

A Guide to the
**PASTOR
SEARCH
PROCESS**



TMB Tennessee Baptist
MISSION BOARD

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INTRODUCTION

Why another book on the Pastor Search Committee process? The answer is not because good resources are not available. In fact, research demonstrates the opposite. LifeWay Christian Resources, in cooperation with Church-Minister Relations State Directors, has produced an excellent piece that is comprehensive in scope. Additionally, several good pieces have been written by Directors of Missions across the Southern Baptist Convention. Many Baptist State Conventions have published their own search books. This growing corpus of resources suggests that congregations and leaders of congregations are beginning to recognize the critical nature of the pastor search process.

A Guide To The Pastor Search Process is user-friendly, and specifically prepared for Tennessee Baptist churches of Tennessee. It is available to Tennessee Baptist churches without charge, understanding that this ministry is possible because of their contributions through the Cooperative Program and the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions. This resource provides a specific process and multiple documents that relate to the work of Pastor/Staff Search Committees. Feel free to make adjustments to the process. Use what is helpful and disregard what does not feel right for your situation.

This resource is a guide to a process that recognizes the priority of prayer and the indispensable leadership of the Holy Spirit. The guide operates with the assumption that ministers are divinely called to the ministry. Further, the guide assumes that ministers are called to serve in specific congregations. It further presupposes that it is the Holy Spirit, working in the hearts of the minister and committee members, who facilitates that call.

Acknowledgement is given to Dr. Aubrey Hay, Dr. Bill Northcott, Dr. Gary Rickman and Rev. Richard Skidmore for their respective contributions to *A Guide to the Pastor Search Process*.

THE INTERIM PERIOD

Your pastor has just announced his resignation. Feelings in the congregation run the gamut of emotions. Some saw it coming. Some are surprised. Some feel grief. Others feel jubilation. If the pastor has left under duress, some may blame others for his exodus.

Regardless of the emotions, life goes on—the church must face the future. There are a couple of things that need to happen, and the sooner the better.

First, the church should consider the question of who will step up to lead the congregation. Nature abhors a vacuum. The exodus of the pastor may result in a scramble among those in the church who want to “take over the reigns.” If the pastor has left in response to growing conflict, the problem is exacerbated. Which “side” will fill the vacuum? The potential for loss is great. It is to be hoped that there are mature lay leaders in the congregation who will recognize the critical need for a balanced decision leading to interim leadership.

Second, the church should elect a Pastor Search Committee. Care should be taken that the steps followed in this process are in compliance with the church’s Constitution and Bylaws. There is a tremendous amount of preparation that goes into getting the Search Committee ready to do its work. More details will be written later about the preparation of the committee.

The Transitional Interim Pastor

More and more, congregations without pastors are recognizing the strategic role of what has been variously referred to as “Intentional Interim,” “Transitional Interim Pastor,” and/or “Temporary Shepherd.” Regardless of the nomenclature, the particular role of this person is to provide positive and helpful leadership that will bring stability, continuity, and consistency to the congregation during the interim period.

Unique Opportunities -- The Transitional Interim Pastor (**TIP**) is not just an “interim preacher.” Through training, skills, experience and giftedness, he is especially prepared to lead the congregation through that period between the departure of one pastor and the arrival of the new pastor. The ministry of the TIP includes the work that is usually associated with a regular pastor. However, by virtue of the distinct character of the interim period, the TIP will have the opportunity to help the congregation in specific ways, which include:

Closure, which may mean:

- Helping the congregation work through the grief it is experiencing over the loss of its previous pastor
- Facilitating the renewal of trust in the office of pastor (in congregations where the pastor has broken trust)
- Resolution of unfinished business that may be crippling the church

- Leading the congregation to rediscover and reaffirm its unique calling and mission
- Assisting the congregation in its understanding of call and ministry, which will enhance the congregation's effectiveness in partnering with its new pastor
- Renewed understanding and appreciation for fellowship and reconciliation
- A stronger, more focused Pastor Search Committee
- Assurance that the ministries of the church will continue with quality and without interruption (worship, ministering to the sick and shut-ins, education ministry, administration of the ordinances, weddings, funerals, meetings, etc.)
- Preparing the church for a positive experience with the next pastor

Transitional Interim Pastor Parameters¹ – A clear understanding of the duties of the TIP and how he and the church will relate with each other should be established at the outset. The Transitional Pastor will:

- Be accountable to the church through the deacon body (or some designate group, authorized by the congregation)
- Not be a candidate to become pastor of the congregation
- Serve until either the church calls a new pastor or the congregation deems his services are no longer needed
- Assist the Pastor Search Committee upon its request, which may include training and consultation; however, he must neither interfere with nor unduly influence the work of the Committee
- Fulfill all the pastoral and administrative responsibilities agreed upon in the conditions of his call to serve as Transitional Interim Pastor

Transitional Interim Pastor Training (TIP) - Several organizations provide specific training for TIP pastors, including the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board (TBMB). The TBMB offers training that covers a variety of subjects for those who feel called to this ministry. Upon completion of the specialized training, each individual receives a certificate of completion. If a church is considering some one to fill this role, they should ask if the candidate has had any Transitional Interim Pastor training and seek references for verification.

The interim period, judged erroneously by some as a “wilderness time,” can, with good leadership, be a “garden” of opportunity and growth.

The responsibility of securing someone for the interim period may be assigned to the Pastor Search Committee or to an ad hoc committee selected specifically for that purpose.²

¹ See Appendix 1 for a sample copy of a Transitional Interim Pastor and Congregation Ministry Covenant.

² For more information about the Transitional Interim Pastor, contact Church-Minister Relations, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2010.

THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Importance of the Committee

In many congregations, there is a movement away from committees and toward teams. The purpose of this book is not to defend one or the other. The critical issue is that the church recognizes the importance of being organized to maximize effectiveness in doing Kingdom work. Whether committee or team, the objective is to serve the mission and purpose of the church. The Pastor Search Committee is a strategic link in moving the congregation forward. The congregation at large has entrusted the Search Committee to search for and identify the individual who will be the next pastor/leader of the church. The process for selecting a pastor/minister is critical for at least two reasons: (1) The shape and health of the congregation, for years to come, hinges on the Committee finding the right person—God’s man—to serve as pastor; and (2) A church may be sued as a result of the misconduct of a pastor if it can be established that the Committee was negligent in their selection process. Recognizing the importance of their work, the Committee will endeavor to proceed with diligence, determination and commitment, resisting all temptations to take short cuts.

Selection of the Committee

The selection of the Pastor Search Committee should follow the guidelines set forth in the church’s Constitution and Bylaws. In fact, once the Search Committee has been elected, the members would be wise to familiarize themselves with this document so all decisions and actions by the Committee comply with the Bylaws. If such a document does not exist, the church will need to decide how the Committee is to be selected. This decision should be informed by the church’s history and how things have been done in the past. The congregation should have the final say in how the committee members are to be selected.

Invariably the question is raised about how many should serve on a committee. As stated above, the Constitution and Bylaws may specify the number.³ Experience has shown that the larger the Committee the more potential for problems. Conversely, too few on a committee may mean the church is not well represented. The ideal Search Committee should probably be composed of from five to ten people, depending on the size of the congregation.

A word of caution is in order at this point. It is hoped that the persons selected to serve on the Committee will be characterized by emotional and spiritual maturity. Nothing impedes the work of a committee more than the presence of a member who has a personal agenda. The Committee should be, as far as possible, a microcosm of the congregation. All members in the church need to feel they have someone on the Committee who will represent their interests. Experience with committees leads to the following cautions:

- A staff member or the spouse of a staff member should not be elected to the Committee
- Husbands and wives should not be elected to serve together on the Committee and caution should even be taken in placing more than one immediate family member on the Pastor Search Committee

3 A Transitional Interim Pastor met with a committee a few years ago that was composed of eighteen people. When asked why there were so many, the answer was that the Constitution and Bylaws required it. It was gently suggested that one of the first things they needed to do was change the Constitution and Bylaws!

- A known trouble maker should not be elected to the Committee
- Someone who is unfaithful to the church should not be elected to the Committee
- Someone who has never been satisfied with any of the previous pastors should not be elected to the Committee

Essentially, those elected to serve on the Committee should have a proven track record of faithfulness to the church. They should be spiritually mature and able to work cooperatively with others. It is very important that the members of the committee be representative of the entire congregation. Therefore, the Committee should be balanced in gender and age.

The Search Committee will incur expenses fulfilling their assignment. Expenses may include mileage, meals, long distance telephone calls, airfare, lodging, etc. The members of the Search Committee should not be expected to pay for these expenses out of pocket. The Finance Committee should review the church budget and find monies that can be used to cover the Committee's expenses. The Finance Committee should recommend a generous amount to the church for its approval. In some cases, advance monies may be given to the Committee. The Search Committee will be expected to provide the appropriate officer of the church detailed records and receipts of expenses for reimbursement. If, however, such records compromise the confidentiality of the Committee's work, it may be necessary for them to be held by the Committee until the conclusion of their work.

Organization of the Committee

Most Search Committees elect a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Recorder. Two other important responsibilities should be considered: Prayer Coordinator and Social Coordinator. Each officer is briefly described in what follows:

- **Chairperson** – The chairperson is responsible for presiding at meetings and giving leadership to the Committee. She/He will call the meetings, prepare the agendas, preside over the meetings, and facilitate the process. The chairperson is not expected to do all the work. He/She should be prepared to delegate responsibilities among the members. Usually the chairperson will be the liaison between the Committee and the congregation. This requires good communication skills. In exceptional cases, the chairperson may wish to call on one of the other members who is more gifted in communication to speak before the church.
- **Vice Chairperson** – The vice chairperson works closely with the chairperson and acts for the Committee in the absence of the chairperson. Early in the process, the chairperson and vice chairperson should decide what the vice chairperson can do to facilitate the search.
- **Recorder** – The recorder will keep good notes of all the meetings. The notes should be complete and neatly prepared so that if/when questions are raised about previous discussion or decisions, it will be relatively easy to find answers in the minutes of the meetings. The recorder will also be responsible for all correspondence that goes out from the committee, whether to the church or the candidate/s being considered.
- **Prayer Coordinator** – The prayer coordinator should be a person who is known by the congregation as one who takes seriously the discipline of prayer. This person will act intentionally to keep prayer before the church and the Committee. More will be written later about ideas for involving the congregation in prayer.

- **Social Coordinator** – The work of this person may not appear as spiritual or as important as other responsibilities, but when this person does his or her work well, things will flow much more smoothly. The chairperson will communicate with the church office to reserve a room for meetings and any other physical or calendar concerns. The social coordinator’s work will be more evident toward the end of the process, at which time plans are being made for the candidate to come to the church field for visit/s. The social coordinator will be responsible for reserving a hotel room for the prospective pastor, setting up meetings with groups in the congregation and making contacts that facilitate the introduction of the prospective pastor and his family. If the church provides a parsonage, the Social Coordinator will work closely with the Property and Space Committee to assure that the parsonage is in readiness for the new pastor’s arrival. If the pastor is purchasing a home, the Social Coordinator will serve as a liaison between the new pastor and the church to provide services necessary for the relocation. The Social Coordinator will work with the ladies of the church to schedule meals to be brought in for the new pastor and family for the first two weeks.

Commissioning the Committee

The church may want to consider a commissioning service⁴ for the Pastor Search Committee. Such a service accomplishes a couple of things. For one, the importance of the responsibility assigned to the Committee is underscored by a commissioning service. A commissioning service also provides a worship context in which a covenant is made between both the Committee and the congregation. A commissioning service can be a very meaningful act of dedication. The congregation covenants to pray for the Committee. The Committee covenants to represent the congregation by being faithful, under God, to find His man for pastor of the church.

Preparation of the Committee

Every committee in a church needs training. The Pastor Search Committee is no exception. In all likelihood, there will be members on the Search Committee who have never served in that role before. The anxiety level will be high. “What are we supposed to do?” “Is there someone who can help us?” Yes, there is help. Before we go there, however, think about two areas that deserve preparation.

- **Preparation of the heart** – Spiritual preparation is basic to the work assigned to the Search Committee. Woe to the person or persons who neglect prayer! The importance of individual, committee and corporate prayer cannot be over emphasized. The process must be saturated with prayer. The Prayer Coordinator is responsible for making prayer a priority with the Search Committee. Quality time should be devoted at the beginning of each meeting for prayer. The Committee members should covenant to pray regularly—certainly daily—for one another and for God’s will to be done. In addition, the Prayer Coordinator should utilize the worship services to challenge the congregation to pray for the Committee and the process. Equally important is the Committee’s openness to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Where did the idea come from that God wants to conceal His will for His church and for His children? God wants very much to disclose His will to those who seek it. Therefore, the Committee must be spiritually prepared to discern the will of God.

