

Here's Help

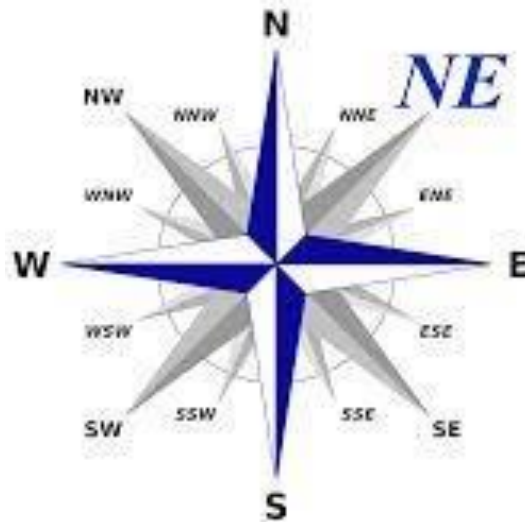
Guidelines for Seeking a Pastor

by

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***This booklet may also be downloaded from our website:
www.MissionNortheast.org.***

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PREFACE

Dr. Leith Anderson in his book, *A Church for the 21st Century* (1994), warned that “a clergy dearth is coming.” He observed that this shortage is “predictable just in terms of those approaching retirement and the greatly reduced number of ministerial candidates.”

There are additional reasons for the scarcity of competent pastors. In many churches the minister’s compensation is not economically feasible for raising a family. There are unrealistic expectations on the pastor and his family leading to burn-out. There is a general disrespect for pastoral leadership. Many capable pastors are no longer in the ministry and spiritually sensitive young people avoid that vocation when they do not see the pastor valued in their local church.

Dr. Anderson concludes, “All these factors point to a coming shortage. There will be a switch from the recent buyer’s market to a seller’s market. Churches will have a much more difficult time finding pastors, will probably expend more time and energy to find effective pastors, and will work much harder to retain those they have.”

A wise church family will humbly and prayerfully seek a new pastor, commit themselves to a supportive relationship with him, and offer as generous compensation as they are able. In spite of the trends, the Spirit of God graciously continues to gift His Church with capable pastoral leadership.

Jesus said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Matthew 9:37-38 NIV)

Our communities are part of the harvest field!

Beginning the Pastoral Search Process with Mission Northeast

Thank you for your interest in the pastoral referral service of Mission Northeast. We value the opportunity to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church by serving you.

This guide has been prepared to assist you in this strategic moment in the life of your church. To be charged with the responsibility to discover the next pastor the Lord has for your church is an awesome responsibility. Although your faith will be stretched through this process, you can trust our Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church, to guide you as you diligently seek Him. We want to come alongside and assist you in this journey.

After your Pastoral Search Committee is formed and you have studied this manual, the next step which enables us to serve you is the completion of the **Church Information Form**. This form is available for download from our website at www.MissionNortheast.org. Instructions for completing the form and a schedule of fees are included. The **Church Information Form** is sent to a potential pastor when we send his form to you. Please contact us if you have any questions or difficulties in completing the form.

In addition to this manual, we hope to assist you in the search process in the following ways:

- We provide a detailed **Ministry Placement Form** about each candidate. This form provides a consistent look for each resume and gathers the same information for each person. This form has been adopted by each of the regions of CBAmerica. You may also use this form for individuals who do not come through our referral process. Simply provide them with the link to the form on our website and ask them to fill it out. That way, you will be able to evaluate all your prospective candidates in the same way.
- We have a network of resources to assist you in the time of transition: area pastors, pulpit supply, interim pastors, and ministry specialists.
- We provide counsel for the committee in interacting with potential candidates. We are often a reference for the church when a pastor wants to know more about the church.
- We provide help with interviews, compensation issues, etc.
- We communicate regularly with search committees and pastors regarding the search process through phone calls, video conferences, and email.
- We provide several church health assessment options. Please see our website or contact one of our area directors to see what's available.

We look forward to serving you!

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PHASES IN THE PASTORAL SEARCH PROCESS

A church that loses its pastor usually begins a journey through five stages of change. Each phase is normal and should be accepted as part of the process of moving from what was to what will be. This time of transition can be an opportunity for spiritual growth within the church family.

1. The Anxiety Phase

The termination of a pastor's ministry raises some natural questions such as: Why did our pastor choose to leave our church? What changes do we need to make in our lives? Who will replace our pastor? Who will perform all the services he did? How can we help serve the church family in this time of transition? Where do we turn for help in the preaching responsibilities? Will people lose interest while we are without a pastor?

