown up in the church. The church's neighborhood was now in decline, and they had moved to the suburbs. They still came back to church, to support their parents, the church, and the fellowship. Few of them, however, made it back on Wednesday nights, including the Wednesday night when the PSC was selected. None of the suburbanites were on the PSC, and they felt shut out, ignored, unwanted, and disrespected. The pastor had won 92% of the vote, but no one had recognized that the suburbanites, which represented about 30% of the church, had abstained from voting at all that day. Now they were making it known, there would be a price to pay for the PSC process that they felt was broken before it even started.

PSC Training

The biggest mistake made by search committees is being in a hurry. PSCs compound this problem with they fail to get adequate training before starting the search process. Obviously, such training needs to include an overview of a good search process, including resources and the pointing out of potential pitfalls. Including questions and answers, this might take about two hours. Leaders of such training might include the Connections Team or the area Field Representatives from the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Directors of Mission of local Baptist Associations are often equipped to do this, and your church's interim pastor may be so, too (it is a good idea for interim pastors to sit in on the training, in any event, so they can be a further resource to the PSC).

But a good training session needs more than just a look at the process. It doesn't matter if your church is in a small town or large city. It doesn't matter if the community is rural, urban, or suburban. Indeed, it makes no difference if the church has been supersized if it's down to the last fifty members, if everyone in the church knows each other's personal business, or if members don't even know each other's names. No matter what the church is like, the PSC needs to experience team building before it plunges into the hard work of seeking a new pastor.

Team building is best begun with a PSC retreat as the first meeting. The Interim Church Services office can assist you with arranging for this retreat. A PSC that really knows each other is one where members can listen to, and respect, very different opinions. It is one where members can speak openly, in a trusted and safe environment. This does not come naturally. It takes work, commitment, and guidance. Without work in this area, a PSC can be dominated by one, or more, personalities that shut the door to conversation and concerns of less assertive members.

The church was beginning to grumble. "He's not feeding me," some said about his preaching. "I never wanted him in the first place," said John B., one of the former PSC members who found the pastor. The rest of the PSC couldn't believe their ears. They had voted 100% in favor of this candidate, and now John was throwing them under the bus. "Why didn't you say anything?" they asked. John responded, "Well, I just didn't want to be a troublemaker." But really, he hadn't felt safe voicing his concerns. He had been afraid of what other PSC members might think or say about him if he had objected to their opinions.

Mary felt creepy. Was it the look in his eyes, the way he shook her hand when they met, or the tone in his inflection when they talked about his wife? She couldn't figure out exactly what it was. But something made her suspicious about the pastoral candidate's faithfulness to his wife. She never mentioned it; however, because without something more tangible, she just knew the men would say she was being "a silly female." The pastor resigned one year later, after it was discovered he was having an affair with a married lady in the church. At that time, a quick (but obviously belated) check revealed he was suspected of several affairs at his prior church.

To round out a good training session, a serious look at the spiritual foundation of the process is necessary. Affirming the roles of biblical principles and prayer, and the maintenance of each PSC team member's prayer life, are not just Sunday School answers, nor are they to be assumed. A determined and conscientious effort to keep God in control of the committee's work is an important step in any search process—and this should be included from the start. In addition, the PSC can become a spiritual leader for the church. Seeking to include the church in prayer efforts, for instance, will combat the temptation for people to simply “want what they want,” regardless of what the church needs or what God wants.

Pray to Know God's Will

Pray to Do God's Will

[Knowing and Doing are two different Things]

Nothing More/Nothing Less

The Interim Pastor

At about the same time the church is putting together a PSC, it will also be looking for an interim pastor. In fact, sometimes the church tasks the PSC with finding the interim pastor. In an ideal situation, the interim pastor will be a trusted resource for the PSC. The interim pastor, if equipped, could be the perfect person to train the PSC. The interim pastor could be an on-going guide, meeting with the PSC perhaps once per month to check on their progress and address issues. But the interim pastor should not be involved in promoting a candidate or campaigning for or against candidates.

There is also another huge issue that the PSC needs to sort out before it goes any further. The question needs to be asked, “Can the interim pastor be a candidate for the installed pastor's position?” The best practice is a firm and absolute “No!”

In fact, interim pastors recommended by the office of Interim Church Services are required to have a written, public covenant with the churches they serve. The covenant states they will not accept the call to be permanent pastor under any circumstances. These interim pastors are experienced ministers who have been called by God to the unique ministry of helping pastorless churches. They have also been equipped to assist such churches through special training. Therefore, they are not using interim positions to seek permanent pastorates.

Why is this important? Consider what happens all too often when an interim pastor lacks this commitment. One hundred percent of interims are immediately loved by some portion of the church, which sees the interim pastor as the quick fix to finding the next pastor. A single sermon, or a few months of sermons—all of which are probably “sugar stick” sermons that have been tried and proven to have universal appeal—are preached to an impressed audience. Some members will press the PSC to quit searching and call the interim pastor. These members have asked the interim pastor if he would be willing to be considered, and he has nobly answered, “I just want to do God's will, and if the PSC wants to consider me, I would certainly pray about it.” The PSC is told, “If you don't call the interim pastor, we're going to leave the church” or “We're going to make a motion at the next business meeting to dissolve the PSC and call our interim pastor.” But the PSC has already heard from another group in the church that says, “If you call

that interim, we're leaving the church." Now what are they supposed to do to keep their church from splitting?

It is best to have an interim who wants to help the church during the interim. Instead of preaching the same set of sermons in the same order as at every other interim church, a called and equipped interim will preach to the needs of the church. Instead of minding one's Ps and Qs in order to protect position and relationships, a called an equipped interim pastor will lead the church to address uncomfortable issues that need to be dealt with before calling the next pastor. A good interim will say what needs to be said to help a church.

If you, as the PSC, are already confronting this uncomfortable issue, you have two options:

1. Explain to the interim that the church is going to enter into serious conflict between the two camps (pro interim and con interim) unless the interim joins the PSC in affirming that he is not a candidate for the office of pastor. If the interim is not willing to put the needs of the church above personal needs, it probably tells you all you need to know for the next option.
2. Go ahead and consider the interim pastor right now! Don't wait. Don't go through the long search process and consider the interim at the end of the timeline. If the PSC decides to call the interim pastor, the work is done. If the interim pastor is not called, the search continues, although the interim pastor probably now needs to resign.

These same principles can guide the PSC if an associate minister wants to be considered for the pastorate, too.

Most likely, resumes, applications, and recommendations started arriving for the PSC long before the PSC was even formed. The PSC is now ready to start the search process, but it is NOT ready to look at possible candidates. These materials should have remained unopened and saved for the PSC until it was formed. Now, the PSC should resist the temptation of looking at them, because the PSC doesn't know what it's looking for yet! As we are about to see, the first steps of the search process need to be the development of two profiles: the Pastor Profile and the Church Profile. Let's begin the actual search process.

THE SEARCH

With the pre-search work completed, it is time to start the search. However, it is NOT time to look at candidates. The temptation for the PSC to start looking at resumes is a return to rushing and anxiety. How can the PSC know what type of candidate they are looking for? Without detailed guides—a Church Profile and a Pastor Profile—a PSC will look blindly at resumes until some element jumps out at them, and they call the next pastor based on that one thing. Often, this is a Sugar Stick sermon.

The PSC secretly arrived on a Saturday night in the town of the pastor they had heard so many good things about. They hadn't told him they were coming, so they could hear a "typical" sermon. Driving by the church that night, they read the church signage from the rent car windows: "Guest Preacher Dr. So and So." Their intended target was on vacation! As a backup plan, they split up at the local shopping mall and asked random people for the names of good preachers in town. Since they all heard the same name, they visited the alternate church, instead.

Walking out of the alternate church, every member of the church said, "Wow! What a sermon! This must be why God called us here. He must be the person God wants us to call!" Within two weeks, an invitation was extended and accepted for the fall-back pastor to come and preach in view of a call.

A few days before the candidate arrived for his special "in view of a call" Sunday, the PSC chair received a call from a member of their prospective pastor's church. The caller asked, "Did you know we were about to fire our pastor because of an -on-going affair he is involved with?" In retrospect, the PSC realized that this tragic turn of events probably saved them from another mistake: calling a pastor based on a single sermon (or a string of sermons) with no consideration to the other needs of the church or gifts of the pastor.

Taking time to develop the two profiles will also give time for better resumes and referrals to come in. A typical church will receive hundreds of resumes, with a large quantity coming in very early. Churches will receive dozens of resumes as soon as the news starts to get out:

- Before the PSC is formed
- Before the pastor is out of his office
- Certainly before the PSC knows who they are looking for

Often the early resumes are as sent out of the candidates' desperation:

- To get out of an uncomfortable setting
- To end a period of unemployment
- To get a raise

This is not a total absolute principle, for a well-intentioned and trusted resource might send you the name of a perfect candidate quickly, but the rush of resumes at the very beginning should be looked at with great wariness.

Keeping the Church Informed

This is also the time to begin a steady flow of information to the church. While the names of candidates will be kept confidential, the church will trust and support the PSC if kept informed. Regular updates from the PSC will be greatly appreciated, in:

- Sunday morning worship
- Monthly business meetings
- The church newsletter
- Worship bulletins

One of the best ideas is to post a timeline of steps that the search committee will follow [APPENDIX ONE]. The timeline can be posted in a well-traveled hall in the church. Progress can be indicated and updated on it, for instance, by the PSC Chair's signature.

The Church Profile

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the PSC is being honest with candidates about what the church is really like . . . warts and all. Some of the deception can be intentional, but unrehearsed. No one on the PSC has mentioned "it" out loud. It's just that everyone intuitively knows, "No one will come here if we mention _____ [the elephant in the room]." At the same time, church members develop pictures of their church that tend to be less than accurate, for example, using a higher attendance figure from several years earlier. False memories, the lack of recognizing change, and disconnection with the community around the church are common culprits. This is why distressed pastors often say, "The search committee lied to me."

In reality, the PSC told Pastor Rick no lies. What they did was to fail to mention that they knew the youth minister wasn't working out and needed to be let go. Two months after the pastor arrived, the personnel chair told him the new pastor they were calling a committee meeting to terminate the youth minister, and they needed the pastor there. At that meeting, the pastor heard for the first time that the youth minister overspent the summer youth camp budget by \$1,000, used the church credit card to purchase new sound equipment without authorization, failed to return the unspent cash advance from the Six Flags trip, and failed to meet the office hours he had agreed to during the prior year's probation meeting. The pastor had not been too impressed by the youth minister, to date, but was working on plans to address it, and this meeting caught him off guard. He agreed with the personnel team's logic and said he would support them, reluctantly, in their decision. The next Sunday, the pastor was verbally attacked over and over by church members who had youth in their family. They didn't know the background

problems. They didn't know the pastor had been uniformed until that week. They didn't even know it was all "handled" by the personnel committee.

Our office can help you with some important statistical information that should be included in your church profile. First, there are the demographics based on the government census information for your church's neighborhood. Income, race, level of education, make up of households, etc., can sometimes give pastoral candidates a more accurate picture of the surrounding neighborhood than the membership can give. At the least, the demographics can confirm what the PSC tells the pastor. [APPENDIX TWO]

Our office can also provide a ten year profile of the church's numbers: attendance in worship, attendance in Sunday School, giving to the Cooperative Program, total mission giving, etc. Participation figures are the numbers that were turned in by a church in its Annual Profile and are only as accurate as the church's report. Financial figures are the actual monies received by the BGCT. [APPENDIX THREE]

Beyond these statistics, the PSC should also consider adding important additional information that can be compiled for a presentation to serious pastoral candidates. Based on the Intentional Interim Ministry process, additional information should include:

- A summary of the church history, including difficult subjects and a clear explanation on why the last pastor left.
- A description of the church's relationship to non-church entities. Who does the church believe like, partner with, pray for, etc., outside our walls? This usually includes a heavy emphasis on local, state, and national affiliations.
- A description of the pastor's role in decision making, the leadership structure in the church, and governing documents.

Tim was born, raised, and gifted to help churches in large urban settings. He was a graduate of the Power Church seminars. He could not wait to get to his first pastorate, where he knew he would set the world on fire. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of professors and friends, he just couldn't land his first church. Then, out of the blue, he got a call from Gus McElroy Memorial Baptist Church. As interviews progressed, Tim said all the right things to achieve his goal of being called to be GMMBC's next pastor. But in the back of his mind, he already was thinking that he would give it two years. Everything about the church and its community was dull, wrong, out-dated, and backwards. Tim made a list after each email, phone call, and interview of all the things he would change during his first year.

Part of preparing a pastor profile might also lead the PSC to set others to work to make sure that the church is physically ready for the next pastor. Is the church attractive, fixed up, and in good repair? What about the pastor's office? If there is a parsonage, even if an interim pastor occupies parts of it several days per week, it probably needs major work to make it not just livable, but desirable.