4 See Appendix 2 for sample of a commissioning service.

- **Preparation of the head** – The “nitty-gritty” work on the front end of the process involves thorough exploration into the background of candidates who make the short list. Long before the Committee goes to meet or hear a candidate, time and effort are spent investigating the candidate’s references. More will be written about checking the candidate’s references later. For now, suffice it to say that this part of the process is absolutely critical, and a Committee must take this seriously or pay for it later! Only when the Committee has made the necessary preparations above, is it ready to go listen to a candidate.

Slow Down--Don’t Rush

The inevitable tendency is for the Committee to accelerate its work. Pressure may come from within the Committee and/or from the congregation. Observation suggests that most congregations experience some level of anxiety when the church does not have a pastor. The consequence is that church members will put the squeeze on committee members. “What’s taking you so long?” “I know someone who would make us a great pastor.” “We’ve got to get a pastor or our attendance and giving will nosedive.” These are but a few examples of what committee members may hear. Members of the Committee must resist that kind of pressure. To succumb to it might very well result in getting out in front of God and thereby calling the wrong man. The Committee must be sensitive to the people who voice their concerns. However, in a kind and firm way, the members of the committee must remind their fellow church members that they are committed to finding God’s man through the exercise of prayer and in dependence on the Holy Spirit’s leadership.

The situation described above is another good reason for calling a Transitional Interim Pastor. There are many examples of churches that prospered during the interim period because of the capable leadership of a skilled TIP. When the congregation has confidence in its transitional leadership, it is less likely to be anxious. Consequently, there will be a healthier environment in the church and this will translate into greater freedom for the Search Committee.

Training the Committee

As suggested earlier, at least some of the members of the Search Committee will be serving in this role for the first time. There will be a lot of questions. Where do they go for answers? Fortunately, there is a lot of help for search committees. Many Directors of Missions are capable of providing training for the committees in their association. There are several printed resources available.⁵ Additionally, most state conventions provide training for Pastor Search Committees.⁶

The context for training is important. Probably the most popular context is one meeting between the Committee and their choice of trainer, which takes about two hours. Some committees feel quite competent to handle this by themselves.

A growing number of committees are realizing that a more adequate context for training is done in the setting of a retreat. The Committee will either set its own agenda for the retreat or will invite a qualified person to come in and train them. Experience suggests that it is better to have someone from outside come in to facilitate the training. The chairman of the Committee can negotiate with the trainer relative to place, time, content⁷ and honorarium. The retreat should be planned away from the church building. This will allow for uninterrupted time in an unrushed setting. Many state conventions have camps and/or conference centers that are ideal for this type of retreat.⁸

Communication

- Within the Committee – Ample time should be taken early in the process to build a bond of trust among the members of the Committee. Some committees have solidified relationships of trust through the development of a Pastor Search Committee Members' Covenant. A Friday—Saturday retreat would contribute significantly, not just for training only, but also for building trust. There must be a climate in the Committee that encourages honest and forthright communication among all the members of the Committee. The chairman can do a lot to facilitate dialog among the members simply by inviting them to express their opinions and by stating and restating the value of everyone's thoughts, ideas and opinions. It is only in a non-threatening atmosphere that a Committee can expect to maximize the Holy Spirit's leadership.
- To the Congregation – As often as not, committees are inclined to foster the perception that they are acting in secret. This is not healthy and should be intentionally countered. Appreciating the fact that certain information should remain within the Committee, there is, nevertheless, a strong rationale for sharing pertinent information regularly with the congregation. The value of doing this is that it keeps church members engaged and helps them to know that the Search Committee feels a responsibility to the congregation. A periodic report on Sunday morning is a courtesy to the church. The report may include announcements as simple as:

5 Pastor Search Committee Handbook, LifeWay Press, 2000 (May be obtained at LifeWay Christian Resources); Pastor & Staff Search Committee Guide, Don Mathis, Convention Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1998; So You're Looking for a New Pastor, Elizabeth Achtemeier, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1991.

6 Contact Dr. Steve Holt, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, 1.800.558.2090, extension 2010.

7 See Appendix 3 for sample retreat program.

8 Carson Springs, Tennessee Baptist Conference Center, East Tennessee, 1.423.623.2764; Linden Valley, Tennessee Baptist Conference Center, Middle Tennessee, 1.931.589.2622.

1. We have met and elected officers
2. We have received a good number of resumes to date
3. We are planning a retreat and inviting someone from outside to lead us in a period of training
4. We have met for training with Dr. Steve Holt of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board
5. Explain the search process the Committee has adopted
6. So far, we have prayed over all the resumes we have and have come up with a short list of five
7. We are currently checking references of those persons who have made our short list

These are just samples of what a report could look like. The primary thing is to keep the membership informed. The congregation will appreciate timely reports and will be encouraged to know that progress is being made. Reporting time is an excellent time to reiterate the importance of congregational prayer for the Search Committee and the process.

Two Keys

- **Confidentiality** – The members of the Committee must keep confidential any and all personal information about the candidates they review. The Committee is handling lives that are precious and reputations that must be carefully guarded. Members of the congregation will ask Committee members specific questions. It is ethically irresponsible for committee members to share names of candidates and other information that could be detrimental to a prospective pastor. Confidentiality is a matter that is addressed in the Search Committee Members' Covenant.
- **Unanimity** – The suggestion of unanimity does not mean there should be no disagreement among the committee members during the process. Again, it is to be emphasized that members of the Committee should feel the freedom to express contrary views. There may be a point in the process when one member says, "I have reservations about this person." In that case, the process invites and encourages honest discussion regarding feelings and opinions. Enough time should be taken to allow either a meeting of the minds on the candidate being considered or a change of course. The importance of unanimity comes toward the end of the process when the Committee is ready to recommend a candidate to the church. At that point, you would expect there to be excitement and enthusiasm among the entire Committee, so much so that it is contagious throughout the congregation. Unanimity among the committee members at the point of recommendation is simply a result of fervently praying, and diligently seeking and following God's will.

A word of caution may be in order. In a very few instances, one contrary Search Committee member has tried to high-jack the process by voting in opposition to a candidate whom the other members of the team categorically support. Unless a reasonable case can be built for this member's opposition, the team should move ahead and the member should either support the decision or resign from the Committee. The Search Committee, as a whole, must be cautious not to allow the will of God to be thwarted by an illogical member of the Search Committee.

INITIATING THE PROCESS

The following process is presented with the understanding that there is nothing about it that is infallible. This process is one among others, but it is Baptist-friendly and has been used effectively in many Baptist churches—large and small. It is intended to be flexible. As you consider the process, please be encouraged to adjust and tweak it so that it feels comfortable for your situation. Some of what is presented here will be significantly impacted by geographical considerations and the availability of financial resources. For example, many churches in Tennessee will not have the financial resources to allow the Search Committee to fly to Texas to hear a candidate. In that case, other options will need to be considered. Some of the steps may need to be shortened into a more compact process. Adjustments to this process should be made as judged necessary.

Surveying the Congregation

A wise Search Committee will welcome input from the congregation. Already, the point has been made about keeping the congregation informed and engaged. Committees can profit from a Congregational Pastor Search Survey⁹ to be used by every member of the church. Probably the most effective way of dispersing the survey is through the Sunday School or in the worship service. Announcements from the pulpit and in the newsletter should be made well in advance so that members know a survey will be used, when, and how the survey will be dispersed, how long the members have to complete it, and how the survey will be returned. In larger churches, it may be propitious to use the survey with the leadership of the church. It is important for the Committee to take seriously the data in the survey. However, it is probably best not to publish the data. Publishing the results could have the effect of establishing a profile in concrete, so that the Committee becomes locked in a too specific profile.

Developing Profiles

The Search Committee needs to think strategically about the next person who will serve as pastor. Using the data from the congregational/leadership survey is helpful in developing a profile for the next pastor. However, that data alone is incomplete. The Committee should spend significant time thinking together about the qualities, skills and strengths needed by the next pastor in order to be an effective leader with that congregation. That determination can only be made if the Committee knows the congregation and community. Such questions as “Where does our congregation want to go in the next three to five years?” “What are the specific gifts and skills¹⁰ our next pastor should possess?” “What are the roadblocks that the next pastor will need to overcome?” “Do we need someone whose gifts are administration, or pastoral, or preaching, etc.?” These are all matters that need to be considered in the creation of a profile for your next pastor¹¹. The Committee should also develop a church profile.¹² This data will be helpful in sharing information about your church with prospective pastors.

9 See Appendix 5 for a sample Congregational Survey.

10 See Appendix 11a for Gifts/Skill Assessment tool

11 See Appendix 12 for suggestions for a pastor profile

12 See Appendix 13 for a sample church profile.

Sources for Resumes

Pastor Search Committees will energetically seek resumes of prospective pastors. There are several sources from which resumes may be obtained. First, you should contact Church-Minister Relations,¹³ Tennessee Baptist Mission Board (TBMB). Resumes sent from the TBMB office are not to be understood as recommendations. Our commitment is to provide resumes to Search Committees and trust the committees to be led through prayer and by the Holy Spirit to the person who will serve as their pastor. The Church-Minister Relations Specialist will also assist you in obtaining resumes on candidates whose names and addresses can be provided to us. This keeps the Committee from having to make the contact. A good rule of thumb is that if the Search Committee makes contact with a candidate, the Committee has an ethical/professional responsibility to communicate with the candidate when that individual ceases to be a candidate. When our office requests resumes on your behalf, we give you the option of whether you want the name of your church identified to the candidate. The primary advantage of sharing the name of the church with the candidate is that the candidate will be in a position to make a more informed decision about whether he wants to submit his resume.

In addition to the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, resumes may be obtained from the following sources:

1. Southern Baptist Seminaries¹⁴
2. State Conventions¹⁵
3. Members of the congregation may submit resumes
4. Some resumes will come to the committee unsolicited
5. The Congregational Survey may be used by church members to indicate names of persons they would like considered
6. Letters may come to the Committee from persons who are recommending ministers for consideration
7. The Committee may wish to contact respected pastors to request recommendations/resumes
8. The Director of Missions in your association may provide resumes to the Committee or you may place an ad in the associational newsletter
9. Advertisements in the Tennessee state paper, *Baptist & Reflector*¹⁶

13 Please contact the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board Church-Minister Relations @ 1.800.558.2090, extension 2010, for resumes; or you may submit a request for resumes by going online at www.tnbaptist.org, click on “employment” and select “Churches Seeking Staff” to enter the Resume System. A batch of resumes will be sent in reply.

14 See Appendix 6 for a listing of Baptist Seminaries.

15 For a link to other State Conventions, go to www.tnbaptist.org and click on “links” in the menu of choices; then click on “*Baptist State Conventions.*”

16 Contact the *Baptist & Reflector* @ 615.371.2003.

The time for receiving resumes should not be viewed as unproductive time. Much can be done during this period. The Committee will use this time to accomplish tasks listed below:

1. Training of the Pastor Search Committee
2. Administration of the Congregational/Leadership Survey
3. Development of Church and Candidate Profiles

Sorting/Ranking the Resumes

The Pastor Search Committee will need to establish an adequate amount of time for receiving resumes. The Committee should select a date to begin working with the resumes. This does not mean that resumes will not be received after that date. It simply gives the Committee a set time when they will begin working with the resumes they have received.

Depending on the size of the church, the sheer number of resumes can be overwhelming. The question becomes how to reduce the volume of resumes to a number that is manageable. One method is to make copies of every resume for each member of the Search Committee. Using the profile that the Committee has created, the entire Committee will work through the resumes and jettison those that do not line up with the profile. A second method that is vital for the Committee to employ in ranking resumes is to have a good job or position description in place. If the church does not have this, now is a good time to develop one. How can you find something if you do not know what you are searching for? Many resumes will be easily eliminated using these two effective methods to filter those received. Once the resumes have been reduced to a manageable number, each committee member will work independently with those resumes, separating the resumes into three stacks: “YES,” “NO,” and “MAYBE.”. The goal of the Committee at this point is to move the process forward toward a consensus list of viable candidates. This will not be an easy task. Study and prayer will be required. This step should not be rushed. Once this has been completed, the Committee will come back together and share their choices. The five to ten resumes that show up with the most frequency will comprise the short list.