All the anxieties of a church family, like all the anxieties of an individual, need to be committed to the Lord. He is the Head of the Body and cares for it. *Do not be anxious about anything, Paul admonished, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God* (Philippians 4:6). Some churches challenge their people to seasons of corporate prayer and fasting concerning the needs of the church and the search for a new pastor. When you do this, God's transcending peace exceeds all your questions and concerns.

2. The Adjustment Phase

As the initial impact of a pastor's departure subsides, a church begins to adjust. Individuals and, when available, other pastoral staff share responsibilities that need to be done. Visiting the sick and newcomers can be accomplished by the board and delegated to those who will assist in this service. A neighboring pastor can be called for funerals or weddings. Other adjustments can be made that will boost a church's confidence that God will enable them to make it through this transition time. Getting used to other voices in the pulpit may be the biggest adjustment of all, but that is essential for the time when a new pastor arrives to be God's spokesman.

3. The Assessment Phase

Between pastors, a church should assess its status spiritually, organizationally and financially. A committee's initial task is to address this question: "What does the Lord want our church to become?" Out of serious reflection and interaction on this matter will come specific guidelines regarding the kind of leadership skills that need to be sought in the new pastor. A church should assess its weaknesses as well as its strengths; its facilities as well as its activities; its opportunities as well as its difficulties. Be careful, however, that you do not spend inordinate time on the negative. Look back long enough to evaluate honestly and confess seriously, then look ahead to the biblical expectations God has for the church.

Mission Northeast offers several assessment tools to assist the church in evaluating its ministry and direction. These tools provide valuable feedback on key areas of a church's ministry. See Supplement 2 in the appendix for more information.

4. The Anticipation Phase

In Acts 13, Paul reviews how Samuel located David, who was God's choice for Israel's leadership. The Lord's confirmation of that choice was: *I have found David . . . a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.* (verse 22, NIV) God will supply the man after His own heart to do His will in your church. It may involve extensive searching and intensive praying – but God will meet the need of a serving and obedient people (Philippians 4:19)!

5. The Acquisition Phase

The day will come when a pastor senses the call of the Great Shepherd, the eager invitation of a congregation and the tug of his own heart and will join the shepherding team of your flock! Be united and excited for that new chapter in the life of your church.

When you acquire your new pastor, love him, pray for him, respect him, generously support him, and cooperate with him. God's Word is clear:

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 NIV)

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17 NIV)

And don't forget to thank God for how He led and sustained you through the phases of transition.

The following pages offer a step-by-step plan for arriving at that joyful day of a new beginning. Of course, a church has to adopt and develop procedures it prefers, but consider these suggested guidelines. At the outset the church will need to select a committee to direct the process of finding God's man for pastoral leadership.

Here are some suggestions on . . .

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR COMMITTEE

“A committee,” goes the humorous old definition, “is a group of the unfit, chosen by the unwilling to do the unnecessary.” The committee in your church that is commissioned with the responsibility of locating a pastoral candidate should be the fit, chosen by the supportive to do what is very necessary. In creating your committee you will need to . . .

1. Determine purpose

The purpose of the search committee is to discern God’s will for a pastoral candidate to present to your church family. This man is God’s servant to help you grow to maturity in Christ and equip you for effective ministry. Pastor-teachers are gifted *to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* (Ephesians 4:11-12) This means that the primary task of the committee is to discern God’s will through the principles of His Word, the persistent prayer of God’s people, the perspective of godly leadership, providential circumstances, the persuasion of God’s Spirit, and the peace of God.

2. Determine size

The number on the committee should not necessarily be a matter of church size. A committee can be too big to meet easily and to function smoothly. It can also be too small to be adequately representative of the congregation. A committee of five to seven seems ideal. Some suggest that an odd number is important in case of tie votes. It is to be hoped that the committee will enjoy a sweet spirit of pulling together to find God’s man and not need to break ties by a single vote. If the group is much larger, bear in mind the factors of reproducing resumes, listening to or watching message CDs, DVDs, or audio and video files, and contacting members for special meetings.

3. Determine representation

Who should be represented on the committee? Your constitution may decree the makeup of the committee. It may even specify that the deacons or elders become the committee. If it doesn’t, it is wise for the boards to be represented as well as the membership at large.

Since a pastor’s ministry must also be responsive to the spiritual needs of women, it is appropriate that the female perspective be represented. If the deacons or elders function as the committee, some women – perhaps deacons’ or elders’ wives – could meet as advisors when a couple is being interviewed. The prospect’s wife would probably be more at ease having other women present.