The pastor's office was spaciouly impressive. A large window looked out through a garden towards the front of the church. A new paint job and new carpet would be an easy project for the men of the church to care for on a single Saturday. It was as if no one could see beyond that to the rest of the room. The large wooden desk was stylish a century ago. The miss-matched furniture included two chairs (one with a wobbly leg) and a couch (which is beneficial for neither meetings or pastoral care, and churches taking appropriate steps to guard against sexual misconduct will avoid). Perhaps worst of all, however, was the pastor's "study" that rested behind a false wall on the other side of the desk. It had book shelves and a computer set up . . . and 14 sets of antlers mounted on the wall by the last pastor. Broken, dusty, ugly and amateurishly done (by the former pastor, himself), the last pastor's wife said he keep take them "over my dead body." So why did anyone think the next pastor would want them?

The Pastor Profile

PSCs routinely will survey the congregation, asking what is desired in the next pastor. This attempt to involve the church is appropriate. The members want to be involved. They want to know the PSC values their opinions. The survey will bolster interest and support of the PSC's process.

However, there are several drawbacks to Pastor Profile Survey. First, most people in a church, including even the most active members, are not necessarily spiritual giants. That means the survey probably answers the question, "What do I (selfishly) want?" Much like choosing a political candidate, church members are thinking, "What's in it for me?" Thus, a typical survey will tell you that the next pastor will qualify if:

- Preaching is good (this is always the most highly rated pastoral duty)
- Age is between 30-32 (so we can reach young people)
- Married, with 2.5 children (to relate to our families)
- Twenty-years experience, with a doctorate (we have complicated issues that require a seasoned and intelligent minister)
- Spends hours daily, in hospital ministry, outreach/evangelism, visiting in nursing homes, attending youth functions (in church and school), able to administer the church finances and supervise staff, active in fraternal organizations and city government, leader in local/state/national conventions, and _____ (fill in all the choices from the survey, because someone in the church will demand the pastor do it)

After observing the misuse of surveys in the search process, a wiser practice is called for. The survey should not be a "majority rules" instrument. Instead, the PSC should use it to gauge where the members are spiritually, and to open further conversations about what would create a good profile for the next pastor. [APPENDIX FOUR]

With that in mind, a better question to ask, when answering the survey, is not “what do I want,” but “what do WE NEED.” This question moves towards selflessness; however, it also needs to submit to an even better question, which is “What does God want.”

This essential question is best answered if the church understands its Mission. Some questions that might help the PSC understand the church’s mission include:

- What is the unique call that God has placed upon our church?
- What is the most important focus of our church?
- What would be missing in Kingdom work in our community if our church disappeared tomorrow?
- What is God calling us to do or be?
- What is the ONE THING that we must be about?

For many churches, this question is never asked. For most, however, we rely on the pastor to TELL us what God’s will for the church is. Many pastors have a single vision of what that should be and move from church to church because they aren’t a good match for the church they pastor. Therefore, the search committee has two healthy options:

1. Make sure the church is united around a common call, and seek a pastor who shares that passion.
2. Or, call a pastor who understands he can’t plant his vision on the church without working with the church to discover, together, the future direction.

Each church is in a different place on a continuum of discovering new direction, so be honest about what can be realistically done during the interim. Perhaps you can:

- Re-examine the existing Mission focus and ensure that the church still endorses this direction.
- Seek help in leading the church through a mission-discovery process before continuing.
- Seek unity around a general mission focus of leading people to Christ and discipling Christians into a stronger relationship with the Lord.
- Agree to support specific ministries that focus on the vision of clarifying the church’s mission in the future.
- Agree to call a pastor who will help you work together on these ideas as he gets to know the church and community in the future.

When the PSC asked their top candidate what vision he had for the future, they expected him to dream big and paint a picture of miracles, growth, and heaven raining down. They wouldn’t have been surprised by such a bold vision. That was the approach of the last three pastors, whose averaged tenure was just over two years. If the pastoral candidate had responded that way, they instinctively knew they would ignore the answer and just do the best they could with whatever happened. This candidate, however, surprised them . . . pleasantly. He said, “I don’t know. I don’t know you—or you me. I don’t know the members, the community, or the culture. But if God leads us to where I

become pastor, I will seek to get to know you as best I can before I would even suggest a big change. On top of that, I would work with church leaders, to explore with the church-at-large, where we need to be going and how we would get there. We would not let a small group unhinge God's plan, but we would be sensitive to moving forward, together, in a united purpose."

The Pastor Profile must also have details about the salary package that can be offered. While this would not be posted, necessarily, it must be understood and agreed upon by all church constituencies in some form or fashion. Most average sized churches (below 150 in Sunday morning attendance) will make the package known to the full congregation while preparing the annual budget. During the interim period, it is sometimes necessary to adjust the salary package. Making the adjustments at this early time in the search process is the best time.

- A long-tenured pastor may have a large salary that has become harder and harder to afford for a church in decline. Adjusting downward now makes sense.
- A long-tenured pastor in a growing church may have never received a raise, other than a cost-of-living raise. It may be necessary to think about offering the next pastor a higher salary than the last pastor received, even though the new pastor will be far-less experienced.
- Occasionally, a church realizes that the loss of a pastor relieves the strain on the budget so that the church can afford to pay the rest of the staff better. If you are wondering how to afford a decent stipend for an interim pastor, then how can you afford a new pastor? Difficult staffing decisions are best made before calling the new pastor, so the new pastor isn't saddled by any hurt feelings that come with such decisions. Deciding to keep full-time ministry associates and/or support staff, in favor of calling a part-time pastor is never a workable solution. The pastor must be the person with the most investment of time and salary.

The larger the church, however, the less likely it is that salaries will be openly disclosed. Instead, all salaries are often lumped together and reported to the church as a lump sum. Arguments against hiding salaries include:

- If the salary is so high it can't be justified, something is wrong.
- Other public servants have public salaries.
- Congregational polity means committees actually act as sub-committees and the congregation is a committee-of-the-whole, entitled to full disclosure about salaries.

If, however, the culture and historical practice of the church would demand confidentiality in this area, there still needs to be checks and balances. The Pastor Search Committee has to have the full details of what can be offered. Working with some combination of the finance committee, personnel committee, and a Leadership Council will ensure the package is doable and reasonable.

The package will include:

- Salary

- Housing (IRS rules about limitations and pro-active declaration of amount she be followed)
- Benefits
 - Health Insurance—being as generous as possible protects the church from crippling obligations if a disaster befalls the pastor’s family
 - Retirement—pastors of all-sized churches will opt to forego retirement (as well as health insurance) to have more take-home pay. Don’t enable this mistake!
 - Vacation—many churches want to start even a seasoned pastor with two weeks of vacation after completion of a full year. Start a pastor with Paid Time Off equal to their years of service. But realize that pastoring requires the highest level of creativity, which can only be maintained with adequate renewal time. Four weeks off per year would be a good minimal starting point.
 - Continuing education—time away for the pastor to learn from others will benefit the church.
 - Ministry away—whether leading church mission trips or preaching revivals for another church, the pastor will be re-charged by these opportunities to the betterment of the church.
- Expense Reimbursements—it should not cost the pastor to do ministry for your church. Follow an expense reimbursement plan, where the pastor (and other staff or members) can only be repaid if acting within pre-approved guidelines, within the budget, if giving is keeping up with the budget, and only upon timely presentation of receipts. Reimbursements might include:
 - Ministry travel (hospital, prospects, emergency visits)
 - Books
 - Ministerial meetings (travel and meal to associational, state, and national conventions)
 - Hosting ministry meals
 - Continuing education events

All of these items are subject to the limitations of the church’s actual budget giving.

With a Church Profile and a Pastor Profile in hand, you are now ready to begin the actual process of searching for your pastor.

Posting Your Opening

So you’re looking for a pastor. Do the right people know? How do you get the word spread to trustworthy persons or resources, so that you get a pool of reliable candidates? As mentioned earlier, you will not only get resumes early, but you will also get a lot of resumes. A typical sized church running 100 in Sunday morning worship could get 200, or more, resumes. They come from out of state, from other denominations, from undetectable origins, often with no way of figuring out how they even knew your church was seeking a pastor. The overwhelming majority will be inappropriate for your church, if not totally horrible! So, you want to make sure you have sought help from truly helpful sources.

There is a continuum of options on how you can seek trustworthy help. On one end of the spectrum is the idea that you don't want anyone to know you are searching. You might trust a few people to send you resumes. You will work from that small pool, praying that God's choice is in there. On the other end of the spectrum, you might turn over every stone you can. You don't want to miss any chance or opportunity. What is the right way for your committee?

If you have had trouble in calling appropriate pastors, or you've had conflict or issues that give you the need for a very specialized next pastor, the guarded approach might be best. Most churches, however, will lean toward the latter. This means you must have a PSC that is willing to do the hard work of looking at lots of candidates, and the PSC must be equipped so they know how to read resumes and rule out poor candidates.

There is no magic in any of these resources, but they are listed in the order of most highly recommended to least. In each and every case, the more complete your pastor and profile are, the more likely you are to find the right pastor for your church.

1. Post your opening at www.texasbaptists.org/ministerconnection. This will allow candidates who have registered with the system, to view your church opening and make direct application to you. You will also receive a password to see what resumes have been posted, so you can initiate contact, if you choose to do so.
2. Share your need with trusted denominational personnel who can network on your behalf. Your BGCT Field Representative is one such person (APPENDIX FIVE).
3. Place an ad in the Baptist Standard (www.baptiststandard.com) or appropriate periodicals.
4. Most of our Texas Baptist universities and seminaries have an office that will attempt to supply you with resumes or allow the posting of openings (for examples, see <http://www.baylor.edu/truett/index.php?id=94568> or <https://www.logsdonseminary.org/index.php/ministersandchurches/churches-seeking-ministers>). Here are lists of the Texas Baptist schools that have a formal relationship with the BGCT:

3 Year Graduate/Postgraduate and Advance Programs:

- George W. Truett Theological Seminary (MDiv, DMin)
- Logsdon School of Theology (MDiv, DMin)
- Wayland Baptist University (MDiv)
- Baylor University (MA, PhD)
- Dallas Baptist University (PhD, EdD)

1 & 2 Year Graduate programs:

- George W. Truett Theological Seminary (MTS, MACM)
- Baylor School of Social Work (MSW)
- Dallas Baptist University (MACE, MACM, MAGL, MATS, MAWL, MAST, MACH)
- East Texas Baptist University (MAR)
- Hardin-Simmons University (MMCM)
- Logsdon School of Theology (MAR, MAFM)

- Houston Baptist University (MATS, MABL)
- Howard Payne University (MAYM, MATM)
- Wayland Baptist University (MAR, MCM)

Undergraduate programs receiving Ministerial Financial Assistance:

- Baptist University of the Americas
- Baylor University
- Dallas Baptist University
- East Texas Baptist University
- Hardin-Simmons University
- Houston Baptist University
- Howard Payne University
- University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
- Wayland Baptist University

Our office will be happy to visit with you about your questions regarding these and other schools.

5. Your own church website can be very helpful in this process. Posting the most detailed pastor profile and church profile will allow candidates to see characteristics that will attract them or dissuade them. You can link all of the above ideas to these detailed profiles on the church's website.
6. There are other websites that allow the posting of resumes and positions, but PSCs need to be very cautious as they will certainly open the door to candidates that are not good matches to the church's DNA.

A final recommendation regarding posting your position is to have a deadline. Decide how long you want the opening to be "active." There's no magic time, but perhaps 3-6 months, would be realistic. Then, after the deadline, no more resumes would be accepted or candidates considered. Trust God to work in your timeframe. If not even one prospect works out, you can start over (from scratch) with new postings and new a deadline.

Trinity Baptist Church had survived 10 months of an interim period. The pressure mounted weekly on the search committee to present a candidate for consideration. The PSC thought they finally had their pick. He matched the pastor profile. He was a good fit with the church profile. Strong recommendations and evidences of pastoral gifts led the PSC to tell him they were ready to meet for a final interview and to negotiate.

But then it happened. They got a resume from their DREAM candidate—whom they never thought would consider Trinity Baptist Church. Not wanting to lose the former candidate, they simply slowed down their process and stated that they needed to delay the final interview a couple of weeks. That little bit stretched to three weeks, and then four. At that point, they determined the late prospect was no prospect at all. They dropped their dream and went back to the original prospect.

But the original final candidate had detected that something had happened. They hadn't kept their word about the final interview. They were clearly covering something up. Was there a better candidate, after all? Full of doubt and mistrust, the final candidate withdrew from consideration.

Receiving Recommendations and Applications

It should not be up to the PSC to track down information about every potential candidate. Welcome recommendations from your church members, but require that the recommendation must be in writing, in the form of a resume. This protects your team from wasting its time.

There was a day when no pastor would dare have sent his own resume to a church. A letter of recommendation, covering a resume, was standard. This is still a good practice, but most committees are not put off by receiving direct applications from candidates. Make sure your committee agrees on this. And once a resume is received, every member of the committee should get to see it. No individual should screen resumes and submit only resumes he/she has approved to the rest of the PSC. This is a team effort.

All recommendations and applications should come directly to the PSC. No one else should deliver these to the committee. Renting a P.O. Box, creating a unique email address, or using the postal or email address of a search committee member is better than using any of the church contact points. This not only protects the confidentiality of the candidates, it protects the church staff from temptation and accusations.