Once the short list has been developed, each person on the short list will be contacted by phone. The phone conversation should include:

1. Introduction to the church
2. Invitation to the individual to become a candidate in the search process
3. Response to the individual’s initial questions
4. Permission to check references¹⁷
5. Permission to secure a company to conduct a full background check¹⁸
 - a. Credit report
 - b. Criminal report

¹⁷ See Appendix 7. An alternative approach might be to wait about checking references until after you have reviewed all the candidate’s sermons. You could then rank the resumes in order of your number 1 candidate, number 2, etc., and then check references beginning with your number 1 candidate. The same could apply also to the full background check.

¹⁸ The Tennessee Baptist Mission Board has negotiated with the **Clear Star Background Checks**, to provide cooperating Baptist churches and associations access at a group rate. Go to Sales@ClearStar.net or call 1-888-982-4648.

6. Request a website link or CD of sermons for review
7. Notification of follow-up letter,¹⁹ including forms²⁰ for signature granting permission to proceed with the comprehensive background investigation.

If the individual agrees to become a candidate, he will then receive the follow-up letter (see # 7 above).

Sufficient time should be allowed for the individuals on the short list to be contacted, for the follow-up letters to be sent, the CD or weblink information received and permission forms returned.

Reviewing the sermons on CD or via weblink should be done with a plan. It will be helpful to the committee members to use some kind of guide for viewing and evaluating the sermons.²¹ At this point, you are not eliminating the candidates on your short list. Rather, listening to sermons is one aspect in the process of helping the Committee decide who will be its number one candidate. The sermons should be listened to at a time when the entire Committee can be present.

There are two schools of thought about how best to accomplish this task. On the one hand, there are those who believe the ideal arrangement is to schedule sufficient time to review the sermons in one sitting. Assuming you will be reviewing a sermon from each of five candidates, you can figure on about six hours. The rationale for reviewing the sermons in one sitting is that you will be more likely to make better and fairer comparisons. However, the other school of thought is that the sermons should be reviewed in at least two sittings. The rationale for this is that by the time you review two or three sermons, you become mentally tired and, therefore, those reviewed last do not receive a fair hearing. Another possibility is to review two sermons in one sitting and decide which sermon is the stronger of the two. Come back as soon as possible thereafter and review two others and decide which of those two is stronger. Assuming you started with five, you now have one that you have not reviewed and two that you have judged stronger than two others. Take those three, review them and decide how you would rate them in terms of their strength. So, you have reduced the resumes to a short list of people who have been contacted, and you have received, reviewed and made decisions about the sermons. You are ready to move to the next step.

You are still working with the short list. Based on two considerations—the resumes and the sermon evaluations, the members are ready, **independently**, to rank the candidates. Each member should order and rank the short list according to whom he/she judges to be the best fit for the church's next pastor so that the first choice is number five, the second is number four, and right on down the line. When the committee members come back together to compare their work, the next step will be to come up with a consensus short list that will be used by the committee to move forward in the process. The Chairman of the Committee may go around the table and let the members of the Committee identify their number 1 choice and assign it a number value, say 5 if your goal is to arrive at a short list of five. After each member has identified her/his number 1 choice, go to number 2 and assign it a value, in this case 4. Continue that process until every resume has been assigned a value. Add the numbers and the resume with the highest number becomes your number 1 candidate; the one who receives the second highest number becomes your number 2 candidate, etc. Once you have identified your number one candidate, it is suggested that the Committee deal with that person exclusively.

It may be that you will decide upon another process for determining your short list. Whatever method you use, the committee will be wise to consider one person at a time.²²

19 See Appendix 8.

20 Check References Form and Release Form for Background Check

21 See Appendix 9.

22 An added step in the process could postpone the sorting and ranking of candidates until after the Committee has visited the most promising candidates' churches to worship and observe. Ultimately, the Committee will identify one person who becomes the focus of the search process.

INVESTIGATING THE CANDIDATE

Serving effectively on a Pastor Search Committee is hard work. A tremendous amount of time and effort is expended investigating the background of the candidate. This can be time-consuming and tedious work. However, to shortcut the process at this point is courting disaster. Some committees have been known to jump in their automobiles when they hear of a promising candidate and drive over to the church to hear him preach. The prowess of the pulpit has often been the peril of the pulpit committee. Based on the “preacher’s” performance in the pulpit, the Committee moves forward to discover, only after the preacher has been on the field for six months, that he doesn’t pay his bills, or he doesn’t really care about people, or he is a dictator, or maybe he just does not fit the congregation. Such sloppy work among search committees is an affront to God and a betrayal of the congregation who has entrusted the Committee to find God’s man. The sad thing about all this is that in most cases this scenario could have been avoided if the Committee had been careful to look into the background of the candidate. The matter of checking references will be discussed shortly. Before we get to that, however, let’s identify some key questions.

Basic Questions

- There are at least three areas in the background of any candidate that should be carefully explored by the Search Committee and which must remain in the forefront when references are consulted:
- The Ministry Question – This relates to the candidate’s track record. Of course, if the candidate is a young minister, there will not be much history of ministry for the Committee to look at. However, as far as possible, the Committee should raise questions about the candidate’s ministry experience. Does he possess the ministry skills, experience and strengths that the next pastor should have to be effective (based on the profile that the Committee created)?
- The Moral Question – This is a question that should not have to be asked. In an ideal world, all ministers would be godly, honest, decent, faithful and committed. The sad but real fact is that we do not live in an ideal world. In the real world, ministers are sometimes corrupt and immoral. Ministers have skeletons in their closets. It is the Search Committee’s responsibility, as far as possible, to look in the candidate’s closets. This is just another way of saying that the Committee must thoroughly investigate the candidate’s past in order to avoid the pitfall of calling a man who is not a man of God.
- The Mix Question – We all know that oil and water do not mix, and we should also be sophisticated enough to know that sometimes a pastor and a church do not mix. In other words, sometimes the fit is not comfortable. It is possible for a good pastor and a good church to get together and have a bad experience. In considering a new pastor, the Committee will want to consider the culture of the church. Can a city boy do well in a country church? Can a man who has nothing but big church experience be successful in a small church? Can a Northerner make it in a Southern congregation? The answer to all these questions is yes/no. There is no hard and fast formula to follow when it comes to making a decision of this import. Often, the decision is made as much on intuition as hard facts. The important thing is to realize that the Search Committee is looking for someone who will be a good fit with the people he is being called to lead.

Checking References

Thorough work in checking references can produce positive results and save tremendous travail that follows the calling of the wrong pastor. Typically, most resumes will include references. In the rare cases when references are not included, the Committee will want to secure references from any candidate who makes the short list.

Checking the references is key to understanding the candidate and will produce either positive or negative results, depending on how well the Committee does its job. Granted, even when a Committee has done a thorough and effective work in checking references, there is no absolute guarantee of a healthy relationship between the new pastor and the congregation. However, the likelihood of the relationship succeeding is greatly enhanced by careful attention to detail in this matter.

Since you have the candidates' resumes in hand, it is a good idea to start with the references listed on the resume. Usually there are phone numbers and addresses included with those who are named as references. The Chairperson of the Search Committee will need to delegate among the committee members the task of contacting references. It is important to involve all members of the Search Committee, as far as possible, in this step in the process. It is equally important that the committee members all be on the same page. Therefore, the committee members will need to take as much time as needed to agree upon what questions are important to ask the references.²³ It is a good idea to create a checklist that may be used by the committee members, assuring that common data about the candidates will be collected.

Some Search Committees choose to develop a letter to send to references.²⁴ The references are cordially requested to respond in written form to the questions on the form and return the form in a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Either of these methods can be used with good results. However, the phone conversation may provide opportunities to ask follow up questions or ask for amplification on specific responses. Of course, there can also be follow up on responses that are returned on the form. If more information is needed than what is provided in the written response, a phone call can help fill in the gaps. Another item for consideration in making this decision has to do with the simple fact that many people are reluctant to fill out a form, perhaps because of the time it takes or because they do not want their responses to be in written form.

Regardless of which approach the Committee decides upon, it is advised that the Committee go beyond the references listed on the resumes. Anybody can find three or four people who will give them a good reference. That is exactly why the Committee needs to expand its investigation beyond the references listed on the resume. There are several ways to accomplish that. One, when talking to the references listed on the resume, the committee member can ask the questions, "Can you provide me with the name (and phone number, if possible) of someone else who knows '_____?'" Another way of expanding the investigation is to contact the Director of Missions in the association where the candidate is currently serving. As a general rule, the Committee is discouraged from contacting people in the candidate's current church. However, it is perfectly permissible to contact members in churches where the candidate has served previously. These are usually listed on the resumes under "experience." You may also want to contact the Director of Missions in the associations where the candidate has previously served. Realistically, the Committee should understand that there exists the possibility of getting negative feedback from a reference. After all, it is impossible to please everyone! However, after having contacted multiple references, the Committee should be aware if there are recurring patterns of destructive behavior or unhealthy issues that characterize the candidate's ministry experiences.

²³ See Appendix 10 for a sample form that may be used in consulting with references.

²⁴ See Appendix 11 for a sample cover letter.

CONTACTING THE CANDIDATE

Setting the Meeting

After the hard work of checking the background of the pastoral candidate, the time has come to initiate contact with the candidate. The Chairperson of the Committee will logically be the one to make this contact. The Chairperson needs to be prepared to answer questions that may be raised by the candidate over the phone. To assist in the accurate dissemination of information, a church profile should be prepared and in the hands of the Chairperson.²⁵ Such information will be helpful to the candidate in deciding whether or not to enter the search process. Of course, at this juncture, neither the Committee nor the candidate is making a decision beyond an initial meeting. The Chairperson will express the Committee's interest in the candidate and ask him if he would be willing to set up a meeting with the Committee. The chairperson will respectfully request that the candidate's spouse also attend the meeting. If for any reason the spouse cannot attend this meeting, then there needs to be a scheduled time for the Committee to meet the spouse. This could happen at one of the other meetings that will be held before the Committee makes its final decision. Why? Though the church is not calling the spouse to serve on the staff, the spouse will be either an asset or a liability to the candidate's ministry. The church has every right to expect that the minister's spouse will be committed to Christ and to the church, and the Committee has the responsibility of assessing that. If the candidate is interested in meeting with the Committee, a place and time should be mutually agreed upon by the candidate and the Chairman of the Committee. Often, a nice restaurant will have private rooms and provide the context for a productive meeting. The place should be selected based on convenience and privacy. Of course, the church should cover the expenses of the candidate and his spouse. Additionally, it is a professional courtesy for the church to cover all expenses incurred by the candidate throughout the entirety of the search process.²⁶ This is only fair in view of the fact that the Committee initiated the process and the candidate has chosen to enter the process at their invitation.

A word should be said here about possible geographical restrictions. What was written above assumes that the candidate is within driving distance of the church. There may be instances where the candidate is far enough away that the Committee will need to make other arrangements for a meeting. In fact, the challenge of distance may be such that some of the steps in the process may need to dovetail into one another. The Committee will use their judgment to determine how the process needs to be adjusted.

Meeting the Candidate

The initial meeting is far more than a "hello, how are you" meeting. The meeting provides a comfortable context for exploration and decision, both on the part of the candidate and the Committee. Preachers and committees often fail to go deep enough in raising critical questions that could better determine the future success of the relationship between the pastor²⁷ and the church.²⁸ What happens at this meeting will help determine both for the candidate and the Committee if they should proceed to the next step.