4. Determine tasks

A chairman who is spiritually and emotionally mature should be elected by the committee, unless chosen by the congregation at the time of appointments. The significant nature of this task points to choosing a godly man who is respected as a spiritual leader within the congregation. A secretary to keep accurate minutes of each meeting is necessary. This person also may handle correspondence, or the chairman may prefer doing it. Prompt and courteous correspondence is crucial for representing Christ and your local church to prospective pastoral candidates. Choose a contact person to receive resumes and give updates to your Mission Northeast Area Director.

Travel is usually involved to hear prospective candidates. If the full committee is unable to travel, several members of the committee should be available for this purpose. When the entire committee is not able to travel, it is usually helpful for spouses to join the members who do.

5. Determine meeting schedule

Each who serves must commit priority time to this priority task. Meetings of the committee should be agreed upon for everyone's convenience. Meet regularly on a specified day even if no major decisions will be made. Prayer and discussion about your goals is important for fusing together divergent personalities and infusing each with the sense of God's will. Of course there may be occasions for special meetings as well. Agree on a concluding time for each session. Late-night marathons often elicit more sharp tempers than sharp thinking.

6. Determine costs

Increased costs for postage, phone calls, travel expenses, office supplies, etc., should be projected for carrying out your responsibilities. Members of the Search Committee should not be expected to absorb these costs themselves. You should also plan on reimbursing the candidate for any travel expenses as well as an honorarium for preaching or teaching. That reimbursement might involve air fare, car rental, lodging, and meals.

The reason for anticipating these costs at the outset is so that all the normal salary and pastoral costs are not consumed in other church projects. When there is a healthy, growing fund, a committee can reach out further in its quest for a quality pastor. Also encourage a fund to be established for moving expenses, which could be substantial.

7. Determine procedures

Is the committee responsible for obtaining pulpit supplies or securing an interim pastor? This must be determined by the church at the time the committee is formed. It is usually desirable for this to be the committee's task, so preaching engagements can be easily coordinated.

The value of an interim pastor is that he is able to provide a more balanced spiritual diet for God's flock. The right man can sense special needs and develop his pulpit ministry to be of maximum help. It also avoids the constant change of personnel in the pulpit. Generally, the man you ask to be interim is not to be a potential candidate. If a number of people want him to be permanent, this could work at cross purposes with the efforts of the committee. Essentially, the role of the interim is to prepare the congregation for its new pastor. A retired pastor may be an ideal interim pastor.

There is increasing emphasis today on the role and value of an intentional interim ministry.

8. Determine accountability

The pastoral search committee should regularly inform and consult with the spiritual leadership of the church (that is, the elders or deacons). Their spiritual insight and oversight should be an integral part of the search process. The congregation should receive regular updates concerning the pastoral search process. Their prayer and participation are important. The more they are involved in the process, the more likely they will be supportive of the conclusion.

Questions for the committee to decide also need to include: What steps will be followed with each name presented? How will interviews with prospective candidates be conducted? See sample questions in Supplement 3.

Now let's consider suggestions for the committee members . . .

HOW TO CARE FOR BASIC MATTERS

Your first need is not to gather a pile of resumes but to begin a process of self-study in which you identify church mission, vision, and values, assess needs and secure basic information.

The first step in determining the path to any destination is knowing where one is currently. When staring at the big map in the mall, before you can determine how to get to your favorite store you need to find the "You are Here" arrow or dot. The same is true in the journey to discover your next pastor. Without clarity on your church's hopes and dreams and how you will accomplish the mission Christ has for you, it is impossible to discover the type of leadership needed from the next pastor. In addition to knowing the condition of your flock (Prov. 27:23), it is also important to understand the community in which the church is located. Communities and neighborhoods are constantly changing. We often fail to notice these changes when we are living in the midst of them. If we are going to be faithful and fruitful in the mission God has given us to make disciples, we need to understand the mission field in which God has placed us.

Mission Northeast has a number of tools to assist you in understanding both your church and community. Contact us to let us help you find the right tool for your church's needs.

1. Clarify mission and ministry

What is going well in the church ministry? What areas need improvement? What are your hopes and dreams for the future of the church? The answers to these important questions begin to shape the profile of the pastor you need to lead your church. Conducting a church health assessment as noted earlier will pinpoint areas of strength and areas that need improvement in your church's ministry. (see Supplement 2)

The committee should also secure or develop a working description of the purpose for which the church exists. Sometimes this is termed "mission clarification." Either your committee or the deacons/elders should compile a realistic, exciting expression of your church's mission. You also might want to describe how each area of ministry (worship, education, outreach, etc.) relates to that purpose. Each working group within the church should be asked to convey in one or two paragraphs what it sees as its role in helping to fulfill your church's mission. Specific objectives should be gathered from each source and condensed into a brief clarification of the church's mission in the world and in the community. Reduce that to a few pages, duplicate and have available as part of the packet for prospective candidates.