Sorting Resumes

You probably only need to make two files for the resumes you receive. One file will be for those that are an obvious “no.” The other file is for the pile to be considered further (that is, a “yes” pile). Some PSCs create a “maybe” file, but that’s usually not needed unless you only receive a handful of resumes. How do you know which pile to put them in? Look at your Pastor Profile.

1. Do they have the right background of experience?
2. Do they meet the education requirements?
3. Do they seem to be matched in denominational relations?
4. Is the resume appealing in form and content?
5. If you called them, could you afford to move them from their current residence?
6. Are there any “red flags” that you should not ignore?

For the “no” pile, a quick standard letter can be sent immediately. Send this directly to the self-applicant or to the referrer who sent a resume (not to the candidate in that case):

Dear _____,

Thank you for sending us your resume. We are grateful for your interest in our church and your desire to serve the Lord. In comparing your resume to the church profile, however, we believe the Lord is leading us in another direction. We do wish you the best. We hope, pray, and believe that the Lord will lead you to His perfect calling.

Blessings,

For the “yes” pile, you can send a note to the candidate that:

- Offers thanks.
- Asks for a audio of a sermon (cd, dvd, or website).
- States you will let them know what is happening as you progress through the search process.
- Requests references, if they were not provided in the resume.

Consider resumes as they come in. There is no need to wait and consider them all at once. In this step, and in each of the following steps, you will continually narrow down your list as you move along.

Checking References

Create a template of what you want to ask the first line of personal references for the candidates that made the “yes” file. These references will all provide glowing recommendations, unless the candidate isn’t too smart. Some initial questions might include:

1. How long have you known this person?
2. What is your relationship?
3. Would you recommend this candidate as a pastor? If yes, why?
4. What are the candidate’s greatest strengths as a pastor?
5. In what areas is the candidate “still growing?” [This is better than asking for weaknesses.]
6. Please tell us about a time the candidate faced conflict.
7. Describe the candidate’s leadership style.
8. What are the candidate’s core values of faith?
9. Does the candidate normally do _____ (fill in some of the church’s greatest expectations of a pastor’s role)?
10. Can you give me the name and contact information for a couple of other people who can give us some information on the candidate?

The last question, used by mission-sending boards, gets the PSC beyond just talking to the first level of recommendations. Don't call these new contacts yet, but when you do, you will also ask the second level of references for additional names. Usually, just getting two generations away from a candidate's references will lead you to people the candidate has no idea you would ever find. That may give you some additional, and more objective (if not more truthful) information.

Listening to Sermons

This can be one of the most thankless times of the search process. The PSC should listen to sermons together, so that everyone has the same experience and no one is distracted by work or family during a private listening. Coming together when everyone is rested will be particularly helpful particularly for this step. Creating a listening template can be helpful for rating the sermon immediately after hearing it.

1. Was the message appealing to hear?
2. Was the sermon scripturally sound?
3. Was it interesting? How so?
4. What were the major points of teaching?
5. What was the overriding theme or truth?
6. Would our church like, understand, support such preaching?
7. Am I drawn to want to hear another sermon by this candidate?
8. My overall grade for this sermon is _____.

After narrowing down to the PSC's top choice (or top few choices), additional sermons can be requested. Many candidates record sermons regularly. Even some of the smallest churches archive their sermons on their church's website. And while some candidates may not be able to easily provide a sermon recording (for instance, a new pastor or student), even they should be able to create one in a laboratory setting or the chapel of a friend's church.

Some committees find it appropriate to name a particular date and see what the candidate preached on that date, not knowing a search team would request it. However, hearing a sermon, when the pastor's weekly schedule is unknown, does a disservice to knowing how well the candidate can preach when well-prepared. Which leads to the follow up question, "Are you going to protect your next pastor's sermon preparation time with a reasonable set of other expectations?" Some pastors are so overloaded that they have no choice but to use the best internet sermons they can find, even though that gets them in trouble. A good Sunday morning sermon may take half of a pastor's work week to adequately research, write, and practice.

Initial Interview Questions

At this point, you should have a top short list of the top candidates. The number on that list is up to you: ten, five, or three? The smaller the number, the easier your search will be, but don't force yourselves to eliminate those who you are still interested in. The top FIVE might be a good place to start.

Before contacting your short list, decide how you are going to contact them. To be fair and impartial, try your best to interview everyone in the same manner. You might start with a written questionnaire, if the pastor's writing ability is especially important to you. Otherwise, most pastor candidates speak privately of how they detest the questionnaires. But you are in charge of this process. Do what you need to do to discern God's will.

A phone call, with the whole team around a speaker phone can work. Not every candidate can use a visual link, like Skype, but it might be worth trying. If all candidates are close enough, maybe you can start with a face to face interview. For most PSCs, the phone interview will be the natural place to start. In many PSCs, different candidates will be interviewed by different PSC members in sub-groups. But if you have successfully arrived at a short list, at this point, best practices would dictate that every team member participates in this initial interview. Then, make sure every candidate gets asked the same specific set of questions, while allowing the candidates' individuality to carry the conversations to other places. [APPENDIX SIX]

Background Checks

With an even shorter list of top candidates, maybe five or three or even the top ONE, it is time to do further background checks. Send the candidate(s) a permission slip to sign and return to you [APPENDIX SEVEN]. You should also ask the candidates' spouses to sign a waiver. With this permission slip in hand, make your phone calls to the second and third generation of references. Phone calls are better than written reference checks. People are reluctant to write their real feelings, and in fact may not want to write at all and will do a pitiful job, if they return the questionnaire at all. But casual phone calls are overwhelmingly well received and unguarded.

You do not need to do an official background check on crime, finances, or education, yet. You can wait and do that on the final candidate. But letting them know this is coming gives some the opportunity for some candidates to be "led by God in another direction." Candidates with problem backgrounds will often self-eliminate and you have avoided a problem.

Face-to-Face Interviews

There's no race. Take your time. If you have a clear top choice, proceed with interviewing that candidate alone. If things are not clear, a face-to-face interview with your top two or three candidates will set them apart. If it doesn't, do another set of interviews. Perhaps the weakest point of most search processes is that a single face-to-face interview is all that is conducted before deciding to call a pastor. Certainly, a PSC has to be sensitive to not creating job insecurity for a candidate who is currently serving another church. Nevertheless, multiple interviews are essential in discovering the appropriateness of calling the right person. Interviewing points to consider include:

- Some candidates have the unique gift of charming a search committee into infatuation. The committee then makes an offer too quickly, without doing their homework and completing a full search process. Jim Collins, in his book Good to Great, describes the

impressive, self-secure, confident interviewee who is discovered to be an egotistical dictator only after an all-too-short interview process.

- Meetings need to be conducted where everyone is comfortable and can hear. Restaurants are usually NOT an appropriate place for such an interview, unless a private room is secured. However, a public meal before the meeting (in a safe location) can be a good idea to see how the candidate handles himself.
- Meet with the candidate several times. Meet with the candidate alone. Meet with the candidate and spouse. Meet the whole family. Meet with the candidate again.

The Final Candidate

At this point, you should have a final candidate. It is time to stop working with all other candidates. Do not get into a “horse race.” Tell the other top tier of candidates that you feel led to work with another candidate until you know if they are the right choice, or not. Get back to these other candidates as soon as you have determined if you have found your next pastor, or if you want to continue talks with them. Your honesty and transparency will be greatly appreciated by the other candidates and will help them deal with their disappointment and anxiousness.

The candidate should likewise agree to work with you alone and notify any other churches that your negotiations have started. If the candidate is not willing to cease talking with other PSCs, do not go forward with this candidate until he is ready to do so.

To discern, with the final candidate, what God’s will is for both parties, the following areas (not necessarily in order) need to be thoroughly covered:

1. A detailed review at the Pastor’s Profile, going point-by-point so that everyone knows the requirements for the position have been specifically addressed. If the candidate is weak in some areas (highly likely), the search team will need to share this with the church and why it was decided to overlook this fault. There should be no unexplained or unrealistic expectation. Duties, from absolute and first order to those of low priority, need to be listed. It is not unusual for a PSC to realize that the list of duties is unreasonable. So, the list should be negotiable and not written in concrete. Some can be dropped! Any adjustments must not be made in secret, but should be explained to the church members.
2. A detailed review of the church’s profile so the candidate can affirm a high level of comfort with the church’s culture and in working with such a church. Make sure there are no hidden agendas, or elephants, that will discourage the pastor upon discovery.
3. A visit to the church field. Bring the candidate to town, but not to be paraded before the congregation. Tour the church. Tour the town. Look at neighborhoods where the pastor could live, the family could shop, the spouse could work, and the children could go to school.
4. It is time to negotiate. A final understanding of duties, responsibilities, and expectations should be placed into a written COVENANT [APPENDIX EIGHT] that can be presented to the congregation at the same time as the candidate. Financial agreements should be completely settled before announcing the candidate.
5. Decide on the wisdom of a meeting time with existing staff, particularly other ministers. If such a meeting is scheduled, be clear. Is this simply a courtesy? Does the PSC want

feedback from staff? Do the opinions of the staff have any influence on the PSC's decision? It is not uncommon for some staff members to be so afraid of the security of their positions that they subconsciously undermine the work of the PSC. The PSC might want to have representation at any meetings that take place between the candidate and the staff. Every church situation is different, and you have to weigh the circumstances at your church.

6. Assuming that the search committee is in agreement with the pastoral candidate, that this is God's will, it is time to move forward to the church. No pastor should be brought before the church, in view of a call, if the candidate is not committed to accepting the invitation on the spot. The pastor, spouse, committee, and prayerful discernment should all agree that this is God's will.

Special Note: Some non-Anglo church traditions require that the PSC present a slate of candidates, allow the church to hear each candidates' preaching and to dialogue with them, and then have a vote to see if any one of the candidates can get a majority of votes. What happens after that varies from church to church. In some churches, if no candidate gains a majority, there is a runoff between the top two candidates. In other churches, the PSC starts over from scratch. While recognizing this practice might be so entrenched in a church's culture that it might be impossible to ignore, it is still a dangerous and potentially explosive practice:

- The interim period is a time when leaders need to lead. The PSC are key leaders. Let them lead by doing all the background work to bring the single, best candidate before the church.
- If a candidate gains 51% of the three-way vote, he may have a majority supporting him, but there are 49% that were not for this selection.
- If a candidate has 2/3 or 3/4 of the votes, you have still divided the church by forcing them into camps.
- Voting for or against a single candidate is not without potential failing, but it is more likely to simplify the vote and unite the church.

Visiting the Candidate's Home Church

It was once the practice of "pulpit committees" to go church-to-church seeking the next preacher for their church. You will have noticed by now, that no mention has been made of your search committee visiting a pastor's home church. This is intentional! It should be the last thing you do before inviting the candidate to your church. There should be an agreement that, if all goes well with the home-church visit, the candidate will be invited to come in view of a call.

Some reasons for saving this for the end of the search process include:

1. The search team has already had a chance to hear the candidate preach online or via cds or dvds.
2. There is no doubt that good preaching is desired and important. Nevertheless, over-focusing on preaching easily tempts PSCs to disregard the other important parts of the Pastor Profile.

3. Every church visit by a PSC has the potential to make those pastors “lame ducks” in their own churches.
 - a. “There’s a search team here to look at our pastor. I guess he doesn’t love us anymore.”
 - b. “Remember that search team that looked at our pastor? Apparently they didn’t think he was good enough. I wonder what they noticed is wrong here?”

Instead, agree upon a date with the pastor. Let him deliver a sermon that he has prepared with your team in mind and with adequate preparation. Give him a chance to prepare his church, if that’s something that needs to be done. And then, look beyond the sermon, for the dynamics of how the church members interact with each other and with the pastor. As awkward as it might be, you may find the best experience is being confronted by church members who say, “Don’t you dare take our pastor! . . . unless it’s truly God’s will.”

The seven members of First Church’s PSC team entered from different doors, spaced apart by several minutes. But everyone knew they were a search team, even though the pastor hadn’t breathed a word that they were coming. The fact that they had come in the same vehicle, First Church’s 15 person passenger bus, didn’t help. They thought they had taken care of that concern by parking in the back parking lot. More importantly, the used duct tape and poster board to cover the church name on both sides of the van!

Announce to the Church

It is now time to let the church know you have found your top candidate. Announce the date by giving at least a two week window. This will give members a chance to do their own investigating—and they will! It is better they let you know if you’ve missed something vital during this two weeks than springing their discoveries on you the day the pastor comes to be voted on. Your church members will get on the church grapevine. They will check Google and Facebook and whatever else is available to them. Have you already done so? You better have.

On a Sunday morning, when the most people possible are present, take time in the morning service to pass out the candidate’s resume and/or short biographical sketch as well as the negotiated covenant agreed upon by the PSC and the candidate. The PSC chair (most likely) should describe events of the search, impressions of the candidate and family, and how the PSC envisions the candidate fulfilling the needs of the church, that is, the Pastor Profile. Other PSC members can add their impressions. The church can enter into a special time of prayer.