25 See Appendix 12 for sample Church Profile form.

26 This includes meals, hotel, mileage (per IRS allowance)

27 See Appendix 14 for sample questions for ministers.

28 See Appendix 15 for sample questions for committees.

In advance of the meeting, the committee members should have already studied the questions they want to ask the candidate and decided how the questions will be divided among them. The Committee wants to avoid the impression that they are working from a checklist. Therefore, it will be much easier if each member of the Committee accepts responsibility for three or four of the questions. At this meeting, it is appropriate for the Committee Chair to take the lead. If this is a dinner meeting, the Chairperson will get everyone's attention and offer thanks for the meal and meeting. After the meal, the meeting can take on more formality. The first item will be a time of prayer, seeking God's will and leadership. This will be followed by introductions. Likely, informal introductions have already been made as the candidate, his spouse and the committee members gather and eat. The chair may want to invite the members of the Committee to introduce themselves more fully by sharing a little about their family, work, and involvement in the church. After the committee members have introduced themselves, the Chairperson could invite the candidate to introduce himself and talk about his Christian pilgrimage. It would be appropriate to invite the spouse to share about their own Christian sojourn. From that point, the committee members will introduce their questions. It is very important that the answers to each question be understood by the committee members. It is perfectly acceptable to ask the candidate or his spouse to amplify on an answer that may be incomplete. The chairperson needs to be sensitive to the time and allow ample time for the candidate and his spouse to ask the questions they have brought to the meeting. The committee members should have done their homework and be able to respond intelligently to the questions of the candidate.²⁹ As soon as possible after this meeting, the committee members should come back together to debrief. Each member of the Committee should be prepared to share his/her impressions. It is important to hear from each member. The Chairperson has the responsibility of encouraging and engaging each member to express her/his feelings. What did you like; what did you not like? Were there any red flags? Did the meeting raise other questions that need to be addressed? Does the committee feel good enough about the meeting to proceed to the next step? All concerns should be resolved before moving to the next step. If that cannot be done, the Chairperson should contact the candidate, thank him for the meeting and inform him that the Committee feels God is leading them in a different direction. In that case, the Committee will go back to the second choice and renew the process. If, however, the Committee feels positive about the initial meeting, they are ready to move ahead with this candidate.

Visiting the Candidate's Church

Now that the Committee has agreed to move forward in the process with the candidate, they will make preparations to go hear him preach. The Chairperson will contact the candidate and apprise him of the feelings of the Committee. "Bro. So & So, our Committee felt very positive about our initial meeting and we are prepared to move to the next step. When would be a convenient time for us to come and hear you preach?"

Some committee members have wondered about the wisdom of calling in advance of a visit to hear a candidate preach. What if he pulls out one of his candy sticks? Well, there is, of course, that possibility, but the advantage of calling ahead outweighs going unannounced. For one, you have already established contact with the candidate and you have conducted a meeting that was based on trust. It is important to maintain that level of trust by being above the table throughout the process. Slipping in and slipping out may mitigate the atmosphere of openness that has been set.

If possible, it is always better to hear the candidate in the context of his own church's worship service. Granted, it can be awkward visiting another congregation to hear their pastor preach. However, there is really no better way to evaluate the candidate's ability. In the context of the candidate's church, the Committee will benefit from a total experience of "seeing," "hearing," and "feeling" the spirit and flow of the worship. The Committee will get to hear the candidate welcome the congregation and guests. They will hear him pray. They will see his style and feel the warmth of his personality or his lack thereof. Again, geography

29 See Appendix 14 for questions the candidate may ask.

may make this kind of trip difficult. The Committee will once again need to tweak the process so that it fits the situation. However, there is simply no substitute for the dynamic quality of being there.

As soon as possible after hearing the candidate, the committee members should come back together to debrief. Each member of the Committee should be prepared to share his/her impressions. It is important to hear from each member. The Chairperson has the responsibility of encouraging and engaging each member to express her/his feelings. What did you like; what did you not like? Were there any red flags? Does the Committee feel positive enough about the candidate's performance in the pulpit to proceed to the next step? All concerns should be resolved before moving to the next step. If that cannot be done, the Chairperson should contact the candidate, thank him for the privilege of being in his worship service, but inform him that the Committee feels God is leading them in a different direction. In that case, the Committee will go back to the second choice and renew the process. If, however, the Committee feels positive about the initial meeting, they are ready to move ahead with this candidate.

Second Visit/Meeting (Optional)

Some committees may need to schedule a second visit to the candidate's church to hear him preach. Usually this occurs if there is indecision or questions emerging from the first visit. The Committee has not been turned off to the candidate but needs a stronger affirmation than what was experienced in the first visit. The second visit to hear the candidate preach again may easily be planned in conjunction with a second meeting.

A second meeting can result in the disclosure of additional information or provide the opportunity to follow up on questions carried over from the first meeting. It affords an excellent opportunity to review and clarify the budding relationship between the candidate, Committee and congregation. The fact is that there is such a scope of information that needs to be explored, both by the Committee and the candidate, that a second meeting is propitious. This is a time for final considerations before the candidate is invited to the church in view of a call. A well-developed checklist³⁰ of concerns may be profitably used at this second meeting. The committee members, as far as possible, must be solidly together before they can justify introducing the candidate to the congregation. This meeting should bring clarity and certainty, either to proceed with the candidate or to cease negotiations and move to another candidate.

A second meeting would be an excellent time to schedule meetings between the staff and the prospective pastor. It will be important to make ample time for each staff person to sit down with the candidate so that they may begin to understand one another. The members of the church staff will be naturally anxious about a new man coming in. Their anxiety can be lessened (or heightened) by meeting with the candidate. The Committee should provide a time for the staff to give feedback to them regarding any concern they have as a consequence of their meeting. Conversely, the prospective pastor should also be given an opportunity to speak candidly about his impressions of the staff. The author was once asked if the staff should tender their resignation upon the installation of a new pastor. The answer to this question depends upon how you understand calling. Is a staff person in the ministry because it's a job or a calling? Has the staff person experienced God's divine calling upon his or her life? Is the staff person called by the pastor or the church?

A word of caution at this point. Do not wait until the last minute to allow the staff to meet the candidate. Treat them with trust and respect in this process by giving them adequate time to dialogue with the candidate the committee is bringing before the church. If the staff is not positive about the candidate, it may not be a positive experience moving forward.

30 For example, this would be the time to discuss salary, housing, insurance, retirement, time off for vacation, conferences, conventions, revivals, reimbursable ministry expenses, etc.

What has been written about a second visit assumes at least two things. One, there remains areas that need to be explored before the candidate and Committee can move to the next step in the process—introduction and recommendation to the congregation. And, two, geography and financial resources are favorable. In some situations, because of the geographical distance between the candidate and the Committee, coupled with limited financial resources, the process will need to be tweaked. When a Committee finds itself in this situation, other means should be employed to accomplish the ends described above. Perhaps the Committee can pursue final considerations via a conference call. If a conference call cannot be arranged, the Committee Chairperson can use the Committee’s checklist to assure that all questions and issues are satisfactorily resolved before moving to the next step. Whatever the process looks like at this point, the primary objective is to guarantee that all hearts are clear before taking the next step.

CANDIDATE'S VISIT TO THE CHURCH FIELD

By the time the candidate and Committee reach this step in the process, both should have a firm conviction that this is God's will. Positive feelings have prevailed throughout the process of reviewing resumes, listening to tapes, contacting references, meetings and the visit to hear the candidate preach. Now is the time for the infamous "trial sermon." Of course, if the Committee has planned well, the sermon will be only a piece of what happens in this visit.

Scheduling the Visit

The Committee and candidate will decide together a mutually acceptable weekend for the candidate to be introduced to the church and preach in view of a call. The Social Coordinator will take care of arranging for motel accommodations, restaurant reservations, and any other physical aspects of the visit. Remember, the church should cover any expenses incurred by the candidate during the visit. The Committee should also decide what needs to happen during this visit. How important is it for the candidate to meet with the staff, deacons, senior adults, youth, etc.? A tour of the church community might need to be scheduled. A general reception may be planned for Sunday afternoon in the fellowship hall of the church. The Committee and the candidate can decide together what the weekend should look like.

Preparing the Congregation for the Visit

It goes without saying that by the time you reach this point in the process a lot is at stake for the candidate, Committee and congregation. How the candidate is presented to the congregation will make a tremendous difference in how he is accepted. The importance of unanimity among the committee members has been underscored already. If the committee members are not excited about their recommendation of this candidate, it is highly unlikely that the congregation will be. On the other hand, if the Committee demonstrates excitement in presenting the candidate, the congregation will catch it! The Committee can help pave the way for the candidate's visit to the church field and a positive reception by providing useful information to the congregation. One of the things the Committee will want to do is develop a nice biographical form³¹ that can be used in introducing the candidate to the congregation. A nice picture of the pastor and his family, along with important information about his ministerial preparation and experience, will go a long way in creating a welcoming atmosphere among the congregants. This form could be included in the newsletter or passed out on a Sunday morning through the Sunday School. It should not be used too early because there is the potential that the news could get back to his current congregation. A good approach might be to use this particular piece the week before the candidate is scheduled to make his visit. That does not mean, however, that nothing can be done in advance of the candidate's visit. Some committees have utilized a kind of "town hall" meeting to share information (excluding details of name and current ministry) about the candidate with the congregation. This type of meeting would allow the Committee to present answers to questions that might be anticipated and to answer unanticipated questions. Certainly, the Committee would want to share with the congregation important matters involving salary and benefits, vacation, time off for revivals, continuing education, etc. Of course, the congregation should have already approved these matters. It is simply a courtesy of making sure everybody is on the same page. This type of meeting would provide a context for sharing with the congregation the formal covenant³² that articulates the mutual commitments being made by both the candidate and the congregation. In fact, this would be a good time for the congregation to affirm the covenant and to make sure that all questions have been adequately addressed.

31 See Appendix 16 for sample Information Form.

32 See Appendix 17 for sample Pastor-Congregation Covenant.

In addition to the “town hall” meeting, the Committee will be wise to utilize other means for informing the congregation of the candidate’s visit, e.g., bulletin, newsletter, pulpit announcements; without disclosing the name of the candidate. The biographical form, with details, will be sent out to all resident members’ homes the week before the candidate’s visit.

An important aspect of the weekend visit will be the trial sermon. It is suggested that the Committee work with the candidate to discover any special requests he may have for the worship service. The Committee will also work closely with the Minister of Music to assure that the candidate will be properly introduced and have ample time to deliver his message.³³

The Sunday evening service is an excellent time for the candidate to share informally with the congregation his Christian pilgrimage, including his conversion, call to preach, ministerial experience and other information of his choosing. Following his testimony, he could invite questions from the congregation.

Taking the Vote

When it comes to the matter of the vote, most committee members ask “what,” “when” and “how” questions.

What constitutes a good vote? When it comes to answering this question, there is no standard. A pastor has gone to a church with a 75% vote and done well. Conversely, there have been times when a pastor has gone to a church with a vote in the high 90% and failed. Often the Bylaws of the church will stipulate what percentage of the vote is required to issue a call. When this question is not addressed by the Bylaws, the congregation should determine in advance of the trial sermon and vote what percentage is required for a call to be extended.

When is the best time to vote? The desire is to involve as many people as possible in the vote. Since Sunday morning is the most attended service, it makes sense to have the vote on the Sunday morning following the Sunday of the trial sermon. That time frame also gives the congregation a week to pray about their vote.

How should the vote be taken? In order to ascertain the most accurate opinion of the congregation, the vote should be taken by secret ballot. As people enter the sanctuary for the Sunday morning worship service, a prepared ballot with the simple options of “YES” and “NO” may be handed out. Before the worship service begins, the vote can be taken. Someone should be selected to preside over the vote. That person will recognize the Chairperson of the Search Committee who then will ask the entire Committee to join him on the platform. He will underscore the unanimity and enthusiasm of every member of the Committee in presenting a motion to the church that Bro. “So and So” be called as pastor. There will be no discussion of the motion. The individual presiding will then step up and announce that every church member is entitled to vote. The ushers need to be prepared to hand a ballot to anyone who failed to obtain one upon entering the sanctuary. The instructions are simple. The members should vote either “YES” to call or “NO” not to call the candidate as pastor. When all the ballots have been marked, they should be collected and counted by the ushers or others who have been designated for that purpose. By the end of the worship service, the count should have been easily completed and the results should be shared with the congregation.³⁴

33 One contributor remembers vividly stepping into the pulpit to preach a “trial sermon” when the clock read 11:40 a.m. The announcements, music, and the awarding of Bibles to graduating seniors had crowded the worship service and resulted in a window of about twenty minutes for a four-point sermon. If you are a Baptist, you know the magic of the noon hour. Talk about pressure! Through careful planning, this uncomfortable scenario can be avoided.

34 Often the question is raised about what is a “good” percentage vote. This question may be addressed in the church’s Constitution and Bylaws; however, if it is not, the Search Committee should work with the key leaders of the church to make that call.

As soon as feasible, after the vote has been determined, the Chairperson of the Search Committee should notify the candidate. The candidate will likely respond in one of two ways. He will excitedly accept the call or he will ask for time to pray about it. Of course, there exists the possibility he could decline the call. However, that is unlikely at this point. If the candidate asks for time to pray about the decision, the Chairperson will warmly agree but will emphasize the importance of informing the congregation in an expeditious and timely manner. It is reasonable for the Chairperson to ask for the candidate's decision in time to announce it to the congregation on the upcoming Sunday.