Yes, this project will take some valuable time but will be immensely helpful in evaluating each man you consider. You cannot know if a man is right for your church if you do not have a clear focus of what your ministry really is. A prospective candidate has a right to inquire about what the church sees as its function. He should not be expected to bring the goals and guidelines; he ought to be secured because he is challenged with what the church perceives her mission to be. A good pastor will be attracted and motivated by a well-conceived set of objectives that show vision and direction.

Many churches make the mistake of believing the new pastor should bring his own mission and vision to the church. This unfortunately only sets the church and pastor up to fail. This may be one of the primary reasons for short pastoral tenures today. When a new pastor begins to lead the church in a new direction in keeping with his vision, the resulting changes usually result in conflict and frustration if this vision is not shared by the congregation. A much better course of action is for a church to clearly articulate the mission and vision God has placed in their heart to reach their area for Christ and then find a pastor whose heart and passion resonates with their mission and vision.

2. Organize information into operating guidelines

When you have the pulse of the people, you can assemble the information needed to complete the Mission Northeast **Church Information Form**. This simple tool enables appropriate referrals to be offered. This allows for an initial exchange of information and for the potential candidate to be praying along with the committee for God's direction.

The **Church Information Form** is downloaded from our website and completed on a computer using Microsoft Word. It is then emailed to your Mission Northeast Area Director.

3. Develop a pastoral profile

As procedures and standards are adopted they should be listed for use in screening resumes. For example, there may be matters of doctrinal sensitivity that need to be taken into consideration. Or perhaps a style of pastoral leadership is the felt need of the majority. Certain skills or emphases may be preferred. Age and experience may be deemed important in the selection process. Significant factors should become checkpoints for appraising each resume. This will influence choices on the basis of predetermined expectations rather than momentary emotions.

4. Develop a ministry description

This is sometimes called a job description in the business world. It is essential that you think through and list specific responsibilities and policies regarding pastoral function. This will help to avoid later confusion and clashes. Built into this document ought to be a plan for performance review or ministry evaluation. A pastor should know, for instance, that annually the elders/deacons or a pastoral relations committee will share reactions to his ministry and allow for any mid-course adjustments that may be wise. Having this kind of prior agreement with a pastor can head off many of the ugly, damaging conflicts that so often scar churches, pastors, and their families.

The Ministry Description for this pastoral position should be adopted by the church leadership and the church so it has agreement and authority.

5. Prepare an adequate compensation package

You will need to have a clear grasp of what your church is prepared to invest in caring for your pastor and his family. This should include a meeting with the board responsible for this part of your budget. Working out a suitable financial package to offer the candidate may require overcoming the traditions of the past, the uncertainty of the future and the confusion that sometimes surrounds the pastor's compensation. A pastor with the training and experience your church needs is worthy of generous support – even if it stretches your faith. Many churches are offering their pastors the opportunity to purchase their own homes. Consideration should be given to the need for the pastor to build financial equity in a home.

Consider the biblical responsibilities for supporting elders who devote time to preaching and teaching: *The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching . . . The worker deserves his wages.* (1 Timothy 5:17-18 NIV)

Trust in God's provision for your future and growth potential! God will honor a commitment to be generous toward His servants whose vocation is pastoral ministry!

In studying the whole financial picture, it is helpful to divide every expense regarding a pastor into two categories: *Personal Compensation and Benefits, and Professional Costs and Reimbursements*. To get an accurate picture of a pastor's compensation, these two categories must be kept separate.

Personal Compensation and Benefits. A base salary, fair rental value of the parsonage (or housing allowance, if he prefers to own his residence), utilities, Social Security Tax Assistance (because a pastor, considered self-employed by the IRS for Social Security, has to pay more than the average employee), health and disability insurances, and a 403(b)(9) tax-sheltered retirement plan. These are items involved in personal compensation. With changing tax laws, these items should be regularly reviewed and configured for best tax advantage.

Professional Costs and Reimbursements. Auto expenses, phone, computer, ministry expenses, book and journal costs, continuing education, national and regional conference fees – these kinds of items are not salary. They are expenses that should be recognized as essential to maintaining pastoral service. They should not be paid out of a pastor's salary. A car, for example, is as essential for ministry as a phone. Check current tax rules to make sure that the alignment of expenses in this category are labeled and expended to the pastor's tax advantage.