Then, use all forms of church communication to continue spreading the news: Sunday bulletins, newsletters, emails, radio announcements, newspaper ads. This is a great time to “market” the church by letting everyone know the prospective new pastor is coming. Reach out to all your inactive members, and don’t worry that their presence will tilt a close vote. If you have had a healthy and transparent search process, the church will be trustful and support your recommendation.

Now, weigh your situation carefully. Do you need a town hall meeting to give people time to talk and ask questions? Perhaps the next Sunday, during the Sunday School hour, would be a good time to meet again. Members will have had time to think through the recommendation by then. Taking time to answer questions and address concerns, about the candidate and the covenant, will mean a lot to your members.

In View of A Call

Wouldn't it be nice if a candidate could "audition" for a month, or so, preaching and performing pastoral care? Most people could put their best foot forward for a much longer period than that, however, so it probably wouldn't help much in the long run. More importantly, it is unlikely that your final candidate would have the luxury to do that, particularly if he is serving in another church. So, make the most out of a long weekend.

Friday night, you could host a time of "meet and greet with" special leaders in a church. Decide who needs to be "on board" by Sunday, who needs to share their wisdom with the PSC, and who needs to have their egos massaged less they cause trouble. Friday night could be a simple time of fellowship with a baked potato supper and casual conversation, ending with a prayer time.

Saturday morning could be the time to host a church-wide brunch. Let the pastoral candidate greet folks as they enter. Once everyone is seated and eating (so feed the pastor early), introduce the pastor and family. Let the candidate give a testimony, followed by the spouse's testimony. Then the real fun begins.

It is now time to enter into a Q&A period. Ask members to speak into a microphone to ask their questions. They will ask a variety of good, bad, improper, indifferent, and illuminating questions (for both the church and pastor). It is a good time to see how the pastor responds to the different personalities in the church and how quickly the candidate can think on his feet.

- What version of the Bible do you preach from?
- Do you believe in a visitation program of going door-to-door on Tuesday afternoons, because that's how we built this church in the 1950s?
- Can you explain Premillennial Dispensationalism, according to the "Left Behind" series? I've read the books and seen the movies and I still don't get how they got that from the Bible?
- Have you ever had an adulterous affair?

If there is any question that could rock the candidate's world, it better have been discovered, asked and addressed long before this moment.

And then comes Sunday. The candidate can greet folks arriving for Sunday School. During the morning service, the church will listen to one of the candidate's "top three sermons" (the other two having been presented on CD and when the PSC came to the candidate's church).

The candidate, and family, can now be escorted to some other site on campus while the church goes into business. The motion comes with a second already, because it originates out of the PSC. Take time to allow the church to ask final questions or to make comments. Very little discussion usually occurs. So, it's time to vote by ballot.

The motion to call _____ as the new pastor of ABC Church, under the guidelines of the covenant presented by the PSC.

Please Circle Your Vote

YES NO

Most likely, your candidate will win by an overwhelming, but not unanimous vote. He will need to go home and give notice to that church. Starting time for beginning at your church will depend on the need for vacation, for moving, for finishing special projects, and for the children's semester in school. But make no mistakes about it: You have your new pastor!

A Special Note of Reality

So, why will the church vote for your candidate? How will they know this is the candidate of God's will? Some options include:

- The one sermon they heard that day was a good one!
- The pastor dresses appropriately and acted "pastoral."
- The pastor's spouse was impressive and the children were well-behaved.

Hopefully, everyone knows these are not the final decision-making items! But what other alternatives are there? How about:

- Praying and praying and seeking God's will. Then, somehow, in the midst of spiritual discernment, a gut-feeling will signal the Holy Spirit's touch and indicate how to vote.
- Better yet, what if we admit that the people don't know! They either trust the PSC, or they don't. If you have a transparent, spiritual, healthy process, they are most likely to vote in support of their PSC, even if they don't particularly like the candidate!
- Wait a minute. Even if the PSC doesn't have a great process, it is likely that potential nay-sayers will keep their mouths shut and their votes supportive, because they don't want to cause any problems.

Here's the truth few will believe or share with you. The church doesn't know. They vote, no matter what their reason from above, with fingers crossed. So, you, the Pastor Search Committee, better get it right!

AFTER THE SEARCH

Many PSC members have shared what a difficult job it is to be on the PSC. It takes lots of time and hard work, while under intense pressure from fellow church members to HURRY UP. The brief thanks, the high pressure, and the worry about members' long-term memories (if things doesn't work out with this pastor) might make one wonder why they agreed to serve.

But overwhelmingly, the majority of PSC members share that it has been a wonderful walk with the Lord. The pressure—knowing the future of the church rests on the PSC—drives members to their knees and a closer walk with God than during normal times of service.

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. I Cor. 12:9-10 [NAS]

So, rejoice that the search is over. But it isn't time to step down, yet. There is still important work that needs to be done and the PSC is usually the best choice for getting these things done, or seeing that they are done.

Publicity

The arrival of the new pastor is often a bit of letdown. A huge crowd showed on the special Call Sunday (even if you didn't promote this day to your inactive members, many of them will show up anyway). Now, the first Sunday of the new pastor's tenure can be quickly take the church back to business-as-usual. In fact, it could be somewhat devastating to the new pastor if you have to say, on his first Sunday, "We're really down today for some reason." So, you might want to avoid having that first Sunday during a three-day weekend when many of your members are away.

In addition, this is another great day, or phase, to publicize and promote.

- Use the church sign to advertise the pastor's arrival
- Distribute ads however you can: direct mail, community newspapers, radio, website
- Notify denominational press (Baptist Standard)
- Notify denominational entities (local association, Baptist General Convention of Texas, national conventions)

Installation Service

An installation service can further promote the arrival of a new pastor, as well as blessing the pastor and build a spiritual foundation for the pastor's tenure. If this is not part of your church's tradition, don't fret. It's not a difficult task, and the new pastor will certainly take the lead in designing the service.

Set a date, perhaps four weeks after the pastor's first Sunday. Let the pastor choose and invite a special guest preacher, like a favorite mentor. Not unlike an ordination service, the service would invoke God's help, charge the pastor and church with fulfilling their mission, and commission the pastor to this new task. Denominational representatives, and even city representatives, could have parts of the service. Some churches have included a member from the pastor's previous church as a sign of God's will being done. A special time of prayer, even with the laying on of hands, would be both biblical and supportive.

Pastor Support Team

While a Pastor Search Committee is, by definition, an *ad hoc* committee that ceases to exist once a new pastor is secured, you might want to rethink such a sudden ending. Think about it. The pastor, and the pastor's family, is going to arrive as strangers to your church and community. Nobody in the church loves the pastor like you do. No one knows the pastor as well as your team. And nobody is as vested in your new pastor's success as you are. Likewise, there is no one the pastor knows, loves, and trusts like the Pastor Search Committee.

With that in mind, many churches have found it helpful for the PSC to stay together as a Pastor Support Team. This could be done as a formal motion to continue in that role, or it could be a very informal decision. Some churches find it helps to transition this team into a permanent role that supports all ministers in the church, but most churches make it temporary for the pastors first four to six months. Of course, the pastor needs to be supportive of any these decisions.

First, let's address what the Pastor Support team is not. It is not a supervisory team. Evaluating the pastor's performance, examining how well the covenant is being lived up to, or maintaining an accountability relationship with the pastor should remain with whomever the church has designated those roles. The support team is also not a conflict management group, standing between the new pastor and those who complain about performance, conduct, or character. Again, that role should rest elsewhere (or be created).

This is not to say a new pastor won't want to seek some private counsel on important matters from search committee members. Instead of this being the focus, however, a Pastor Support Team means continuing to help the pastor feel loved and welcomed as the pastor (and family) make the transition to this new ministry. Some ideas that Pastor Support Teams have utilized include:

- Pack the pantry—Once the pastoral family is settled into a new home, stock the shelves and refrigerator with desirable foods.

- Host the pastoral family for lunch—Create a sign up list so that a different family hosts the pastoral family for lunch after church. This could go on for months, giving the pastor a great opportunity to get to know members, and vice versa.
- Accompany the pastor to big events, in and out of the church, to make first introductions. It will especially be helpful to make sure the pastor has adequate notice of church rituals and special days that everyone else knows about.
- The pastor’s children, especially if they are teenagers, are making a huge sacrifice and going through a difficult transition. Recruiting families with children of similar ages, or members of the youth department, to rally around these new peers can free the pastor from ongoing concerns of how the family will be received.
- Realize that the pastor is placed at risk by using church members for family needs and contractual work. There is the risk of jealousy, if the pastor uses one church member over another. And there is the risk of damaged relationships and church fallout if a church members performs poorly in a professional duty for the pastor. Nevertheless, the pastor’s family may have many questions that need to be answered, concerning things like:
 - A job for the spouse
 - Finding permanent housing
 - Where to shop
 - School options
 - Entertainment venues
 - Medical care
 - Dangerous places
 - Auto mechanics

Over time, the pastor’s circle of relationships will grow (inside and outside the church) and the need for a support team will fade. This will be fairly obvious when it happens, so don’t be hurt when the pastor “no longer needs you.” Instead, celebrate that you have completed your duties and you have done your job well.

Conclusion

Your church is a living, breathing, changing, and unique entity. Your culture, practices, rituals, and values are unique to your church. So, now that you have read through this manual, realize that this is not a book of absolute rules. It is a guide that represents wisdom from dozens and dozens of churches, their pastor search committees, and their interims. But you have to decide what parts work best for you and how to implement them, as well as what parts just don’t make sense in your church. This may require on-going conversations with someone who understand the search process and the interim path. So, don’t be a stranger. We’re just a call or email away whenever we can help again.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX ONE

1. Team Building
 - a. Early
 - b. Every meeting
 - c. Meet w/o work
 - d. The “abstaining” vote
 - e. Consensus, spiritual discernment, unanimity
2. Spiritual Foundations
 - a. Early
 - b. Every meeting
 - c. Include congregation
3. Communication to church
 - a. Cannot over communicate
 - b. Post timeline
 - c. Maintain confidentiality
4. Pastor Profile
 - a. Survey options
 - b. Survey builds buy-in
 - c. Survey doesn’t decide, gauges interests
 - d. Town hall follow-up
 - e. Caution about absolutes
 - f. Mission is key (new pastor called to same mission?)
 - g. Include congregation
 - h. Key leadership’s extra input
 - i. Finance committee salary guidelines
5. Church Profile
 - a. History
 - b. Denominational and outside relationships
 - c. Leadership—staff, lay, decision-making
 - d. Community demographics
 - e. Church demographics
 - f. Include congregation
 - g. “They lied to me”
 - h. Are you called to a church like us (change is not likely)
6. Posting Opening
 - a. BGCT and AA Fellowship
 - b. Baptist Standard
 - c. Collin Baptist Association
 - d. Church website
 - e. DOMs in major cities

- f. Word of mouth (internal and external)
 - g. Schools, general web sites
 - h. Candidates who aren't looking to move
 - i. DEADLINE (but don't wait to process candidates)
 - j. Resume (written application/recommendation) required
7. Resumes
- a. Compare to Pastor Profile
 - b. No—immediate response letter of thanks, but no
 - c. Maybe—optional, immediate response of thanks, we're working on it
 - d. Yes—immediate response, request more information
 - i. no more than 10
 - ii. Next pastor likely in this group
8. Video/Audio tapes
- a. Individually vs. group listening
 - b. Listen when fresh
 - c. Not a good gauge, but not to be neglected
 - d. Sugar sticks and lightning bolts
 - e. Multiple listening of final candidate(s) during step 13
 - f. Candidate provided vs. sources
9. Check references provided
- a. Ask references for additional references
10. Initial Phone Call
- a. Divide up calls (not full team) vs. conference calls
 - b. Update on process
 - c. Request info
 - d. Packet coming
11. Deeper Research (Narrowing Down Finalists)
- a. Permission form for background checks
 - i. Personal
 - ii. Criminal, financial, educational, sexual misconduct (don't do yet)
 - b. Contact Charlie Singleton, et al., to contact candidate's DOM
 - c. Contact all references discovered
 - d. Facebook, Google
 - e. Written Questionnaire vs. Telephone Conference Call
 - i. Keep questions the same
 - ii. Chase rabbits
12. Determine Top Candidate (maybe 2 or 3)
13. Face to Faces interviews
- a. Alone
 - b. With spouse
 - c. In public
 - d. In private
 - e. Good To Great cautionary tale—the confident, intelligent, personable megalomaniac
 - f. Remember the profiles
 - g. Pros and cons of personality profile (DISC)
14. Complete Background Checks