Assuming the final decision is to consummate the call, the candidate and Committee will work together to arrange the details of relocation. It is the responsibility of the Committee to go the extra mile in laying the groundwork for a positive beginning. Once the new pastor is on the field, the Committee might consider scheduling a general reception for the pastor and his family, including especially local pastors and congregations, the Director of Missions, a Baptist state convention representative, as well as a representative from the community at large. The Committee should also plan, with the new pastor's input, an installation service³⁵ to formalize the relationship between pastor and congregation.

Additionally, the relationship between the pastor and congregation is much more likely to be healthy and long term if preparation is made to elect a Pastor/Staff-Church Relations Committee.³⁶

35 See Appendix 18 for sample Installation Service.

36 See Appendix 19 for Pastor/Staff-Church Relations Committee.

TAKING CARE OF THE MINISTER'S FINANCIAL NEEDS

Consider

Scripture teaches that ministers are to be paid in a manner worthy of their labor. Passages like Luke 10:7, I Corinthians 9:14, Galatians 6:6 and I Timothy 5:17-18 give instructions for the church to provide well for their ministers.

Stewardship leads to planning financial support. Churches may be tempted to use the “package” approach to paying their staff. This will nearly always unnecessarily increase the tax liability of the minister and thus cause him to have less money to provide for the needs of his family. Often this results in the payment of 25% or more in taxes that he may not legally owe. For instance, funds used for medical insurance premiums paid by the minister after money has been delivered to him in a package are subject to both federal income tax and SECA tax. A good financial support plan that provides medical insurance premiums as an employee benefit results in no tax payment on those dollars. Churches can insure better stewardship of church funds with an accountable reimbursement plan instead of allowances or a package. Detailed expense reports give Personnel and Finance Committees a much clearer understanding of the ministry and expenses of their staff members.

Simplicity will flourish with a good financial support plan. Package amounts lead to confusion about what amount constitutes a minister's real income. Church members who see the package amount may not be aware that the package includes ministry related expenses, the cost of medical insurance, retirement contributions, and the payment of the total Social Security tax by ministers. Their understanding will be greatly enhanced with the adoption of a good financial support plan. Simplicity is also very much needed as you approach a prospect. It is much easier for a family to consider salary and housing dollars and know that this is what will be provided for their daily living costs.

Review

Written policies are vital in defining the financial support practices of the church. A variety of issues should be addressed in these documents. A clear plan for reimbursing ministry related expenses should be in place. The church and staff need information that is easily understood as to the provision of benefits and personal income. Income policies should define how housing allowance is designated for the ministers of the church. Other matters that should be addressed include vacation, sick leave, sabbatical leave, work hours, pay periods, employee classifications, or other hiring issues.

The church's history of financial support will be valuable for your Committee. Has the church maintained or adjusted income levels by granting cost of living increases? Who has the responsibility of personnel review and the recommendation of merit increases? Search Committees are often confronted with the reality that their church has not kept pace and now needs to make some dramatic increase. This information should be passed along to the Finance or Personnel Committee of the church before a specific candidate is mentioned.

Since ministry related expenses vary greatly depending upon the location of the church, this is a good time to review the expense history of the previous staff member who served in this position. This will provide some measure of the amount that will be needed to fund expenses for the person being sought.

Receive

Information should be gathered from the minister under consideration. Age, for instance, along with the size of the family, will affect insurance costs. Education, age, years of experience, and other personal or economic factors should be considered in the compensation of ministers.

Compensation studies should be investigated. Most state conventions participate in a survey of churches to determine the amount of income and benefits provided to various church staff members. Contact your state convention for information.

Input from the Finance or Personnel Committee of the church should be sought. Their concerns and plans should be clearly understood by the Search Committee. Your state convention may have a financial support specialist or your Director of Missions may be a good consultant at this point.

Plan

Three separate areas will emerge in a good Financial Support plan.³⁷

Ministry related expenses should be handled on an accountable reimbursement basis. These expenses should not be included in a “package” amount. They should not be paid as “allowances” which will increase the tax liability of the minister. They should be funded by the church in a line item separate from income.

Protection coverage and benefits should provide adequately for insurance and retirement. A medical insurance plan as well as life and disability insurance should be required components of protection for the minister and his family members. Retirement contributions should be made wisely. For a variety of reasons, retirement contributions should be placed in the Church Retirement Plan. These factors include SECA tax considerations, housing benefits in retirement, and protection coverage provided by state conventions for ministers involved in the Church Retirement Plan. Your state convention or GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention can provide answers to your questions.

Income includes salary and, for ministers, the possibility of housing allowance and a Social Security offset. Be sure that housing allowance is clearly understood and utilized by your ministers. If there is any question for a staff minister other than the pastor as to whether that person should be treated as a minister for tax purposes, contact your state convention for assistance. It is vital to the financial support plan that this issue be clear.

Consult with those who clearly understand the special tax rules that apply to ministers and churches. IRS forms, reporting requirements, self-employment social security taxes, housing, and a variety of other issues make financial support planning for ministers and churches complex.

³⁷ See Appendix 20 for a sample worksheet.

A FINAL WORD

Thank you, Pastor Search Committee, for your diligent labor of love. When Committee members understand the vital importance of their assignment, proceed in the spirit of prayer, depend upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit, resist short cuts, and devotedly and doggedly pursue their task, God will be honored and their work will be validated. The members of the Committee can breathe a sigh of relief, but they cannot rest on what is perceived to be an assignment completed. After all, the Committee has been at the center of a process that has ultimately led to a new and promising beginning. It is now up to the members of the Committee to be the pastor's greatest supporters and strongest advocates. Sadly, over time, many churches begin to take their pastor for granted. Please don't let that happen in your situation. The health of your pastor—personally and professionally—is impacted either for good or bad, depending upon the love and care shown to him by the congregation he serves. As a member of the Committee who brought him to your church, you have a unique responsibility to help him be successful and healthy. How do you do that? Put yourself in his shoes. Try to understand the peculiar challenges he faces and stand up for him and stand with him. He is not perfect, and he will make mistakes. You are not expected to gloss over those, as though they did not exist. However, you must forgive him and help him to do better, if he will let you. Lead the way in looking for ways to express your appreciation to your pastor and staff. Recognize pastor/staff anniversaries, birthdays, and special achievements. The church calendar provides opportunities³⁸ for special expressions—tangible expressions—of the congregation's love and appreciation for the pastor/staff. This happens because someone had the idea and took the lead. Someone was willing to say, "Let's do _____ for our pastor/staff to show our love," and the majority of the members of the congregation nodded their heads and said, "Yes, let's do!" As a member of the Pastor Search Committee, you can be the one who has the idea and takes the lead.

38 Consider a nice Christmas gift for the pastor/staff. What about a "pounding" around Thanksgiving? October is Pastor/Staff Appreciation month. Suggestions/plans for how to make this month special can be obtained by contacting the Church-Minister Relations Specialist @ 1.800.558.2090, extension 2010.

Appendix 1

COVENANT FOR MINISTRY

between Transitional Interim Pastor _____

and _____ Baptist Church

I. TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY OBJECTIVES:

- Move through grief and frustration.
- Resolve unfinished business that may be crippling the church.
- Listen to hurts and ideas.
- Reinforce the ministry of volunteer leadership.
- Raise the trust level.
- Renewed appreciation for fellowship and reconciliation.
- Fresh understanding of the church's mission.
- Deal with special needs of the church.
- Prepare congregation for a positive experience with next pastor.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRANSITIONAL PASTOR

- Be directly accountable to the church through the Deacon Body or its designate group.
- Under no circumstances would he be a candidate to become the next pastor.
- Consult with the Pastor Search Committee in the process of organizing/training the Committee for its work, but without interference.
- Serve until the church has called a new pastor or until the congregation releases him from his service.
- Provide regular pastoral and administrative leadership as agreed upon.
- Maintain regular office hours and work schedule as agreed upon by Transitional Interim Pastor and congregation.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONGREGATION

- Pray for and support the church throughout the interim process.
- Pray for and support the Transitional Interim Pastor.
- Work together to resolve any unfinished business and to establish healthy goals for ministries and missions.

IV. SALARY AND BENEFITS

The congregation agrees to provide the following salary and benefits:

- 1. Salary _____
- 2. Housing _____
- 3. Benefits _____
 - a. Medical insurance _____
 - b. Disability insurance _____
 - c. Life insurance _____
 - d. Retirement _____
- 4. Reimbursable expenses _____
- 5. Vacation and/or leave time _____

V. TERMINATION OF THE COVENANT

Either the Transitional Interim Pastor or the church may terminate this Covenant with thirty (30) days written notice. The Covenant is based on mutual trust and may be altered by mutual consent and agreement of both parties.

..... This Covenant becomes effective _____.

(DATE)

Deacon Chairperson

Transitional Interim Pastor

Appendix 2

COMMISSIONING SERVICE

Prelude

Opening Song: “The Church’s One Foundation” (*Baptist Hymnal, 1991, p. 350*)

Welcome and Explanation of Service.^{39*} (Transitional Interim Pastor or Chairman of Deacons)

Responsive Reading

Church Spokesperson: *God has saved us and called us with a holy calling according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. (II Tim. 1:9)*

Search Committee: *And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:18)*

Congregation: *For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

(John 3:16)

Church Spokesperson: *Jesus said, “I will build My church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” (Mt. 16:18b)*

Search Committee: *For we are “members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ, Himself being the chief cornerstone”. (Eph. 2:19b-20)*

Congregation: *And may “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. (Eph. 1:17)*

³⁹ *The Church at Antioch, led by the Spirit of God, understood the importance of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. In response to God’s leadership, the congregation selected Paul and Barnabas and commissioned them to go out from the church to serve God’s purpose. Paul and Barnabas had a special assignment and the church blessed both them and the assignment by sending them out as their representatives. Our Search Committee has been given a special assignment. Our congregation, led by the Spirit of God, has selected them for the purpose of seeking God’s will in the calling of our next pastor.

Church Spokesperson: *“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 13:1-4)*

Congregation: *This service is our endorsement and commissioning of the members of this committee. We send them out with our blessings, and we covenant to pray for them and with them as they seek God’s leader for our church.*

Search Committee: *We accept our assignment, under God, and understand that we are representatives both of Christ and this church.*

Congregation: *We thank God for these who will represent us on our Pastor Committee.*

Search Committee: *We confess our feelings of inadequacy to meet the challenge before us. Church family, please pray for us, that we may be led by the Holy Spirit as we seek to fulfill the task of finding God’s man to be our next pastor.*

“Lord, Be Glorified”

In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified, In my life, Lord, be glorified today

In my work, Lord, be glorified, be glorified, In my work, Lord, be glorified today.

In Your Church, Lord, be glorified, be glorified, In Your Church, Lord, be glorified, today.

The Sacrament of Encouragement

Church Spokesperson: *God tells us that it is our responsibility to be faithful in our service to Him and His Church. Being a faithful member of our Pastor Search Committee involves:*

1. *Daily communication with God*
2. *Dedication to the task that God has called you to*
3. *Dependence upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit*
4. *Diligence in your work*
5. *Determination to find God’s man to shepherd our flock*

Church Spokesperson: *God is the basis for your spiritual strength. Will you communicate with Him daily through Bible reading and prayer?*

Pastor Search Committee: *We will, with God's help.*

Church Spokesperson: *During the fulfillment of your assignment, will you have respect for one another, lay personal agendas aside, disagree in love, and support one another as brothers and sisters in Christ?*

Pastor Search Committee: *We will, with God's help.*

Church Spokesperson: *Will you try to give expression to the spirit of Christ in all your relations with others; will you permit His influence to be felt in your work; and will you search for His will and let it be done throughout this process?*

Pastor Search Committee: *We will, with God's help.*

Church Spokesperson: *Colossians 4:2-4*

This is God's command to those of us who stay behind and serve. We must be faithful in under girding these with our interest and prayer support, asking continually that God will provide witnessing opportunities for them.

(To the congregation): If you will join me in this commitment of support, will you stand?

Church Spokesperson and Congregation: *(To the Pastor Search Committee):*

We the members of _____, pledge to you our continuing interest and prayer support. When we pray, we will ask God to lead and bless you. We will ask Him to give you guidance, wisdom, and patience to be effective. We will also ask Him to bless those men of God with whom you make contact.