These two categories of financial provision for the pastor's ministry are outlined in the *Terms of the Call* (see Supplement 6) and on the **Church Information Form**. See Supplement 2 for several helpful resources dealing with pastoral compensation.

As you review these matters, keep in mind the biblical principles of pastoral support, such as I Timothy 5:17-18 and I Corinthians 9:7-14. Most servants of God are reluctant to emphasize their personal needs, but their effectiveness in providing for their family releases them to focus on the ministry.

To arrive at an adequate salary you should know what the median income in your community is. Check with your local government for this information. Some churches also average the incomes of the leadership in the congregation. And, of course, you need to take into account what a pastor's needs are based on his family situation. Be sure you are comparing apples with apples when considering compensation. For example, do not include the costs of health insurance and retirement in calculating a pastor's take-home pay unless that is also included in the average incomes of your leaders.

Days off, Holidays, Vacations, and Sabbaticals. Are you offering an adequate amount of time for rest, recreation, and recovery? Actually, this is one of the least expensive and most appreciated benefits you can make available to a man considering your church. The unique demands of the pastorate can exact an enormous toll on the man of God. The stress and burnout casualties in ministry are mounting. Providing adequate time off and a generous vacation package, even if longer than the average member may get, seems wise when the following values are considered.

- Emotional value* – to help a man cope with the drain of confronting all sorts of human crises in the lives of those he seeks to help.
- Physical value* – to give time to renew the strength that has been spent in the hard work and long hours.
- Spiritual value* – to recharge a man's spiritual energy and allow him to be ministered to for a few weeks.
- Family value* – to reward a family for those many evenings without Dad when they shared him with others through the year.
- Church value* – to enable a pastor to bring back fresh perspectives gained from reading, praying and reflecting.

Four weeks of vacation is what most churches provide. And be sure to allow him to divide his time away in a manner that fits his finances and needs best. If he chooses to spend some of that time at home, do not bother him with church business. In fact, if you want a pastor's vacation time to be of maximum value to the family and to the church, make it possible for him to vacate – to get away. Perhaps a recreational vehicle or cottage on a lake can be provided.

6. Check your Expectations for the Size of Pastoral Staff

Churches and pastors often struggle to have an effective, growing ministry due to a failure to have the right size staff for the size and demands of the ministry. Expectations of church members typically outpace the energy and giftedness of the pastoral staff.

Smaller churches who have been accustomed to having a full-time pastor often fail to realize that the changes in the economy and the changes in ministry expectations now make it unlikely for them to afford a full-time pastor and the type of ministry that will reach their community for Christ. In his book, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*, Dr. Gary McIntosh explains how the changes in our society have impacted a church's ability to adequately provide staff and ministry.

"A church cannot pay more than 60% of income for the support of their pastor."

— Dr. Gary McIntosh

The first step toward an adequate staff begins when a small church obtains the services of a full-time pastor. During the 1950s and '60s it was generally assumed that twelve tithing families could support a full-time pastor. I doubt that this was ever completely accurate, but several factors during those years made it more likely that a small church could afford a full-time pastor. Cash salaries and benefit packages for pastors were lower; there was less competition for church members' charitable contributions, so members contributed a higher portion of their income to their church; the generation that was in leadership accepted financial sacrifice due to the experience of the Great Depression and World War II; land and facility costs were fairly reasonable; and there were lower expectations concerning programs in the church.

Of course, this has all changed during the past half century. Pastoral salaries have increased and the rise in health care insurance costs have driven benefit packages higher; church members now demand a greater variety and higher quality of church programming; costs for purchasing land and building facilities have skyrocketed into the millions; numerous charitable organizations and causes now vie for church members' dollars; and the generation now leading churches has experienced a strong economy and isn't comfortable with financial sacrifice.

These and other changes mean it now takes about 150 adult worshipers to provide for a full-time pastor and to finance a church ministry that meets the expectations of today's churchgoers (91).

It is important to remember that these changes simply reflect widespread changes in our society. The rising cost of living has raised the expenses and salaries of everyone and the specialization and sophistication of our culture has raised expectations in all areas of life.

Larger churches must also review the size of their staff and the expectations they have for staff if they want them to be effective. Dr. McIntosh's book is very helpful in understanding the unique differences between small, medium, and large churches and the impact of staff and structure upon the size and growth of the church.