15. Visit to Church and Community
 - a. Confidential
 - b. W/ spouse
16. Meeting Staff
 - a. Think through who needs to be included (top tier)
 - b. Confidentiality concerns
 - c. Power of staff over decision
 - d. Staff's influence over their circles
17. Extend Call Invitation to Single Candidate
18. Negotiation
 - a. Duties
 - b. Written covenant (job description, plus)
 - c. Financial package
 - i. Salary
 - ii. Housing
 - iii. PTO
 - iv. Expenses
 - v. Continuing education
 - vi. Insurance
 - vii. Retirement
 - viii. Social security supplement
 - ix. Moving expenses
 - x. Vs. other staff
 - xi. Public knowledge
19. Visit Candidate's Home Church
 - a. Agreed upon date
 - b. Planned approach
 - c. Saved until end to protect pastor's tenure
 - d. Can be used to differentiate between top candidates after step 13 (not ideal)
 - e. If candidate not in a pastorate, consider other possibilities
20. Announce to church
 - a. Two week notice (at least)
 - b. Call to prayer
 - c. Resume (one week notice)
 - d. Time for feedback
21. Candidate In View of a Call
 - a. Long weekend
 - b. Special focus groups
 - c. Town hall
 - d. Q&A
 - e. Worship
 - f. Vote
 - g. Accepts on spot
22. PSC Transition to Pastor Support Team
 - a. Help w/ relocation and orientation to community
 - b. Socialization of wife/children and moral support
 - c. Permanent or tempo

APPENDIX TWO

Demographic Update with Graphics: 2014/2019 **1**

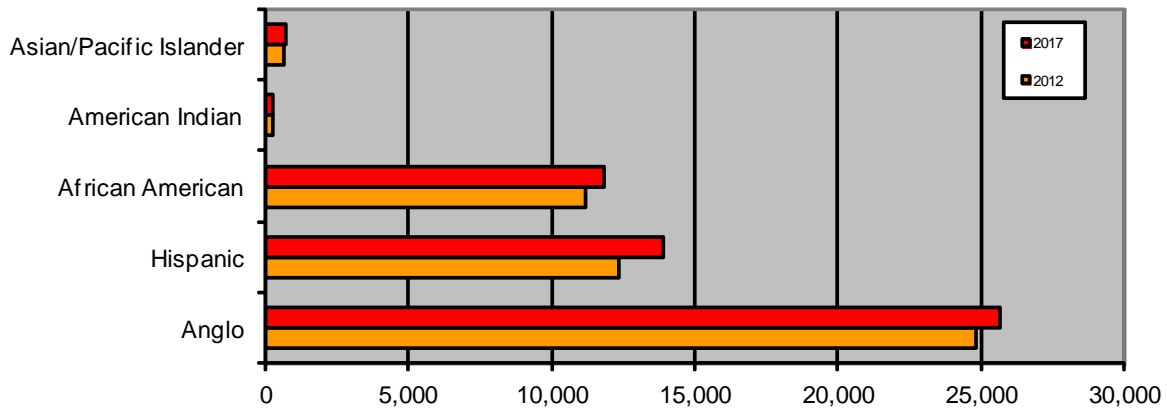
Example Baptist Church, 5 mile radius Page 1 of 3

	2014 Estimates			2019 Projections			2014-2019 Change		
		Here	Texas		Here	Texas		Here	Texas
Population		49,288		52,442			3,154	6.4%	6.5%
In Households	48,042	97.5%	97.8%	51,186	97.6%	97.9%	3,144	6.5%	6.7%
In Families	41,447	84.1%	82.2%	44,140	84.2%	82.3%	2,693	6.5%	6.7%
In Non-families	6,595	13.4%	15.6%	7,046	13.4%	15.6%	451	6.8%	6.5%
In Group Quarters	1,246	2.5%	2.2%	1,256	2.4%	2.1%	10	0.8%	0.0%
<small>People live in households or group quarters (nursing homes, prisons, etc.). Households are families (2+related persons) or non-families (living alone or with non-</small>									
Population By Race/Ethnicity									
Anglo	24,820	50.4%	45.0%	25,660	48.9%	44.1%	840	3.4%	4.4%
Hispanic	12,350	25.1%	38.5%	13,921	26.5%	39.5%	1,571	12.7%	9.3%
African American	11,169	22.7%	11.9%	11,857	22.6%	11.8%	688	6.2%	6.3%
American Indian	270	0.5%	0.7%	293	0.6%	0.7%	23	8.5%	6.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	679	1.4%	3.9%	711	1.4%	3.9%	32	4.7%	5.7%
Population by Age & Gender									
< 5 Years	3,876	7.9%	7.4%	4,188	8.0%	7.2%	312	8.0%	4.3%
5 - 9 Years	3,673	7.5%	7.4%	3,960	7.6%	7.0%	287	7.8%	0.6%
10 - 14 Years	3,552	7.2%	7.4%	3,798	7.2%	7.1%	246	6.9%	2.7%
15 - 19 Years	3,531	7.2%	7.3%	3,723	7.1%	7.4%	192	5.4%	8.1%
20 - 24 Years	3,859	7.8%	7.3%	3,649	7.0%	7.0%	-210	-5.4%	2.6%
25 - 34 Years	6,538	13.3%	14.2%	7,250	13.8%	13.5%	712	10.9%	1.1%
35 - 44 Years	5,676	11.5%	13.4%	6,068	11.6%	13.1%	392	6.9%	3.9%
45 - 54 Years	5,978	12.1%	13.0%	5,932	11.3%	12.5%	-46	-0.8%	1.9%
55 - 64 Years	5,270	10.7%	11.0%	5,664	10.8%	11.5%	394	7.5%	11.6%
65 and over	7,334	14.9%	11.5%	8,209	15.7%	13.7%	875	11.9%	26.0%
Median Age	37.5		34.2	36.8		35.5	-0.6	-1.7%	3.8%
Households by Type	18,014			19,070			1,056	5.9%	6.9%
Married Couples, Kids	3,909	21.7%	26.0%	4,151	21.8%	26.2%	242	6.2%	7.5%
Married Couple No Kids	4,498	25.0%	24.9%	4,783	25.1%	24.9%	285	6.3%	7.1%
Single-parent households	2,828	15.7%	12.9%	3,004	15.8%	12.9%	176	6.2%	7.1%
Other families	1,239	6.9%	6.5%	1,329	7.0%	6.5%	90	7.3%	7.1%
Persons living alone (nonfamily)	4,769	26.5%	24.2%	5,048	26.5%	24.2%	279	5.9%	6.7%
Roommates (nonfamily)	766	4.3%	5.5%	751	3.9%	5.3%	-15	-2.0%	2.8%
Total Housing Units	19,457			20,642			1,185	6.1%	6.9%
Owner-Occupied	10,706	55.0%	59.5%	11,346	55.0%	60.1%	640	6.0%	8.1%
Renter-Occupied	7,301	37.5%	32.7%	7,721	37.4%	32.0%	420	5.8%	4.7%
Vacant	1,450	7.5%	7.9%	1,575	7.6%	7.9%	125	8.6%	7.7%
Educational Attainment									
Population 25+ Years	30,789	62.5%	63.2%	33,116	63.1%	64.2%	2,327	7.6%	8.4%
No HS Diploma	7,482	24.3%	19.2%	7,995	24.1%	19.1%	513	6.9%	8.0%
HS Graduate	8,309	27.0%	25.4%	8,982	27.1%	25.3%	673	8.1%	8.0%
Some College	9,755	31.7%	29.2%	10,515	31.8%	29.2%	760	7.8%	8.4%
College Degree or higher	5,243	17.0%	26.2%	5,624	17.0%	26.4%	381	7.3%	9.1%
Households By Income Level									
< \$15,000	2,455	13.6%	12.0%	2,239	123.1%	10.6%	-216	-8.8%	-5.4%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	2,312	12.8%	9.5%	1,870	102.8%	7.6%	-442	-19.1%	-14.1%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	2,733	15.2%	10.3%	2,768	152.2%	9.3%	35	1.3%	-4.0%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	3,897	21.6%	16.7%	4,645	255.4%	18.1%	748	19.2%	16.1%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2,693	14.9%	18.2%	2,794	153.6%	16.7%	101	3.8%	-2.0%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1,412	7.8%	10.8%	1,700	93.5%	12.3%	288	20.4%	22.4%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1,427	7.9%	11.8%	1,535	84.4%	11.6%	108	7.6%	5.1%
\$150,000 and up	1,085	6.0%	10.7%	1,518	83.5%	13.7%	433	39.9%	36.7%
Median HH Income	\$40,819		\$51,863	\$44,641		\$55,610	\$3,822	9.4%	7.2%

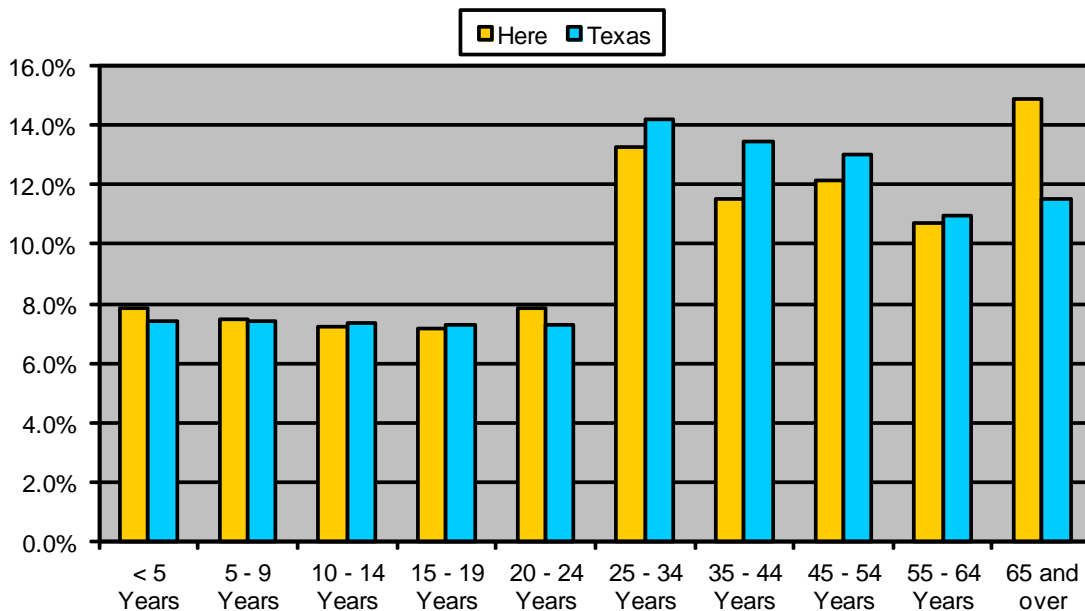
POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2014 ESTIMATES



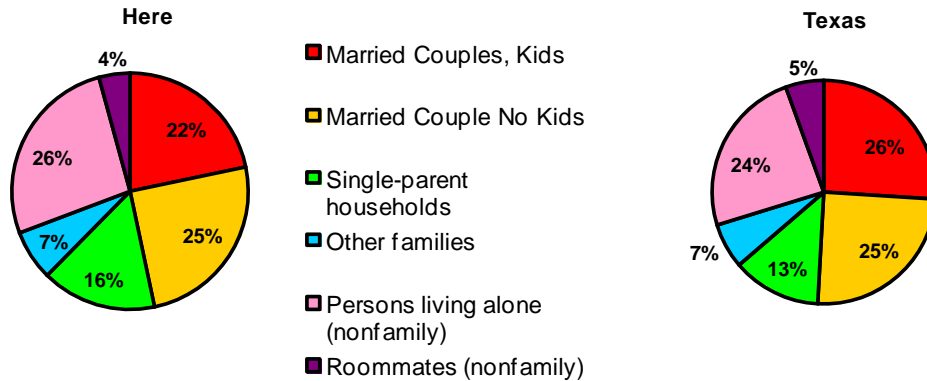
PROJECTED CHANGE IN RACE/ETHNICITY, 2014 TO 2019



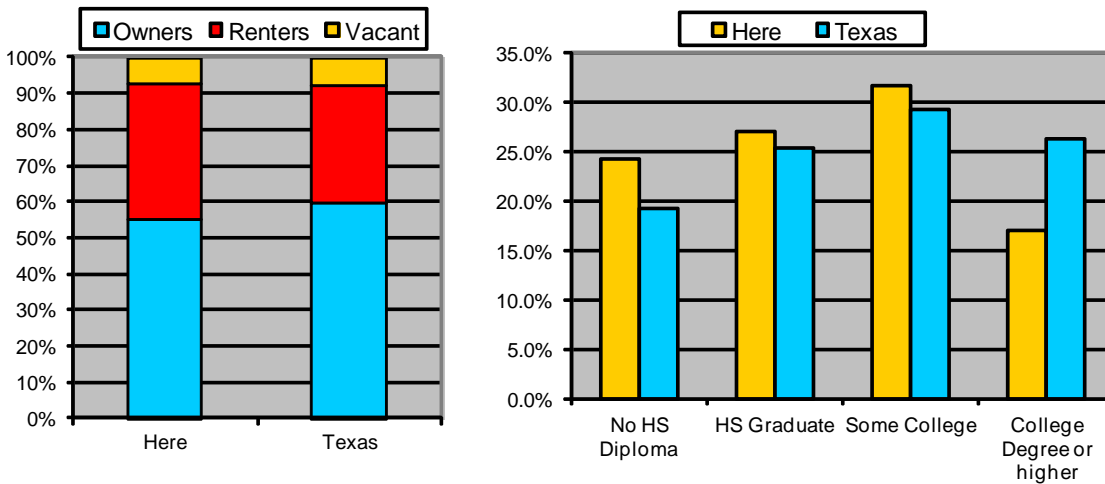
POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS, 2014 ESTIMATES