Church Spokesperson: *Prayer for the Pastor Search Committee*

Closing Song: *"We Are God's People" (Baptist Hymnal, 1991, p. 383)*

Closing Prayer

Postlude

Appendix 3

PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE RETREAT

Two-Day Retreat:

Friday:

6:00 p.m. Gather for dinner

7:15 p.m..... Call to Order

- Prayer
- Introductions

8:00 p.m. Overview the Agenda

9:00 p.m. Benediction

Saturday:

7:00 a.m.....Breakfast

8:30 a.m..... Session # 1

- The Value of a Transitional Pastor
- The Pastor Search Committee

10:00 a.m..... Break

10:30 a.m..... Session # 2

- Initiating the Process
- Investigating the Candidates
- Contacting the Candidate

12:00 noon Lunch

1:00 p.m. Session # 3

- Candidate’s Visit to the Church Field
- Taking Care of the Minister’s Financial Needs
- A Final Word

3:00 p.m. Benediction

Appendix 4

PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COVENANT

Recognizing the importance of the assignment with which our Church has entrusted us, and the special relationship among our Pastor Search Committee members, we hereby covenant together to:

1. Make this assignment a priority in our lives;
2. Make prayer a priority by
 - a. Praying for one another
 - b. Praying for the process
 - c. Praying for our church
3. Be open and committed to the leadership of the Holy Spirit;
4. Welcome and encourage the expressions of everyone's opinion and ideas;
5. Respect every member of our Committee;
6. Work in the Spirit of Christ to resolve differences and disagreements in our Committee when they arise;
7. Leave our personal agendas at the door;
8. Guard with the utmost confidentiality, both in and out of our meetings, all matters that relate to our pastor search process;
9. Support the ministry of our new pastor, upon his arrival, by prayer, friendship, and service; and
10. Encourage our fellow-members to pray for our new pastor and to support his leadership through their faithful service to the Kingdom of our Lord.

Chairperson

Vice Chairperson

Recorder

Prayer Coordinator

Social Coordinator

Appendix 5

Name of Church

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

You are invited by the Pastor Search Committee to participate in the process of seeking a new pastor. Please give your prayerful attention to the survey. Thank you for your cooperation in responding to this survey.

1. How much pastoral experience should our next pastor have?

Under 5 years 5 – 10 years 10 – 15 years 15 – 20 years more than 20 years no opinion

2. What age should our next pastor be?

20 – 30 30 – 40 40 – 50 50 – 55 no opinion

3. What should be the minimum level of education of our next pastor?

high school college degree seminary degree doctorate degree no opinion

4. If a seminary degree is required, how important is it that the seminary be a recognized Southern Baptist Institution:

requirement not very important not important important very important no opinion

5. Would you be open to a recent seminary graduate?

yes no

6. Please indicate below the duties/responsibilities you consider are most important in our next pastor. Rank in order of their importance to you, 1 for most important, 2 for second in importance, etc.

_____ administration

_____ visiting church members

_____ counseling

_____ visiting the sick

_____ preaching

_____ visiting nursing homes

_____ denominational involvement

_____ prayer

_____ Bible study

_____ the ability to work with people

_____ community involvement

_____ social skills

_____ reaching the lost

7. *If there are other responsibilities/duties not listed above which you feel are important, please use the lines below to make comments:*

8. *How important is it for our next pastor to be married?*

requirement *not very important* *very important* *not important* *important* *no opinion*

9. *Please share with the Committee names (address & phone #, if possible) of prospects you would like the Committee to consider.*

Appendix 6

BAPTIST SEMINARIES

Gateway Seminary

3210 E. Guasti Road
Ontario, CA 91761
Phone: 909.687.1800

Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary

2095 Appling Road
Cordova, TN 38016
Phone: 901.751.3015

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

5001 North Oak Street Traffic Way
Kansas City, MO 64118
Phone: 800.944.6287

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

3939 Gentilly Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70126
Phone: 800.662.8701

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

P.O. Box 1889
Wake Forest, NC 27588-1889
Phone: 919.761.2100

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

2825 Lexington Road
Louisville, KY 40280
Phone: 800.626.5525

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

P.O. Box 22120
Fort Worth, TX 76122
Phone: 817.923.1921, ext. 6330

Appendix 7

PASTORAL CANDIDATE

CHECK REFERENCES AND AUTHORIZATION FORM

I authorize _____ name of church _____ located in _____ name of town _____ to

contact references on my resume and others (including full background check) who may

know of my qualifications for ministry. Further, I authorize any person, school, past

employer(s) and organization(s) who might know my qualifications for ministry to

provide _____ name of church _____ with relevant information and opinion that may be

useful to _____ name of church _____ in making a decision about considering me as a candidate

for a ministry position in _____ name of church _____. I, hereby, release such persons and

organizations from any legal liability in providing such information and opinions.

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 8

LETTER TO CANDIDATES WHO MADE SHORT LIST AND WHO HAVE BEEN CONTACTED BY PHONE

Date _____

Address _____

Dear _____:

Thank you for our recent phone conversation. Our Search Committee is excited about the assignment our congregation has given us to seek a new pastor for our church family. We are committed to prayer and seeking the will of God in this matter. We truly believe that our greatest days are ahead and that with the right leadership we can impact not only our community but also our state and the world.

We are grateful that you have agreed to become one of the five people on our short list of pastoral candidates. We want to be completely candid in this process. On the basis of your resume, we felt led by the Holy Spirit to contact you for further consideration. We feel a professional responsibility to keep you informed about the process.

When we talked to you on the phone, we mentioned that we would like your authorization to check references and to run a background check, which will include credit, criminal and medical reports. We have enclosed a form by which you may grant authorization for us to proceed with that process.

Also, we asked you to please provide us a sermon that we can listen to. It would really be helpful if you could provide us with two sermons, if possible.

We are enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which you may return the items we have requested. You may also send us the weblink via email to: _____ email address _____.

Again, thank you so much for your time and cooperation. We know that you will join with us in praying for God's leadership as we seek to find our next pastor.

Sincerely,

Appendix 9

GUIDE FOR EVALUATING SERMONS

Minister's Name _____

The following are areas to be considered in reviewing a sermon. The Committee may wish to add other areas. These areas may not fit every sermon. This form is simply an aid to help create intentionality and purpose to the experience of reviewing sermons. Please score the items by using (1) Below Average, (2) Average, (3) Above Average, and (4) Excellent.

1. Well-groomed	1	2	3	4
2. Easy to listen to	1	2	3	4
3. Good content	1	2	3	4
4. Positive attitude	1	2	3	4
5. Inspiring	1	2	3	4
6. Appropriate humor	1	2	3	4
7. Well prepared	1	2	3	4
8. Clear message	1	2	3	4
9. Points well-made	1	2	3	4
10. Good transitions	1	2	3	4
11. Radiates warmth	1	2	3	4
12. Good grammar	1	2	3	4
13. Good diction	1	2	3	4
14. Good use of scripture	1	2	3	4
15. Good illustrations	1	2	3	4
16. Appropriate length	1	2	3	4
17. Good invitation	1	2	3	4
18. Good application	1	2	3	4
19. Motivational	1	2	3	4
20. Good doctrine	1	2	3	4
21. Helpful	1	2	3	4
22. Challenging	1	2	3	4
23.	1	2	3	4
24.	1	2	3	4
25.	1	2	3	4

Notes: _____

Appendix 10

GUIDE FOR CHECKING REFERENCES

Name of Candidate _____

Name of Reference _____ Phone # _____

Name of Committee Member _____

Date of Contact _____

Introduce yourself and give brief background on why you are calling. “Bro. _____” has attracted our interest. We have received his permission to contact references.” Assure reference that the information shared will be strictly confidential. “Would you please talk to me about Bro. _____?”

1. How do you know Bro. _____?

2. How long have you known him? _____

3. Please share about some areas our Committee feels are important and how you would evaluate Bro. on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. A good family man | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Spiritual maturity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Honesty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Work ethic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Good pastor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Loves people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Good people person | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Preacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. Teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. Administrator | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. Emotional maturity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- l. Handles conflict 1 2 3 4 5
- m. Dependable 1 2 3 4 5
- n. Handles money well 1 2 3 4 5
- o. Able to compromise 1 2 3 4 5
- p. Warm/friendly 1 2 3 4 5
- q. Flexible 1 2 3 4 5

4. What would you say are his greatest ministry assets? _____

5. Why do you think he is open to leaving his current church at this time? _____

6. To your knowledge, has he ever been asked to leave a former church? If yes, for what reason? _____

7. Are you aware of any skeletons in his closet, be it personal or professional? (Has he ever been accused of abuse or harassment?)⁴⁰

8. Would you be able to give me the name and phone number of one or two other people who know Bro. _____?

a. Name _____ Phone _____

b. Name _____ Phone _____

9. Can you recommend Bro. _____ without reservations? _____

40 A court decision in Kentucky turned on whether the Search Committee raised this specific question.

10. Can you think of any questions I should have asked but have not? _____

11. If you were on a Pastor Search Committee, would you vote to call Bro. ??? as your pastor? _____

Appendix 11

LETTER FOR USE IN CHECKING REFERENCES

Date

Address

Dear _____:

The Pastor Search Committee of name of church in name of town is interested in Bro. name of candidate. We have received his permission to contact references to check his personal and ministerial background. We would greatly appreciate it if you would take just a few minutes to respond to the following questions. You can be assured that what you share will be guarded with the utmost confidentiality. Please return this form in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. Thank you so much for your time and cooperation.

1. How do you know Bro _____?

2. How long have you known him? _____

3. I am going to share with you some areas our committee feels are important and I want you to tell how you would evaluate Bro. on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. A good family man | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Spiritual maturity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Honesty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Work ethic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Good pastor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Loves people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Good people person | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Preacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. Teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. Administrator | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. Emotional maturity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| l. Handles conflict | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- m. Dependable 1 2 3 4 5
- n. Handles money well 1 2 3 4 5
- o. Able to compromise 1 2 3 4 5
- p. Warm/friendly 1 2 3 4 5
- q. Flexible 1 2 3 4 5

4. What would you say are his greatest ministry assets? _____

5. Why do you think he is open to leaving his current church at this time? _____

6. To your knowledge, has he ever been asked to leave a former church? If yes, for what reason? _____

7. Are you aware of any skeletons in his closet, be it personal or professional? (Has he ever been accused of abuse or harassment?)⁴¹

8. Would you be able to give me the name and telephone number of one or two other people who know Bro. _____?

a. Name _____ Phone _____

b. Name _____ Phone _____

9. Can you recommend Bro. _____ without reservations? _____

41 A court decision in Kentucky turned on whether the Search Committee raised this specific question.

10. Can you think of any questions I should have asked but have not? _____

11. If you were on a Pastor Search Committee, would you vote to call Bro. _____ as your pastor? _____

Appendix 11a

ASSESSING GIFTS/SKILLS/STRENGTHS FOR OUR NEXT PASTOR

For each area, circle the number from 1 to 6 that best describes your idea of what is needed in your next pastor, with 1 being least important and 6 being the most important. Then add up the scores and rank from highest to lowest.

1. **Administrator:** The Pastor should manage the business of the congregation and should be skilled in good planning, organization, delegation, and management of the day-to-day affairs of the congregation:

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. **Community Leaders:** The pastor should be involved in the total life of the community, in ways that promote ministering to the social and spiritual needs of its citizens:

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. **Counselor:** The pastor should be qualified and committed to spending time with members who need to be helped with their concerns and problems:

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. **Denominational Leader:** The pastor is expected to participate and give leadership in the denomination, at the association, state and national level:

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. **Evangelism/Missions:** The pastor is expected to be a personal soul-winner and to lead the congregation in a planned effort of evangelism. He is to have a passion for missions and to lead the church in supporting missions, including association, state national and international missions. He is to be a strong advocate of the Cooperative Program:

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. **Family:** The pastor should give priority to his family, and should model before the congregation what a Christian husband and father should look like:

1 2 3 4 5 6

7. **Pastoral Ministry:** The pastor is expected to provide pastoral care to all the flock, including visiting the sick, the homebound, nursing home and responding to crises such as death, sudden illnesses and/or other traumatic events in the lives of the members:

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. **Preaching/Teaching:** The pastor is expected to spend a significant amount of time in the study of God's Word in order to have a fresh and relevant message to proclaim when he stands before the people:

1 2 3 4 5 6

9. Stewardship Leader: The pastor should model good stewardship and should lead the church in comprehensive stewardship education and good practices:

1 2 3 4 5 6

10. Worship Leader: The pastor, in partnership with the worship team, should actively plan, coordinate and lead in conducting corporate worship and should promote family and private worship.