A church's expectation for staff must match the reality of their situation or the result will be ineffectiveness, frustration, and burnout. Churches must place a high priority on providing adequate staff for their ministry. "Many churches place their priorities in this order: facilities, programs, staff. However, you'll discover that churches with this priority list are often the declining or plateaued ones. On the other hand, churches that place their priorities in the order of --staff, programs, facilities-- are usually the growing ones. There is no guarantee that adding staff will produce church growth, but it is rare to find a rapidly growing church that is understaffed." (McIntosh, 95).

Let's think now about that big concern of . . .

HOW TO SECURE PROSPECTS

When a pastoral vacancy occurs names are often volunteered from various individuals. You will need to secure other names by diligent search. That's why it is a good idea to think of yourself as a "Search Committee." Of course, this entails both toil and time. If you were Methodists, for instance, the replacement would be simple. A bishop would assign your new pastor. Baptists, however, prefer self-government. The choice of a pastor must be yours. Make your autonomy work – even if it takes longer than you might desire. Mission Northeast does not seek to impose any pressures or preferences upon you, only to serve and assist in referring competent possibilities for your consideration.

1. Look to your association

Mission Northeast is prepared to serve you in referring capable men. Each CB regional ministry center across the country also maintains a file of potential candidates who have completed the standard form. Your Area Director may be able to offer personal insight about these men. He also knows some who may not be looking for relocation but whose fine ministries and length of service commend them for consideration.

Contact information for other CBAmerica regions will be supplied if you request them. To avoid needless duplication, though, it is generally best to work through your own region and let it contact other regions if additional possibilities are needed.

The advantage of working through your Area Director is that he gets to become better acquainted with your church and your needs through personal contacts with you. The more fully he understands your desires, the better he can help you in your pastoral search. So keep him well-informed, and don't hesitate to call him whenever there is a need for assistance.

2. Plan on names from friends

Receive names that individuals may offer. Do not ask for them, but do not be indifferent to them. While this may not be the best logical method for name procurement, the sovereignty of God can certainly cause the name of His choice to be referred from any source. When names are offered, request as much information as possible. It is also a good idea to ask each who submits a name: "Why do you feel this person would make a good pastor of our church?" If the name submitted is a family member or relative, realize that honest objectivity may be colored by that fact.

3. Expect some to offer their own names

If pastors or those who desire pastorates volunteer their own names, be considerate but cautious. If a man graciously asks to be considered and does not have any referral service to make the contact, give him fair consideration and very thorough evaluation. Or you might refer him to your Mission Northeast Area Director to help in ascertaining his appropriateness for referral to your church.

4. Contact schools if you desire

Christian colleges and seminaries have referral departments. Contacting these schools can make available recent or pending graduates and experienced alumni that might be suitable.

A list of several Bible colleges and seminaries is in Supplement 8. One must assess the graduates on their individual merits and convictions and not exclusively upon the reputation of the school from which they were graduated.

These schools may also post ministry opportunities for their alumni.

When you start gathering names, you will need to know . . .

HOW TO HANDLE RESUMES

The resumes referred by Mission Northeast will give you enough information to acquaint you with a man's training, family and philosophy of ministry. When you are comparing a number of resumes at a time, it may be confusing as to which man is best for your church. If you have listed your expectations and qualifying factors as suggested earlier, then each resume can be evaluated in the light of these. Be careful though, that you are not so idealistic that you are not realistic.

Perhaps a pastor's preaching is not as forceful as you would like, but his pastoral skills are strong. You may prefer a younger man, but a certain brother meets all other standards. Maybe a good man has a physical factor that overshadows an otherwise promising capability. Somebody once pointed out that a man in trouble with the law, run out of town, suffering a serious physical malady, unmarried and over fifty would not check out very well with most committees today. Therefore the apostle Paul, were he alive today, would be bypassed!

Here are some orderly steps for processing resumes

1. Adopt a standard form

Our *Ministry Placement Form* provides a consistent look for each resume and the gathering of the same information on each pastoral candidate. Do **not** create your own form asking for the same or similar information that is already available on our form. Our pastors have already expended a great deal of time preparing this form. If you find there are issues not addressed on our form, these may be explored in the interview process. Although not recommended, you may create a supplement to our form that asks a few questions not already addressed. But keep it very brief! Please send a copy to us; we may include some of them in the next revision of our form.

If you receive a promising resume that is not on the Mission Northeast form, you may want to send him a copy of it and explain that this is the body of information needed to make a fair assessment. This enables you to have the same data on each person being considered. It also has the additional value of determining the man's doctrinal and functional alignment with Mission Northeast. *In all cases be sure that a candidate has signed the four signature pages in the Mission Northeast **Ministry Placement Form** before recommending him to the congregation.*

Experience has revealed that it is wise to discuss names under serious consideration with your Area Director, especially if he has not referred them. Sometimes he is aware of something you might need to know.