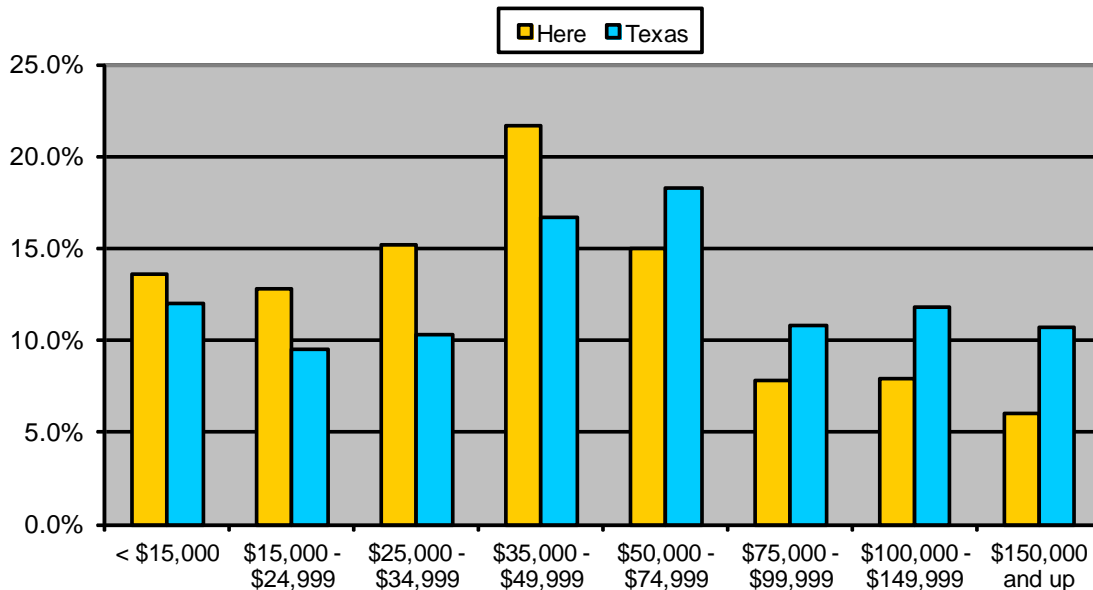
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE, 2014 ESTIMATES



HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE, 2014: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR AGES 25+, 2014



HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME GROUPS, 2014 ESTIMATES



APPENDIX THREE

CONGREGATION PROFILE, 2003-2013

Example Baptist Church
 Address
 Somewhere, TX

Association:
 Year Organized: 1960
 Church Phone:

County & % Unchurched:
 County Name
 County Name 44%

BGCT ID:
 County Name 44%

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change 2003-2013	Percent
Total Members	504	530	546	545	572	557	518	500	482	459	450	-54	-10.7%
Resident Members	338	333	315	293	297	279	275	266	334	270	266	-72	-21.3%
AM Worship Attendance	90	91	109	102	116	123	137	133	134	113	111	21	23.3%
Sunday School Enrollment	79	114	106	121	115	124	95	108	131	103	104	25	31.6%
Sun Sch Avg Attendance	53	58	64	61	68	81	70	77	86	103	84	31	58.5%
W/MU Enrollment	14	12	14	11	11	14	15	14	14	12	10	-4	-28.6%
Baptist Men Enrollment	13	14	14	12	12	12	14	13	10	10	8	-5	-38.5%
Total Baptisms	7	6	12	5	12	8	7	4	10	20	6	-1	-14.3%
Res Members/Baptism	48	56	26	59	25	35	39	67	33	14	44	Not Applicable	
Additions by Letter	8	14	5	17	19	14	14	9	15	14	11	3	37.5%
Total Receipts (\$)	111,011	117,041	118,366	144,104	171,503	203,198	237,273	254,206	259,811	261,425	267,773	156,762	141.2%
Undesignated Rcpts (\$)	105,089	111,312	112,395	135,098	160,767	195,120	228,084	225,787	252,833	252,530	256,613	151,524	144.2%
Total Missions Expend (\$)	10,121	10,817	11,889	16,952	18,515	20,981	36,161	17,891	27,229	22,961	23,892	13,771	136.1%
Missions As % of Receipts	9.1%	9.2%	10.0%	11.8%	10.8%	10.3%	15.2%	7.0%	10.5%	8.8%	8.9%	Not Applicable	
Coop Program (\$)	7,259	7,881	7,985	10,967	11,624	14,428	15,869	16,148	17,805	17,945	18,628	11,369	156.6%
Coop As % of Undesignated Rcpts	6.9%	7.1%	7.1%	8.1%	7.2%	7.4%	7.0%	7.2%	7.0%	7.1%	7.3%	Not Applicable	
Assoc Gifts (\$)	2,077	2,219	2,230	2,970	3,208	3,903	4,556	4,788	5,046	5,014	4,989	2,912	140.2%
Assoc \$ As % of Undesignated Rcpts	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.2%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%	Not Applicable	
Reporting Status	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported	Not Applicable

Source: 2003 to 2013 Annual Church Profiles, Decision Support, Baptist General Convention of Texas, February 2014.
 Notes: W/MU and Baptist Men enrollments represent adults only 2005-2008; Cooperative Program giving based on calendar year contributions through the BGCT.
 Report status: "Not active"=church was not existing or not part of BGCT at the time; "No data"=church was active but did not report; "Old data"=church was active but data are from an earlier year
 Unchurched is based on population not claimed by any of 236 religious bodies, 2010 U.S. Religion Census, Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.



This service is made possible through continued contributions of BGCT congregations to the Cooperative Program.

APPENDIX FOUR

Pastoral Profile **First Baptist Church of Gatesville, Texas** June 20, 2013

1. **Experience:** A licensed or ordained minister holding to Baptist teachings; Senior pastor experience is preferred; Associate pastoral experience within a large congregation and/or interim pastoral also will be considered. The applicant's education must include a Bachelor's degree; however, a Master's degree is preferred.
2. **Preaching:** Preaches with an emphasis on exegetical/expository preaching with a sound unwavering commitment to the Word of God; Preaches the whole counsel of God, not for agendas, political correctness, nor fear of man's opinions
3. **Leadership:** Leads by biblical example and lifestyle, putting God first; Eager to serve with humility, and has a teachable spirit.
4. **Shepherding:** Considers the needs of the entire church family; Watches over the flock; Guards the church body from false teachings, and secular ideas; encourages and reaches out to all members of the church family; Promotes a spirit of unity and of love among the people; Leaves the 99 for the one.
5. **Counseling:** Gives sound biblical counsel, advice, and guidance; Encourages mature believers in the faith to assist with spiritual counseling opportunities.
6. **Prayer:** Prays diligently for the saints, and encourages a lifestyle of prayer; Is committed to both public prayer and private prayer; Leads by example.
7. **Outreach/Evangelism:** Is committed to making an impact on the community, and then throughout all the earth with the gospel of Jesus Christ, with various ministries, missions, and outreach opportunities.
8. **Vision:** Understands the strengths and weaknesses of the church family; Learns from successes and failures; Recognizes the gifts, talents, and faithfulness of its members; Builds upon the biblical principles and standards which have endured for generations in order to cast a vision for the future of God's people at First Baptist Church of Gatesville, Texas.
9. **Fellowship:** Actively encourages and promotes fellowship with those of like faith.
10. **Worship:** Leads the congregation with an attitude and lifestyle of worship through:
 - Effective preaching and teaching of God's Word
 - Evangelism outreach
 - Music and praise

- Commitment to marriage and family
- Building relationships
- Dedication to prayer
- Effective planning and leadership
- In All things for the Glory of God

11. Discipleship: Equips the saints for acts of service, evangelism, and discipleship training; Actively promotes opportunities to share the gospel with the unsaved, and to grow all believers to maturity in Christ.

12. Administration: Works with and guides existing church staff; Oversees the day-to-day jobs of the church organization; Delegates responsibilities appropriately; Encourages the efforts of church committees, ministries, and missions to effectively function as a church body; Recognizes the church council's responsibility in governance, and works in cooperation with the church council and congregation.

APPENDIX FIVE

Church Profile First Baptist Church of Gatesville

June 10, 2013

Introduction

First Baptist Church (FBC) of Gatesville is a special church that is rich in history having been established in 1856 and is located in the heart of the City of Gatesville, the county seat of Coryell County. The majority of the membership considers themselves traditional in style of worship and there is a strong group of young families who are very active in serving. One of the most outstanding strengths of our church is its mission work.

Our church has undergone quite a change over the last year through the Intentional Interim process. Fellowship is sweeter, more members are being added, and governance has substantially improved. There is a sense of excitement about what the future holds.

Contact Information

Church

Address: 912 E. Main Street/P.O. Box 7,
Gatesville, TX 76528

Telephone: 254-865-2014

Fax: 254-865-1294

Website: www.fbcgatesville.org

Pastor Search Committee

[Names and contact info of entire search committee inserted here]

History

First Baptist Church of Gatesville was established in September 1856 with a total of ten members. At the time FBC was organized, Gatesville was a small settlement of about 20 homes. It had grown around the army outpost of Ft. Gates that had been established to provide protection from the Indians. It was designated as the county seat of the newly organized County of Coryell, which was established on March 15, 1854. The church first worshipped in a tiny rawhide building used by the settlers in early 1800's as a meeting place, courthouse, place of worship, etc.

The first construction (1872) was a small rawhide structure (20'x45'). The building was located on the corner of the present day Bridge and 6th streets. In 1883, a new building (32'x50') was constructed on the site of the present day church. On June 11, 1902, a beautiful brick building was occupied. On March 1, 1936, the present day church was dedicated.

Its first pastor was Rev. W. A. Mason who served in 1856-1857. A total of 21 pastors served the church in its first 100 years from 1856-1956. Pastors who have served since 1956 are as follows:

1953-1960	J. T. Ayers
1960-1961	Kyle Yates, Interim
1961-1966	Sam Tullock
1966-1970	Kenneth Patrick
1971-1972	Billy B. Moore
1972-1976	W. E. Smith
1976-1977	W. J. Wimpee, Interim
1977-1988	Curtis Beard
1988-1989	Hollis Yeilding, Interim
1989-1998	Jay Riley
1998-1999	Miller Robinson, Interim
1999-2012	Steve Dominy
2012-	Levi Price, Interim

Professional Staff

Dr. Levi Price, Interim Pastor (June 1, 2012)

Nathan Cook, Interim Music Minister (October 2011)

Sandra Gurley, Children's Minister (March 20, 2013)

Jonathan Higdon, Youth Minister (April 28, 2013)

Beth Denney, Secretary (July 11, 2011)

Organizational Life

Up to this year, church decisions were made mostly by tradition, by the influence of the pastor, the deacon body, and church committees. As a result of the work led by the Intentional Interim Leadership Team over the last year, the following table summarizes how the governance is now to work.

Name of Group	Purpose	No. of Members/ Entities	Frequency of Meetings	Role *
Church Council	Planning, coordination, conducting, evaluating, calendaring, reviewing, and decision-making about recommendations to the congregation concerning the total work of the Church	13 members	At least quarterly	2
Deacons	Spiritual servants	27 deacons	Monthly	1
Programs	Help the church achieve its objectives and purposes and meet the general needs of the people in the congregation	9 programs, but can vary	As needed	1
Ministries	Consists of teams who minister to needs within the church membership	12 ministries, but can vary	As needed	1
Missions	Consists of teams who lead and work in outreach outside the church membership	15 missions, but can vary	As needed	1
FBC of Gatesville Academy Board	Leadership for the academy that provides Christian education to pre-school age children in the community	6 members	At least quarterly	2
Committees:				
Finance	Budget development, management, and administration	6 members	Monthly	2
Properties	Care of all church property and buildings	9 members	As needed	2
Nominating	Staffing of all church-elected leadership positions	6 members	As needed	2
Personnel	Employment and management of church staff	6 members	As needed	2

*** Role Legend**

- 1 – pastor and laity share responsibility
- 2 – laity takes primary initiative and responsibility

Missions

As a church we feel called to take part in the Mission of God. We want to show all people a picture of the love that Jesus has shown us and offers to the entire world. We recognize this calls us to be on mission in Gatesville, across Texas, and around the world. Some of our annual mission endeavors include KidsHeart Mission Trip to the Rio Grande Valley, Salute to Warrior Citizens at North Fort Hood, Christmas for Texas Baptist Children’s Home in Round Rock, Fill-the-Book Bags for Gatesville ISD, Vacation Bible School, Disciple Now, Operation Christmas Child, Texas Baptist Men’s Water Purification Ministry, and Mission Offerings (Annie Armstrong, Lottie Moon, and Mary Hill Davis). Mission activities that occur regularly are Wednesday Night Clubs (RAs, GAs & Mission Friends), Wednesday Night Meals, Feed the Hornets High School Football Team, Care Center Food & Clothing Center Monthly Volunteers, Boys & Girls Club Volunteers, Random Acts of Kindness, and more.

Ministries

The purpose of our ministries is to offer, extend and amplify a servant’s heart of service to our congregation. We strive to make all feel welcomed, informed and included in worship and all other church activities. Some of our ministries include Audio/Visual, Bereavement, Bus & Van, Decorating,

First Connections Welcome Team, Historical, Homebound & Hospital, Kitchen, Library, Offering, and Ushers.