1 2 3 4 5 6

11. Visionary: The pastor should be able to connect with the congregation, community, Word of God and Holy Spirit in a process of discerning God's will for our church and creating a shared vision for our church:

1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix 12

PASTOR PROFILE

(The pastor's profile should be informed by the vision of the congregation. What kind of pastor do you need to lead your congregation to claim God's future for your church?)

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION

(minimum degree required; SBC seminary)

FAMILY

Married

Children

AGE

pg **SKILLS/GIFTS** (see Appendix 11a)

50

Preaching, pastoral, teaching, administration, counseling, public relations (people skills); fund raiser; others...

COOPERATION

Association

State Convention

Southern Baptist Convention

Cooperative Program

EXPERIENCE WITH MULTI-STAFF CHURCH

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Autocratic

Micro-Manager

Shared Ministry

Shepherd-Leader

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

OTHER PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS BASED ON THE UNIQUE IDENTITY/CULTURE OF YOUR CONGREGATION...

Appendix 13

CHURCH PROFILE

Name of Church: _____

Address: _____

Brief History: (Example)

The Best Baptist Church, Best Baptist Town, Tennessee, was founded in 1878. The church moved to its present location in 1935. The campus includes sanctuary, two-story education facility, family life center (new), crisis pregnancy center, and community benevolence center. Dr. Will E. Domore is retiring after 25 years as the Pastor of Best Baptist Church in Best Baptist Town, Tennessee. With its rich tradition, excellent facilities, a current membership of 738, and a budget in excess of \$800,000, BBC is well positioned to expand its ministries in East/Middle/West Tennessee and around the globe.

Affiliations:

- Best Baptist Town Ministerial Association
- Really Fine Baptist Association
- Tennessee Baptist Convention
- Southern Baptist Convention

Ministerial Staff:

- Pastor
- Pastor’s Assistant
- Minister of Education
- Church Secretary
- Minister of Music
- Financial Secretary
- Minister of Youth
- Preschool Director

Support Staff:

- VACANT
- Carrie D. Load
- Ed U. Cates
- Imma Smiling
- Sing A. Long
- May B. Money Penny
- Dewey C. Trouble
- Reed M. Early

Membership:

Total Members	738
Avg. Sunday School Attendance	243
Current Budget	\$ 829,000
Cooperative Program	\$ 84,700
Designated Missions Offerings ^{42*}	\$ 57,300
Family Life Center Building Campaign Balance	\$ 330,000

42 * Includes Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions, Association, etc.

Ministries:

Prayer Ministry 75 Members of BBC pray at a designated time at our prayer room
Pre-School Developmental preschool for 65 children, ages 2-4
Youth Ministry Ministry to youth 7th to 12th grade
LLL Senior Ministry Ministry to seniors 65 and more mature
Children’s Church Church Service for age four (4) through 3rd grade

Programs:

Sunday School:	Disciple Training:	Music:	Mission Organizations:
Enrollment	Enrollment	All Enrollments	All Enrollments
Avg. Attendance	Avg. Attendance	Avg. Attendance	Avg. Attendance

Compensation:

Salary: _____ Housing: _____ Insurance: _____
Continuing Education: _____ Other Benefits: _____

Appendix 14

THINKING POINTS FOR THE PASTOR

The following areas may be of interest to a Search Committee and the candidate will be wise to have anticipated them:

Christian Sojourn:

- Your conversion
- Your call to ministry
- Where your calling has led you to this point

Family:

- Where you grew up:
 - Parents
 - Schools/Involvement
 - Church experience (may have been covered above)
- Wife (especial interest in her support of your ministry)
- Children
- Commitment to family

Preparation for Ministry:

- Educational institutions and degrees
- Certificates for ministry
- What three books have most influenced your growth in the last year
- Other training
- How are you involved in continuing education

Ministerial Experience:

- Where you have served and accomplishments
- Associational service
- State Denominational service

Theological Orientation:

- What you believe about the Bible
- What you believe about *The Baptist Faith and Message*.
- What you believe about women's role in ministry
- What you believe about the role of the pastor
- What you believe about missions (Cooperative Program)
- How do you engage the community context of the local church
- What do you believe about cooperation with association, state and national convention

Personal and Professional Gifts:

- How you get along with people
- What are your gifts for ministry?
- What are your weaknesses in ministry?
- What is your leadership style?
- How do you handle conflict?
- What kind of church would benefit from your strengths?
- What you enjoy most about ministering in the church
- What is your physical health and how do you take care of yourself physically?

Possible Areas for Exploration by the Candidate

- What kind of pastor does your church need?
- What action/conduct would your church not be willing to forgive the pastor?
- If it were in your power, what one thing would you change about your church?
- What are the two or three things about your church that are doors through which people enter?
- How does your church handle conflict?
- What role do deacons play in your church?
- What role do women play in the ministry of your church?
- What were the circumstances under which your last Pastor left? How long did he serve the church?
- What issues/problems will your next Pastor need to address?
- What are the strengths of your church?
- What are the weaknesses of your church?
- How would you describe your worship services?
- How are decisions made in your church?

Appendix 15

THINKING POINTS FOR THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

It is important to ask “open ended” questions, as opposed to “yes” and “no” questions. The following list is not exhaustive, but is intended to highlight important areas that are worthy of exploration by the Pastor Search Committee.

Christian Sojourn:

1. Ask both the candidate and wife to share their conversion experience.
2. Ask the candidate to talk about his call to ministry.
3. Ask the wife to describe her feelings about being a pastor’s wife. Was she aware of his call before marriage? If not, ask her to explain how she has come to view it.
4. Ask the candidate where his calling has led him to this point.
5. Ask candidate why he would be open to a move at this time.

Family:

1. Invite the candidate to talk about where he grew up.
 - a. Parents
 - b. Schools/Involvement
 - c. Church experience (may have been covered above)
2. Invite him to talk about his commitment to this family.
3. Invite him to talk about how he plans time to be with his family (if not covered in his previous response).

Preparation for Ministry:

1. Ask him to briefly describe his formal training for ministry (this will likely be reflected on his resume); however, it is important for the committee to verify the educational credentials of the candidate. Follow up with any questions that may be raised by his resume or his oral presentation.
2. Ask him about his commitment to continuing education and ask for examples, e.g., certificates, diplomas, specialized training opportunities, etc.
3. Ask the candidate to talk about three books that have shaped his ministry.
4. Ask him what books he has read recently.
5. Ask him if he does personal counseling and if so, on what level, and what is his training in this area.

Ministerial Experience:

1. Ask the candidate to talk about where he has served and his most significant accomplishments.
2. Ask him to describe his leadership style.
3. Ask him how he would characterize his ministry at his current church.
4. Ask him he has ever left a church under unfavorable circumstance. If so, why?
5. Ask him what role committees have played in his churches and how he has related to them.
6. Ask him to describe his relationship with deacons in his previous churches.
7. Ask him how he has been involved with the associations where he has served, the state convention and the national convention.

Theological Orientation:

1. Ask him what he believes about the Bible.
2. Ask him how he sees his role as pastor of the church.
3. Ask him how he views the role and ministry of women in the church.
4. Ask him what he believes about missions (Cooperative Program, International Missions, North American Missions, State Missions, Association Missions, etc.) and how he has led his churches to support missions.
5. Ask him how he understands pastoral authority.
6. Ask him how he understands the relationship between church and community.

Personal and Professional Strengths:

1. Ask him how he gets along with people.
2. Ask him to talk about his gifts and strengths for ministry.
3. Ask him what he enjoys most about being a pastor.
4. Ask him to talk about his weaknesses.
5. Ask him what he dislikes most about being a pastor.
6. Ask him how he deals with conflict.
7. Ask him about his physical health and how he takes care of himself physically.
8. Ask him if he has outside business interests.
9. Ask him to talk about his hobbies.
10. Ask him to describe his community/civic involvement.
11. Ask him how he handles his finances.

Appendix 16

INTRODUCING Dr./Bro. and Mrs. _____

FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH

Family:

Dr./Bro. _____

Education:

High School:

College:

Seminary:

Additional Education/certifications

Wife:

Education

Experience

Children:

School

Work

Church Experience:

Dates (from-to)	Church Name	Size	Ministry Position
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Accomplishments/Awards:

Hobbies:

Civic Involvement:

Philosophy of Ministry:

Personal Testimony:

Schedule of Events:

You are invited to meet _____ and his wife, _____. Several meetings are scheduled to ensure that all church members can find a time that is most convenient for them.

Tuesday, August 9

7:00 p.m.

Meeting with Deacons, place

Wednesday, August 10

9:00 a.m. Meeting with Church Staff, place
6:30 p.m. Meeting with Youth, place
7:30 p.m. Meeting with the Adult Choir, place

Thursday, August 11

1:00 p.m. Meeting with Senior Adults, place
6:00-8:00 p.m. Informal time to drop by and meet ??? and ???, place

Saturday, August 13

2:00 p.m. Meeting with Personnel Committee, place
6:00-8:00 p.m. Meeting with Sunday School Teachers, Discipleship Teachers, Children’s Ministry Leadership/Teachers, Women’s Ministry Leadership and Ministry Team members, place (refreshments will be provided)

Sunday, August 14

9:00 and 10:30 a.m. Worship Services with ?? preaching. Immediately following each service will be a called business meeting at which time a vote will be taken to call candidate as our pastor.

Appendix 17

COVENANT FOR MINISTRY

between

Pastor _____ and
_____ Baptist Church

I. THE PASTOR COVENANTS TO:

- Seek God’s will and be led by the Holy Spirit in every aspect of his life and ministry.
- Consider all members with respect and love.
- Speak the truth in love.
- Demonstrate Christian character in the home, church and community.
- Lead the congregation, by example, to be involved in evangelism, prayer, worship, ministry, missions, fellowship, and discipleship.
- Preach the whole council of the Word of God.
- Be a team leader/player with the church staff and church committees.
- Be directly accountable to the Church through the Deacon Body or its designate group.
- Provide regular pastoral and administrative leadership.
- Maintain regular office hours and work schedule.

II. THE CONGREGATION COVENANTS TO:

- Pray for and support the church.
- Pray for, love, support and encourage the Pastor.
- Speak directly with the Pastor when there are disagreements.
- Provide generous financial support for the Pastor.
- Be intentional in promoting the spiritual and physical health of the Pastor.
- Work together to establish healthy goals for ministries and missions.

III. SALARY AND BENEFITS

The congregation agrees to provide the following salary and benefits:

1. Salary _____
2. Housing _____
3. Benefits _____

- a. Medical insurance _____
 - b. Disability insurance _____
 - c. Life insurance _____
 - d. Retirement _____
 - 4. Reimbursable expenses _____
 - 5. Vacation and/or leave time _____
 - 6. Conferences, Seminars, and Conventions
- _____
- _____
- _____

IV. THE PASTOR’S SCHEDULE:

The Pastor is on call 24/7. The Pastor is expected to minister in times of crisis, day or night; and rightly so. However, the church recognizes the humanity of the Pastor and therefore expects him to care for both his spiritual and physical health. He should have two days off per week, to be determined by the Pastor and Personnel Committee. The Pastor should have regular office hours, during which time he may receive appointments for meetings. This schedule should be provided to the congregation for their and the Pastor’s convenience.

V. TERMINATION OF THE COVENANT FOR MINISTRY

Either the Pastor or the Church may terminate this Covenant for Ministry with thirty (30) days written notice.

The Covenant for Ministry is based on mutual trust and may be altered by mutual consent and agreement of both parties.

This Covenant for Ministry becomes effective _____.

Date

Pastor

Deacon Chairperson

Appendix 18

A COVENANT INSTALLATION SERVICE

A Wonderful Beginning

Prelude

Call to Worship

“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry those that are with young” (Is. 40:11, KJV)

Invocation

(A prayer that God will bless both the pastor and congregation and give them a long and meaningful ministry together)

Hymn

“God Of Grace And God Of Glory”

Scripture Reading Pastor)

I Timothy 3:1-7 (Explain that some N.T. scholars believe Elders refers to

Greetings and Welcome

We welcome our guests

We welcome our Pastor and his Family

Chairman of the Search Committee

Community Representative, (Mayor, Fellow Clergyman, etc)

Director of Missions

State Denominational Representative

Hymn

Serve The Lord With Gladness”

Prayer of Gratitude

Special Music

Charge to the Pastor

Layman: Do you covenant before this congregation and God to strive so to live that you may honor Christ and His Church by your life; and do you covenant, in the presence of this congregation, to accept the pastoral responsibility of Servant-Leader in this church, and, to the best of your knowledge and ability to discharge all duties of this office?