2. Be courteous

Each resume represents a man's life and ministry. Give it both consideration and courtesy. Timely communication is greatly appreciated! Write a brief note to those you do not wish to consider further at this time. Sometimes a committee is led back to a person not initially preferred.

3. Ascertain availability

Send a letter of inquiry to those you wish to consider further and ascertain whether they are interested in being considered (note sample letter in Supplement 4). Circumstances change in the course of time, and the person may not choose to move or may have already determined a move. Make your letter personal. A form letter does not convey a high level of interest. You might include a bulletin or brochure, but explain that other information will be sent if the man becomes a viable, suitable consideration. Ask for a reply within a week or two. Don't let men who fail to answer their mail promptly delay the arduous task of pastoral search.

4. Keep looking

Do not feel discouraged if none of the original group of resumes seem to pinpoint the man you seek. Request other resumes. Additional names come in regularly, and perhaps the right one for you will be in the next batch of possibilities sent to you. Often many names and many months are required to locate the pastor gifted and called to serve the Lord among you.

Be sure, however, that you give more than casual consideration to the resumes sent to you by Mission Northeast or other CB regional offices.

5. Respect confidences

One further caution needs to be stressed. Be very careful that you do not divulge confidential names and information outside the committee. A man's current ministry could be jeopardized if word prematurely got to his present congregation that he was being considered elsewhere. This might create needless unrest in the church he serves.

Also, if any negative evaluations or references are received, keep them tightly classified so as not to hurt a man and his ministry. Do not leave resumes, references or minutes lying around the church or a home where they can be read by non-committee personnel. All Ministry Placement Forms, resumes, reference forms, and notes containing personal information should be deleted from computers and physical copies shredded to protect the personal information of each potential candidate.

During the process you need to know . . .

HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULTIES

Let us not become weary in doing good ... (Galatians 6:9 NIV) should earmark your search for a shepherd. The devil may discourage you in many ways, and you may be tempted more than once to “throw in the towel.” Sometimes months may go by with little progress evident. Some in the church family may grow discouraged, become critical of the committee, and even leave. This may not only threaten the survival of the committee but delay the arrival of a pastor.

What should you do if some of these symptoms arise? Immediately pursue four courses of action.

1. Commit yourselves as a committee to renewed conviction that God promises to provide a shepherd for His flock (Jeremiah 23:4).
2. Claim the gracious promise of Psalm 27:13-14: *“I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord: be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”* (NIV) And in Jeremiah 31:16 we read: *““Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded,” declares the Lord.”* (NIV)
3. Call the congregation to an intense week of prayer, honestly stating that limited progress has been achieved and that a significant spiritual breakthrough is needed. Meditating on a passage like Jeremiah 33 may set the tone for this period of prayer and heart-searching: *“Call to me and I will answer you . . . I will bring health and healing . . . I will cleanse . . . They will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide . . .”* (verses 3-9 NIV) In preparation for a new day of ministry, urge that everyone seek forgiveness where needed (1 John 1:9) and fullness as needed (Ephesians 3:16-19). God may be waiting to get His people ready for the man as well as the man ready for the people.
4. Contact your Mission Northeast Area Director and discuss the impasse that you may have. Perhaps a review of procedures and some redirection will enable you to go on to your goal. *“Plans fail for lack of counsel”* (NIV) is the word of wisdom in Proverbs 15:22. Avail yourselves of the resources available to you.

Consider next the crucial state of . . .

HOW TO SELECT A CANDIDATE

1. Make a Personal Contact

A phone or video conference call can be a valuable timesaver. This important conversation can be pre-arranged for a time when all parties can participate. The call should involve at least three committee members (including one woman) and the prospect and his wife. Make this a friendly conversation in which you discuss your church, housing options, community, and vision. Let them ask questions. Do not pursue heavy doctrinal matters at this point. Keep it casual and friendly. This talk will create a positive or negative impression of the prospect's and his wife's personalities, attitudes, and responses. This is much more effective than if only one member of the committee conducts the interview. It gives a broader perspective for evaluation.

2. Request copies of sermons

Far wiser than prematurely visiting a man's church is to ask him for copies of sermons typical of his preaching. It is good to ask for sermons from three or four consecutive Sundays so you can get a sense of his consistency in preaching over time. Some churches post their pastor's messages on their website. In some cases, videos may be available, which afford an additional dimension of evaluation. Listen for content, interest, delivery and style. Maybe even the length is important to you!