Mission & Ministry Initiatives in Process of Implementation

Our plans are to initiate, expand, and coordinate our Men’s and Women’s Ministries to include a variety of support and outreach activities/services to our own membership and others in our community. Other specific projects in the planning stages include Single Parent Outreach, Prison Studies & Programs, and Fill the Baby Bottle assistance to women’s shelters.

Small Group Program

Having small groups is based on Acts 5:42, “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.” Small Groups meet “house to house” to study the Bible together, fellowship and eat together, pray together, worship together, help each other in practical ways, and develop new relationships (Acts 2:42-47).

The church initiated its Small Group Program in April 2010. These groups met both in homes and at church with some experiencing phenomenal growth in numbers, fellowship, prayer, and service. In 2013, there were six small groups with a total enrollment of 72. Group sizes ranged from eight to seventeen and each group is involved in its own study and generally meets two times per month.

Academy

FBC of Gatesville has sponsored a Christian preschool as an outreach to the community for 26 years, being licensed in 1987. The preschool strives to prepare three, four, and Pre-K five year olds for Kindergarten and uses the same calendar as Gatesville ISD.

The school uses church facilities but is self-supporting through student tuition and fees. For the 2012-2013 school year, the Academy employed three staff members and student enrollment fluctuated between 25 and 27.

Financial Status

A summary of FBC budget for the CY 2012 follows:

Total Budget	Budget Receipts	Designated Receipts	Total Receipts	Total Expenses
\$358,776	\$347,005	\$120,448	\$467,453	\$326,343

A summary of support for our partners and for missions in CY 2012 follows:

Partners

BGCT	Coop. Baptist Fellowship	Coryell Assn.	Latham Springs Encampment
\$24,988	\$2,094	\$1,500	\$1,500

Missions

Annie Armstrong	Lottie Moon	Mary Hill Davis	Mission Trips
\$2,002	\$1,425	\$1,299	\$10,061

Description of Property

The church is located on about two acres of land east of the Coryell County Courthouse on Main Street (US Highway 84). There is one two-story building, which was built in two parts. The first part was completed in 1936. It contains the 500 seat capacity sanctuary, church offices, parlor and kitchen, choir room, three large and three smaller classrooms. The education building was completed in 1962. It contains four large and five smaller classrooms, nursery, Academy, and fellowship hall. Parking is on the west side of the building with overflow across Main Street (highway 84) in the bank lot. A fenced playground is also on the west for the Academy.

Our Community

While our church is located just a couple of blocks from the Coryell County Courthouse in Gatesville, our membership is scattered throughout the county. The 2012 estimated population for Coryell County was 77,231 with the following breakdown in population:

Race	% of Pop.
Hispanic	16.6
White	74.9
African American	16.8
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.1
Asian	2.2
Pacific Islander	0.9
Multi-Racial	4.1

The median age for the county is 30.1 years and the per capita average income is \$36,932.

The county includes five cities – Gatesville, Copperas Cove, Oglesby, South Mountain, and Evant. The 2012 population for the City of Gatesville, the county seat and second largest city in the county, was 15,751 in 2012. The largest city, Copperas Cove, has a population of 32,767. Five prisons for female offenders are also located within the county mostly located in or near the City of Gatesville. The total combined capacity of these prisons is over 4,700 offenders. There is also one prison for male offenders with a capacity of almost 3,000. Also partially located within and taking up a large portion of the county is the Ft. Hood military facility, the largest military base in the United States.

Church Membership

First Baptist Church of Gatesville currently has approximately 390, predominately Anglo, resident members with an average worship attendance of 160.

For the past six years the membership records are as follows:

Year	Resident Membership	Worship Attendance	Sunday School Avg. Attendance	Baptisms
2007	428	185	NA	12
2008	440	200	NA	14
2009	450	190	NA	15
2010	470	190	NA	17
2011	NA	160	140	3
2012	390	150	115	7
2013		160		11*

* Sept 2012 – June 2013

This data is based on reports submitted to the Coryell Association on the Annual Church Statistical Profile, but there is no data supporting the numbers. Also, the lower 2012 resident membership is a result of a few of our members cleaning up our membership roll, which has been neglected for several years.

Sunday School Classes, May 2013

Class	Age	Enrollment	Avg. Attendance
Jackson (Men)	80+	7	6
Honeycutt (Women)	80+	14	8
Mitchell (Men)	70s & 80s	15	10
Sunshine (Women)	70s & 80s	17	8
BYKOTA (Women)	70s & 80s	7	2
Seekers (Couples and Singles)	50s & 60s	28	19
Adult I (Couples and Singles)	20s, 30s, & 40s	35	16
High School	Grades 11 – 12	6	1
High School	Grades 9 – 10	6	2
Intermediate	Grades 5 – 6	9	6
Elementary	Grades 3 – 4	12	4
Primary	Grades 1 – 2	12	8
Pre-K & Kindergarten		9	6
2 & 3 year olds		6	4
Babies & 1 year olds		3	2
Totals		201	111

According to the May 2013 Sunday School enrollment records, there are:

- 60 adults above 70 years of age (38 women and 22 men)
- 63 adults below 70 years of age
- 12 high school age youth
- 15 junior high school age youth
- 33 first through sixth graders
- 18 preschoolers

The Sunday School class for high school graduates to age 30 recently disbanded and combined with the Adult I class due to lack of a permanent teacher and low attendance.

Children’s mission activities on Wednesday evenings during the school year involve 35-40 children and 30-35 youth for Bible study on the same evening.

Enrollment in our 2012 Vacation Bible School (4 year olds – 6th graders) was 55 students.

Our Religious Beliefs

Purpose. This Church is formed to support public worship and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through such programs, ministries, and missions as may be determined by the Church.

Mission Statement. First Baptist Church of Gatesville is a missional, Bible-teaching fellowship, which sincerely worships Jesus Christ.

Doctrine. The following statements are accepted as common ground of faith:

1. The Bible is the written trustworthy record of God’s revelation of Himself to humanity and the authority for doctrine and practice.

2. God is the ruler of all that is; Jesus Christ, whose reality and wisdom are expressed through the presence of God's Holy Spirit, is the head of the church.
3. The experience of conversion through faith in Jesus Christ is a prerequisite for baptism and subsequent church membership.
4. We believe immersion in water answers Jesus Christ's command to baptize and immersion symbolizes the heart of the gospel message – the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
5. We believe there are two New Testament ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe both are symbolic in nature. Baptism and the Lord's Supper symbolize not only the Christian gospel but also the Christian's participation in the gospel's message.

Major Opportunities Facing the Church in the Next Five Years

1. Maintain and keep our building functional and appealing for all.
2. Identify and reach out to the unchurched in our immediate neighborhood, community, and county.
3. Identify situations in our community, which keep people from attending church such as poverty, abuse, hunger, and drugs and then involve the entire community in solutions.
4. Identify the parents of our children and youth who are unchurched and witness to them.
5. Adopt a style of worship, which is appealing to all.
6. Develop new ministries as outlined in our bylaws.
7. Develop a youth program which meets the spiritual needs of more youth in our community.
8. Continue to develop the small group program to include more church members and to attract people to our church.

Our Intentional Interim Period

Our previous pastor of 13 years resigned effective February 2012. This left our congregation undecided as to the next course of action. We had always proceeded immediately to a pastor search committee and carried forward. The pastor had left a suggestion that we consider a program called the Intentional Interim Ministry. Mike Barr, deacon chairman, appointed a six-person committee consisting of Stephen Norris, deacon vice chairman, Vance Stephens, Bob Salter, Jennifer Penny, and Kyle Cooper. This committee among other things, asked Dr. Carl Fickling the director of the Intentional Interim Ministry, to come and explain the program to us. This was done on Feb. 12 and left us in a quandary. While most members liked the program, there were different thoughts on how to implement it.

The four prevailing courses of action were:

1. Fully implement the intentional interim program with a pastor trained in the program.
2. Implement the interim program with a consultant from the BGCT and we provide our own interim pastor.
3. Implement the interim program with our own members providing the teaching and we provide our own interim pastor.
4. Do not implement the interim program but proceed directly to a pastor search committee.

Many informal and formal groups met and discussed the options. Since it was now Spring Break in 2012, several weeks were available for prayer and consideration. In a church business meeting in April, the decision was made to fully implement the interim program or option one.

The church next elected an interim pastor search committee who selected Dr. Levi Price to lead us through the interim period. Under Levi's guidance, we progressed through the five-part program. The church elected a 14-person interim leadership team. An important part of this process was presentation of our church history by Gwen Zeigler with the help of Helen Lipsey. Subsequently, the leadership team hosted a Sunday evening "Forum of Concern" to give all members a chance to voice questions about past and present concerns.

Our next step was to determine what our church considered important or "who we are". A "core values" workshop was held on Sunday evening, Sept. 30, 2012. Our four most highly held values are missional church, fellowship, bible emphasis, and worship. From these values, we formed our mission and vision statements and church logo.

The leadership team led the church in writing and adopting our first and only set of written policies including incorporation, bylaws, deacon policy, ministry, worship, mission, Academy, and Mother's Day Out.

With this done we defined our relationships with various organizations. Then we felt that it was time to select a pastor. The church selected a pastor search committee consisting of Holli Williams, Cathy Norris, Keith Steward, Vance Stephens, Bob Salter, Gary Kafer, and Richard Sweaney.

This process has been healing and uniting. It took us from a divided, suspicious, and frustrated group to a united, trusting, and focused congregation. Not only have we maintained our existing programs during this period, but are increasing the number of people involved and the programs offered. We are ready to continue God's work! At the start many were surprised at how long the program would take, but now we don't want it to end. We praise and thank God for His guiding hand.

APPENDIX SIX A

Sample Questions Search Committee Might Ask Prospect

(These questions are set up under three headings: 1) for initial phone call, 2) for first face-to-face meeting, and 3) for second face-to-face meeting. Add, delete, or reassign questions under the three headings as the search committee decides.

Sample Script and Questions to Ask Prospect During Initial Phone Contact

(If you are calling a large number of prospects, you might prefer not to invite questions from the prospect at this time. You could offer that option during a later face-to-face contact.)

My name is ____ and I am a member of the (position) search committee of (church, city). Thank you for allowing us to begin our consideration of you for the (position) of our church. I know you are busy, and I don't want to take too much of your time. I just have a few questions to ask you so that we can get to know you a little better as we seek to recognize where the Lord is leading us in finding the person for this position. I want to give you a chance to ask me some questions about our church also. I may not have all the answers at this moment, but I can certainly find out for you.

1. First of all, when did you become a Christian and under what circumstances?
2. What event, circumstance, person, or revelation has God used most strongly to lead you to believe he has called you and prepared you for this type of ministry?
3. What do you see as the two or three main purposes of this particular ministry position?
4. How do you measure success in the ministry? How do you know when you have done a good job?
5. Tell me about your education, training and experience that qualifies you for this position.
6. Tell me something about your family. Do they support your calling and vocation?
7. And now, do you have some questions for me?

Thank you so much for your time. Our committee will be praying for you and we ask that you pray for us also as both you and we seek the Lord's will.

Evaluation: Rate this person 1-4, (4 being the strongest)

Pleasant voice ____ Pleasant personality ____ Expresses himself/herself clearly ____
Sincere personal testimony ____ A strong sense of calling ____ Clear purpose for ministry ____
Clear ministry goals ____ Qualified for this ministry ____ Good family relationships/support ____

Sample Questions to Ask Prospect During First Face-to-Face Meeting

1. Who are your role models/mentors for ministry and what about them do you admire most?
2. Describe a typical work week as you prefer it to be. How much time in personal Bible study and prayer, how much time in preparation for preaching/teaching/ ministry, how much time in the office, how much time visiting prospects, the sick, shut-ins? Do you set aside specific family time each week?
3. Please share briefly your preferences or convictions regarding those issues and concerns that have arisen within Baptist denomination and convention life today, such as:
 - a. What words do you use to describe the reliability of Scripture?
 - b. Would you be comfortable with women teaching men or women serving as deacons?
 - c. Do you believe God has already decided who will be saved, or do you believe each person is free to decide whether or not to respond to God's offer of salvation and be saved?
 - d. What role does the pastor have within church governance? What role do deacons have? What is the role of the congregation as a whole?
 - e. What style of worship do you prefer? With what other styles are you comfortable? (contemporary, traditional, western heritage, etc.) What instrumental accompaniment is acceptable to you?
4. In what area(s) of your ministry do you sense the most passion?
5. What are the greatest challenges you have had to face so far in ministry?
6. How much counseling of church members are you willing to do and qualified to do?
7. How involved is your family/spouse in your ministry?
8. What is your leadership/administrative style? Strengths? Weaknesses?
9. Choose which is closer to your personality: (Elaborate if you wish)
 - a. a patient, loving, gentle person
 - b. a driven, passionate, high-standard-of-excellence person
10. Which more closely describes your temperament? (Elaborate if you wish)
 - a. spontaneous, enthusiastic, works-well-under pressure person
 - b. even-tempered, advanced-planning, calm, structured person
11. Which more closely describes your leadership style? (Elaborate if you wish)
 - a. prefer a responsible chain of command and authority with a "hands-on" overseer role
 - b. prefer a team approach with each team member contributing and being responsible in his or her role, expecting others to take care of their responsibilities without a

great deal of personal supervision by a superior

12. What is your preferred involvement in the community?
13. What is your preferred involvement in associational/denominational life?
14. What do you do for fun and relaxation?
15. What are your requirements/needs regarding compensation from the church for salary, insurance, etc.?
16. What arrangements do you need for retirement, home ownership/equity?