Pastor: I do.

Charge to the Church

Layman: Do you, members of _____ Baptist Church, acknowledge that God has led Bro. _____ to serve as Pastor of our church, and do you covenant to encourage and pray for him, and to cooperate with him in fulfilling the Great Commission?

Congregation: We do.

Hymn of Commitment

“Take My Life And Let It Be”

Benediction

Postlude

Appendix 19

PASTOR/STAFF RELATIONS COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

The Pastor/Staff Relations Committee serves as a liaison support group between the pastor and congregation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To give relational support to the pastor and his family in their ministry.
2. To serve as a sounding board for personal and church concerns of the pastor.
3. To bring concerns of the church to the pastor.
4. To be a resource to the pastor in prayer, understanding, and ministry.

PROCEDURES

1. The Committee will be composed of seven (7) persons. They are: Chairman of Deacons, Chairman of the Personnel Committee, and five (5) members-at-large.
2. The pastor is to recommend fifteen (15) persons to the Nominating Committee, from which five (5) will be nominated and elected by the church (it is strongly urged that these persons are representative of the entire church).
3. The five (5) at-large members will be set up on a three-year rotation.
4. The Committee should meet as needed, but at least quarterly.
5. The pastor and/or chairman can call a meeting. The Chairman of the Committee can be elected, along with vice chairman and secretary, at the first meeting.

VALUES

1. It assures the pastor a support group to which he can turn for counsel and advice.
2. The pastor does not have to bare his soul to the entire deacon body or other groups.
3. The church and the pastor have a sounding board for relational concerns.
4. The Committee assists the pastor in making decisions about the church program. There may be times when he needs to bounce ideas off the mind and heart of these key leaders of the church.

Appendix 20

STAFF FINANCIAL SUPPORT WORKSHEET

Name of minister or other paid personnel

	Current	Recommended Amount	Amount
--	---------	--------------------	--------

I. Church Ministry Related Expenses

A. Automobile Reimbursement	\$ _____		\$ _____
B. Convention/Conference Reimbursement	\$ _____		\$ _____
C. Continuing Education	\$ _____		\$ _____
D. Books/Periodicals/Tapes	\$ _____		\$ _____
E. Entertainment/Hospitality Reimbursement	\$ _____		\$ _____
F. Other	\$ _____		\$ _____

TOTAL CHURCH MINISTRY

RELATED EXPENSES

	\$ _____		\$ _____
--	----------	--	----------

II. Protection Coverage/Benefits

A. Retirement Contribution (10% of total income)	\$ _____		\$ _____
B. Insurance:			
▪ Life	\$ _____		\$ _____
▪ Medical	\$ _____		\$ _____
▪ Disability	\$ _____		\$ _____
▪ Dental	\$ _____		\$ _____

TOTAL PROTECTION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COVERAGE/BENEFITS 	\$ _____		\$ _____
--	----------	--	----------

III. Income

A. Salary (Answer b and c for ordained ministers only)	\$ _____	\$ _____
B. Housing Allowance	\$ _____	\$ _____
C. Social Security Tax Off-Set (Taxable)	\$ _____	\$ _____
TOTAL INCOME	\$ _____	\$ _____

HOW TO STRUCTURE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MINISTERS AND OTHER CHURCH EMPLOYEES

1. Determine How Ministry Related Expenses Will Be Covered

- Ministry Related Expenses should be paid by the church as employer.
- **ALL EXPENSES SHOULD BE PAID ON A REIMBURSEMENT BASIS.** (Expenses paid as an allowance increases an employee's tax liability.)
- Ministry Related Expenses should NOT be treated as part of the "Pay Package."
- Expense items frequently covered by the church:
 - Automobile Expense
 - Convention/Conference Expense
 - Continuing Education Expense
 - Book/Periodicals/Tapes
 - Hospitality/Entertainment Expense
- Automobile Expense should be on a PER BUSINESS MILE Basis, using the Current IRS Mileage Rate.

2. Determine Protection Coverage To Be Provided and On What Basis

- Providing adequate protection coverage provides protection both for the employee and the church.
- Decide as a matter of policy what coverage will be provided. Will the church/employer pay for these or will the minister/employee be required to reduce actual compensation to provide necessary protection.
- Protection Coverage that should be included in a Financial Support Plan:

RETIREMENT

Does the church have a retirement plan?

Are the church/employer and the minister/employee aware of the protection benefits and/or matching contributions available through the State Convention when you participate in the Church Retirement Plan?

Is the church/employer doing its part so the minister/employee will have adequate retirement?

SOCIAL SECURITY

Ordained Ministers are, by law, self-employed for Social Security.

For other employees, the church pays 7.65% in addition to 7.65% withheld from employee's pay.

Since Ordained Ministers pay in excess of 15% of Salary & Housing for Social Security taxes, the church is encouraged to pay the minister a Social Security Tax Off-Set equal to 7.65% of Salary & Housing.

Because this off-set is considered taxable income, a minister will still pay a slightly higher effective rate than employees on regular FICA.

LIFE, MEDICAL, DISABILITY & DENTAL INSURANCE

The minister/employee and their family need all three for adequate protection.

This also protects the church in event of serious illness, death or disability.

3. Determine the Amount of Compensation to Be Paid

- Compensation for Ministers = Salary + Housing + Social Security Tax Off-Set.
- Is the amount adequate?
- Consider a Biblical Base for adequate financial support: I Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6; I Tim. 5:17
- Consider family needs. (I Tim. 5:8)
- Consider Cost of Living factors.
- Compare to jobs requiring similar skills and training.
- If the minister is buying/renting, minister estimates total annual housing expense. Designate that portion of the compensation as Housing Allowance. If a house is provided, a housing allowance should still be designated to cover other items such as utilities/insurance not paid by church, furnishings, incidentals, etc...

4. Based on Policies Set in # 2, Determine Costs for Protection Coverage's

- Based on previously determined percentage, compute dollar amount for Retirement.
- Compute 7.65% for Social Security Tax Off-Set if that is to be included.
- Life & Disability Insurance coverage is often based on compensation; therefore, insurance amounts may need to be adjusted to allow for higher premiums.

5. Total & Re-Examine Entire Plan

- With the entire Financial Support Plan in mind, check for areas needing additional discussion and adjustment.

Appendix 21

PASTOR SEARCH PROCESS CHECKLIST

- Pastor Search Committee Election
- Initial Meeting
- Elect Officers
- Plan for Training
- On Church Site
- Retreat
- Select Dates
- Contact Trainer
- Receive Information from Trainer
- Retreat
- Receive Resumes
- Set Cut Off Date for Receiving Resumes
- Administer Congregational Survey
- Work with Finance Committee to Establish Financial Package
- Receive Church Approval for Financial Package
- Work on Profiles
- Church
- Candidate
- Reduce Resumes to a Short List
- Contact Candidates on Short List
- Telephone
- Letter
- First Step of Investigation
- Check References
- Listen to Sermon Tapes
- Reduce to One Candidate
- Second Step of Investigation
- Set up Initial Meeting
- Hear Candidate Preach
- Second Meeting (Optional)
- Time off for vacation, revivals, conferences & conventions
- Salary and Housing
- Moving Expenses
- Reimbursable Ministry Expenses
- Health, Life and Disability Insurance
- Weekend Visit of Candidate and Family
- Set Up Selected Meetings With Church Leaders
- General Reception
- Trial Sermon
- Vote
- Notify Congregation
- Notify Candidate

Appendix 22

DISCOVERING THE CHURCH'S UNIQUE THEOLOGY

“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” Amos 3:3

The Pastor Search Team should select about 25 questions they feel are most important. After answering those questions on other sheets of paper, the candidate should select and answer at least another 25 questions he feels are most important.

1. Describe your conversion and your call to ministry.
2. What do you and your family do for fun and entertainment? What are your hobbies?
3. What is your concept of the Bible?
4. What do you think is the most important thing for you to do during the first year after changing churches?
5. What does total depravity mean to you?
6. What would be your relationship with the church staff?
7. How do you lead your church to give to missions?
8. Describe your family and tell how each member relates to the others and to the church.
9. What do you consider, in the order of their importance, your chief duties as pastor? How do you allot your time?
10. Would you expect to make changes in the current staff? If so, when and how?
11. Is an unsaved person able to respond to the gospel before he/she is regenerated?
12. Describe successes and failures in your ministry.
13. How active are you in associational work? In state convention work? In Southern Baptist Convention work? In civic clubs or social organizations in the community? In other denominations?
14. Do any of your family members have special needs?
15. When was the last times you led someone to Christ? When was the last time you tried?
16. Do you think your best work can be done in a relatively short or a relatively long pastorate?
17. When was the last time you did something for the first time for God?
18. How does a person have faith to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for genuine salvation?
19. Give us your beliefs about the basic Baptist doctrines as stated in <i>The Baptist Faith and Message</i> .
20. How do you encourage spiritual growth in your family?
21. What is your policy on pastoral visitation?
22. What would the ideal decision-making model look like? Pastor? Elders? Staff? Deacons? Committees? Teams? Congregation?
23. Do you schedule office hours and days off?
24. Can you summarize your understanding of the Bible's teaching about election? Who are the elect?
25. How have you grown since entering the ministry?
26. What is your lead spiritual gift and how does that play out practically?
27. What is your view of women in ministry, deacons, and pastoral leadership?
28. Have you ever been incarcerated? Have you ever been convicted of a felony?
29. What is the extent of the atonement? For whom did Jesus die?
30. In what ways do you need to grow now personally and professionally?
31. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy?
32. What is your policy on pastoral counseling? Do you do personal counseling and, if so, on what level? How extensive is your training in this area?

33. What will be your involvement with committees?
34. Describe how you would communicate with different people groups in your community.
35. Can sinners resist God's grace?
36. How would your family feel about moving?
37. What are your convictions on alcohol and drugs?
38. How do you see the role of deacon in the church?
39. How would you rate your interpersonal skills?
40. What do you like most about ministry? Please rank in order of preference: lead, care, and proclaim.
41. Do you believe in eternal security or the perseverance of the saints? If so, please explain.
42. What are your convictions on gambling?
43. The church allows you to lead revivals and attend conventions and other meetings. How many of these do you normally conduct or attend in a year?
44. What is your concept of the role of the laity, both men and women, in the church?
45. To what extent is it appropriate to copy another man's sermons?
46. What are your safeguards against pornography?
47. What style of public worship and preaching do you prefer and practice?
48. What is important to you in handling conflicts between you and a member of the congregation? Tell us about a time.
49. Describe your spiritual health and your feelings about spiritual accountability.
50. Describe your physical health. And what is your exercise program?
51. What are your convictions and practices on multi-culturalism?
52. How would you describe an effective worship service? What musical instruments should and should not be used in worship?
53. What books have you read and/or studied in the last two or three months?
54. Describe your personal, private devotional time.
55. What is your conviction on abortion?
56. What is your personal belief about the nature and function of the church?
57. How comfortable do you feel in working with all age groups in the church?
58. Who are some of the theologians, pastors, professors, or authors that have shaped your theology?
59. What doctrines do you think are essential?
60. Describe your two closest friends.
61. What are your convictions on homosexuality?
62. Describe your three biggest personal victories.
63. What are your greatest strengths and your greatest weaknesses?
64. What are your experiences and convictions about divorce?
65. Is it permissible for a man to serve as a deacon if he or his wife has been divorced?
66. How do you go about making changes in the church?
67. Describe your personal financial situation.
68. What are your convictions on speaking in tongues?
69. How do you work with church leaders in planning?
70. How do you measure success in ministry? How do you know when you have done a good or a bad job?
71. What is your philosophy of stewardship, fundraising, and tithing? Do you tithe?

72. Who are your mentors or models in ministry, past or present?
73. Do you or your family members have outside business interests? Is so, describe them.
74. Why would you consider moving to another church?
75. What is your approach to public invitations and altar calls?
76. What is your view on euthanasia?
77. Describe your use of social media.
78. What are your views of immigrants, refugees, and illegal aliens?
79. To what extent should the pastor be involved in the finances of the church?
80. What is your favorite Bible translation? How open are you to other translations?
81. To what extent should pastors be involved in politics? Why?
82. Describe your family of origin.
83. How do you personally make disciples?
84. Describe how you lead others. Give examples.
85. Is there anything in your past that if it became public knowledge would cause us to hesitate to call you as our pastor or bring embarrassment to our church if we did call you as pastor? If yes, please explain.

**Mid-South Baptist Association has provided this list of questions that they use in their church-planting process.*