Sample Questions to Ask Prospect At Second Face-to-Face Meeting

1. What do you expect of the congregation in relation to your ministry?
2. What visions and potential for church growth/ministry growth do you see for a church such as ours?
3. What is your vision for participation of church members in witness, ministry, teaching, missions, and service to one another?
4. How do you balance your ministerial responsibilities for proclamation with responsibilities related to pastoral care/family care?
5. What is your philosophy of stewardship? Are you a tither?
6. How do you prefer to relate to and work with church committees and the deacon body?
7. How do you relate to others on the church staff? (Ministerial and support)
8. How do you handle conflicts with church members or church staff? Have you developed a plan for handling these conflicts?
9. What do you think might be the greatest challenge in working with church staff and lay leaders of any church, not just this one? What do expect would bring the greatest joy?
10. What do you think might be the greatest challenge in dealing with church members in general? What would you expect to bring the greatest joy?
11. What are your goals for continued training and education related to your ministry?
12. How can our church best support you should you be called to this church?
13. What do you believe would be the most important thing for your ministry to accomplish during the first year?

14. Which more closely describes the view you have of your future:
 - a. to become steadily more educated, experienced, and qualified for my ministry in the years to come
 - b. (Being reasonably well-educated, experienced and qualified already) to focus on using the talents, abilities and wisdom I have gained and apply them to the opportunities provided by this ministry. (Elaborate if you wish)

15. Why are you a Baptist? What beliefs and traditions of the Baptist church do you consider the most important?

16. In looking over the original church survey, the pastor profile which we have developed, the job description, the proposed church/minister covenant and compensation package, what do you like, what concerns you, and what would need to be changed in order for you to accept a call to our church should such a call be presented to you?

APPENDIX SIX B

Questions Directed to the Candidate's Wife

1. Please share your conversion experience.
2. Please tell us a resonant experience in which you sensed God is working.
3. What do you think is your most important responsibility as a pastor's wife?
4. Is there anything that you think is not part of your role that others may assume is?
5. What boundaries have you established in order to protect your marriage and family life?
6. How do you apply Galatians 6:2 ("Carry each other's burdens") when facing difficulties or frustrations in ministry?
7. Where do you and your husband find your own pastoral care?
8. How do you deal with criticism of you or your husband?
9. What is the greatest blessing and what is the greatest burden of being a pastor's wife?
10. Which are your Spiritual Gifts and how have you used them?
11. Are there any helpful resources that you use and would recommend?
12. How can the congregation best support you practically and in prayer?

APPENDIX SEVEN

Credit and Legal Information Release

I hereby authorize _____ Baptist Church to check my credit and legal history with all appropriate sources. Such information may be obtained for the years of _____ to the present.

Minister's Name _____

(Other names minister has used, if appropriate: maiden name, prior married name, etc.)

Minister's Driver's license Number _____

Minister's Social Security Number ____ - ____ - _____

Minister's Signature _____

Date: _____

Minister's Spouse's Name _____

(Other names spouse has used, if appropriate: maiden name, prior married name, etc.)

Spouse's Driver's license Number _____

Spouse's Social Security Number ____ - ____ - _____

Spouse's Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX EIGHT

COVENANT (For Senior Minister)

The _____ Church of _____ (the "Church") and _____ (the "Minister") do hereby acknowledge that we have been led to each other by the Holy Spirit to join in a ministry intended to be mutually profitable to the spiritual interest of the Church and fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord. In view of our shared sense of call to this ministry, the Church earnestly and solemnly calls the Minister to undertake the office of _____ on behalf of this Congregation, beginning _____, and in order to further the ministry which we are to share, we jointly agree to include as part of this Covenant the following Statement of Covenantal Relationship.

PRINCIPLES

- A. Scripture affirms that the relationship we have entered into jointly is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:2-14.
- B. Scripture affirms that those who labor for the Gospel of our Lord deserve support. Luke 10:4-7, 1 Corinthians 9:14, 1 Timothy 5:17.
- C. Scripture affirms that all relationships will be undertaken in love and are to be governed by justice and fairness. Exodus 19:6 through Exodus 20.
- D. The professional called as Minister is recognized as a skilled person with high responsibility for which long years of preparation and training have been required.
- E. The Minister is expected to continue to develop skills and knowledge in the tradition of the long years of preparation and training already experienced and, to that end, such time as is necessary and reasonable shall be made available for the pursuit.
- F. The compensation to be paid and the benefits to be afforded shall appear reasonable, just and fair to the leaders of the congregation, to a majority of the members of the congregation, to the Minister involved, to the Minister's spouse, and to any connectional division of the church that may have oversight of the selection.
- G. For the peace, unity and effectiveness of the church, general acceptance of each of these principles is essential so that the Minister and members of the congregation may be able to work together to carry out the mission of the church.

I. COVENANTS CONCERNING EXPECTATIONS

A. Responsibilities.

1. The Minister shall devote his/her full-time efforts to the Ministry of the Word among us in meeting this responsibility. The responsibilities of the Ministry of the Word shall include the Sunday morning service, outreach and evangelism, visitation of the sick, elderly and shut-ins, visitation of the members of the church, leadership in the organization/committee structure of the church, staff leadership, ministry to and continuing communication with the governing bodies of the church, and participation in the activities and functions of the church.
2. The Congregation covenants to be supportive and to participate in each of the areas in which the Minister shall have responsibility or oversight. It is the intent of the Agreement that the Minister not work alone in meeting the mission of this Church, but that it be a shared relationship as stated in the Principles above.

3. The Minister and the Congregation shall shortly after the call establish short and long-term goals for the Minister and this Church. The goals adopted shall be reduced to writing and signed and reviewed annually to assess the performance of both the church and its members on the one hand and the Minister on the other. A restatement of goals, including old and new, in writing and signed, shall be made after the annual review.

B. Authority and Limitations on Authority. The Minister shall have general and overall responsibility and authority (working to build consensus with the Congregation and/or various committees from time to time) over the professional ministerial staff (including hiring and firing decisions, setting compensation, etc.), worship services, mid-week meetings, lay leader training, outreach, visitation of sick and shut-ins, and such other matters as are mutually discussed and agreed on. The Minister shall have the authority to delegate any of these responsibilities as he/she deems appropriate from time to time. A more detailed description of the authority and responsibility of the Minister shall be set out on Exhibit A attached to this document.

C. Minister's Advocacy Committee. There shall be a standing committee whose responsibility shall be to support and counsel, and provide spiritual support for, the Minister in all matters. It shall be composed of at least five members of the congregation, one of whom shall be the immediate past or present chairman of the deacon or elder body; the others shall be appointed by the Minister to a one year term (but there shall be no limitation to the number of terms a member may serve). No appointed member shall serve simultaneously on this committee and any other committee which evaluates the Minister or participates in compensation, hiring and firing decisions.

It shall meet with the Minister regularly, at least once a quarter. In any matters involving conflict between the Minister and congregation, or any member thereof, the committee will maintain a supportive position as an advocate for the Minister (without becoming adversarial to the congregation).

D. Open Communications. The Church and Minister pledge to create and maintain a relationship built on open communications. Expectations shall be clearly communicated, along with progress towards meeting such expectations.

E. Annual Review. There shall be an annual assessment by the Church Council (or other committee appropriate to the church and denomination) of the expectations, communications, performances, and/or the setting of goals by both the Church and the Minister. The annual review shall be discussed among the Personnel Committee and the Minister's Advocacy Committee; then it shall be discussed among the Chair of the Personnel Committee, Chair of the Minister's Advocacy Committee, and the Minister. At the conclusion of each annual assessment, a new statement of goals and expectations shall be prepared in writing and signed and shall be provided to the Minister and the Congregation.

II. COVENANTS CONCERNING FINANCIAL MATTERS

A. Pastoral Call Agreement. So that the Minister may be free to devote full-time (part-time) to the ministry of the Word among the Congregation, the Church hereby promises and obligates itself to pay the Minister the following (those agreed upon are to be filled in):

Salary \$ _____
Use of Church Owned Residence (value) _____
Housing Allowance \$ _____
Utilities Allowance \$ _____
Automobile Allowance \$ _____
Library/Computer Allowance \$ _____

Pension/Retirement Contribution \$ _____
Self Employment Tax \$ _____
Expense Allowance \$ _____
Life Insurance \$ _____
Medical Insurance \$ _____
Disability Insurance \$ _____
Study Leave Allowance \$ _____
Other (Specify) _____ \$ _____

All salary and benefits shall be continued in full while the Minister is entitled (and encouraged) to take, annually:

Vacation leave of _____ days
Study Leave of _____ days
Other Leave (specify) _____ of _____ days

In addition, the Church agrees to pay in advance a one-time non-accountable moving and relocation expense of \$ _____.

B. Annual Review. The financial matters related to the Pastoral Call shall be reviewed at least annually and shall be adjusted where necessary. Any adjustments agreed upon shall be in writing and signed by the parties.

C. Sabbatical. The Minister shall be afforded at the completion of each six year's service under the Covenant _____ months for a Sabbatical, during which the Minister shall continue to receive full compensation, including salary and all benefits, but shall not be expected to perform the responsibilities outlined above.

III. COVENANTS CONCERNING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A. Grievance Procedures. Any grievances concerning the Minister and Congregation shall be brought to the Minister's Advocacy Committee. After hearing the complaint and giving all sides ample time and opportunity to present their side of the issue, the Committee shall propose a solution. If both sides do not accept the proposed solution, the matter shall be submitted to a Christian mediation group, such as Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc.

B. Termination of Employment.

1. Subjective Disenchantment. If after a reasonable period of time, it becomes evident that a majority of the active members of the Congregation are becoming disenchanting with the Minister's performance (generally manifested in terms of lack of effective leadership, failure to "reach" people spiritually, failure to attract followers in defining or reaching goals, and similar complaints), the Church Council shall be advised of the specific complaints and the identity of the people making them. The Church Council shall facilitate communication among the Minister, the Congregation, and the disenchanting, and specific accusations shall be presented to the Minister with the identity of the accuser.

If the Church Council believes that a majority of the congregation, or a minority substantial enough to affect the continued viability of the church, has concluded that a change in ministerial leadership is necessary, the Minister will be given a period of one year to seek other employment and resign. During that year, the Minister may continue to perform all duties under the Call and

all salary and benefits shall continue at the rate in effect at the commencement of the one year period, except that liberal leave (with full pay) shall be allowed the Minister for the purpose of securing future employment and/or career counseling. The Call of the Minister shall be terminated at the end of the one year period unless there is mutual agreement to continue the Minister's services on some basis, such as administrative leave with full or partial pay.

2. Accusations of Illegal or Immoral Activity. If members of the Congregation accuse the Minister of illegal or immoral activity, such accusations shall first be brought to the Minister's Advocacy Committee, which shall conduct a confidential investigation, including informing the Minister of the nature of the accusations and the names of the accusers. If the Minister's Advocacy Committee feels that the accusations raise questions that are not satisfactorily answered, it may recommend to the Church Council any of the following actions, either singularly or in sequence, depending on the circumstances: continued employment on probation, administrative leave with full or partial pay, or administrative leave without pay. If, after the investigation, the Church Council believes that a majority of the congregation has concluded that a change in ministerial leadership is necessary, the Church Council shall recommend to the Congregation that the Call of the Minister shall be terminated at the end of a nine month period unless there is mutual agreement to continue the Minister's services on some basis, and the Minister's salary and benefits shall continue for nine months at the rate in effect at the commencement of the nine month period. If the Church Council makes a specific finding that there is convincing proof that the accusations are true, the nine months shall be reduced to six.
3. Fairness and Due Process. In making decisions under this section B, the Committee shall act in the best interests of both the Church and the Minister, and shall be guided by the principles of fairness, redemption and mercy. Unless waived by the Minister, no adverse action concerning the Minister shall be taken without a hearing before the main governing council or committee of the Church at which the Minister may face his or her accusers, present evidence in defense or mitigation, and be represented by the person of his or her choice.
4. Action by the Congregation. A majority vote at a called business meeting of the Congregation, if requested by the Minister, may modify or reverse the decision of the Church Council regarding termination, and may increase (but not decrease) the financial provisions of this section B.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF each of the parties accepts this Statement of Covenantal Relationship as evidenced by their signatures, this _____ day of _____, 20____, and as to the Church, in accordance with an authorization of the governing body over such decisions.

CHURCH
By: _____

MINISTER
By: _____

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Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc.
2641 Cromwell Road
Richmond, Virginia 23235
(804) 320-6463, Fax (804) 320-9178
E-Mail: MTMFound@aol.com
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