3. Prepare a packet

Prior to a personal interview, assemble a packet of information. Include material that will give the recipient insight into your church and community. Also include a church constitution or by-laws. If you have a church covenant, be sure to include that and any freestanding mission and vision statements that reflect your church's purpose. Make sure to add a copy of your annual report, church newsletter, pictures, and a description of church and parsonage facilities. Information on schools will be of interest to those with school age children.

A letter at this point might also pose any specific doctrinal or practical questions that need clarification. Ask if the salary package is adequate and clear.

In corresponding with a potential candidate, it is usually wise to mail everything to his residence and mark it "confidential." It may also be his preference that you phone him at home rather than at the church office.

4. Interview personally

If after the personal contact and the sermon evaluation, you desire to get better acquainted with a prospect, invite him to meet with your committee. In situations where this is not convenient, you may want to arrange a video conference.

If you interview personally at this point or at a later time, certain essential questions need to be asked. List what you feel is important in determining the choice of a man. Supplement 3 suggests some items you may want to cover in an interview, using the "TEAM" approach.

5. Check references

In the process, now is a good time to check references. Please do not bother people with the task of giving a reference until you are impressively interested in a man. Write to, email, or phone those whose names have been given in the resume. If you pursue secondary references, be sure not to compromise the pastor's confidentiality. You do not want unwittingly to harm his present ministry.

Don't prepare too lengthy a reference form (note the sample reference letter in Supplement 5, which may also be used for phoning). Those who give sensitive information often would rather give it verbally than in writing. It also allows for some discussion. If you mail a form, always enclose a stamped and addressed envelope for the reply.

6. Visit and observe

The committee should determine the most promising candidate from among the prospects considered and carefully checked. Give adequate time for discussion, prayer, and unity. When one man seems to be the best choice, plan to visit his church to hear him preach, if possible. If a student or minister is not presently pastoring, perhaps he can be heard at a church willing to let him preach for that occasion.

Visiting a man's place of ministry will offer an impression of the congregation, the man's appearance and effectiveness in the pulpit, and the impact of the service.

It is usually not wise to interview people in the congregation and attempt to get evaluative information from them about the pastor. The risk is that you could either receive a jaundiced perspective from an embittered person or encounter a devoted member who would be upset over the possibility of losing a beloved shepherd.

Should the pastor know that a delegation from your committee is coming? Definitely! It avoids any possibility of getting there only to discover a different speaker. Yes, it may allow the pastor to prepare his best. But if he does not impress you at his best, then what he might have sounded like if you had not informed him doesn't really matter. Some committees choose to request a list of the Sundays within the span of a month that would be appropriate days to visit. The specific date of the planned visit is not indicated, but you have provided the pastor opportunity to prepare his board, if he chooses. You certainly do not want to create embarrassment for a pastor by not giving him the opportunity to minimize undue curiosity.

Scheduling a definite date with the prospect and his wife for your visit allows for a planned interview. If given a choice, opt to meet with the pastor in his residence so you can become acquainted with his family and observe his home.

Ascertain his level of interest in pastoring your church. Offer any additional information about your church and community. Inquire if the salary proposal sent earlier needs discussion or clarification – or even negotiation. Be particularly sensitive to the housing preference – private housing or church owned parsonage. Learn how soon he can relocate if God leads him to your church. Assure him that your committee will be in prayer and discussion regarding his availability, and he will be notified of your decision following the next meeting.

7. Evaluate and decide

If the visiting committee members have had adequate time to compare evaluations and the full committee senses agreement that this is "the man," he should be invited to candidate at a mutually agreeable date. A man may prefer to come first as a pulpit supply so he can better determine his feelings about the church before becoming a candidate. You may also prefer it this way, feeling that a double exposure is better than a single visit.

While this may seem to be desirable, be aware of some disadvantages. If the distance is significant, this represents additional costs. Even though this would not be an official candidating visit, it would still be appropriate to offer to defray the cost for him to bring his wife and family. Also, in this situation, your people would be evaluating only a man's pulpit ministry without due regard for his other pastoral skills. These would be openly discussed with different segments of the congregation in an official candidating circumstance. Furthermore, many pastors find it difficult to be away two Sundays within a short period of time. A one Sunday visit is the norm for most prospects.

When you have sensed God's leading to one man, here's . . .

HOW TO PRESENT A CANDIDATE

1. Plan the candidating event

Carefully work out the schedule of activities for the candidate's visit. Invite his wife to accompany him, and his children, if feasible. Having the children present if they are very young may serve no valuable purpose. Older children usually would want to be part of the major decision they may face. It is understandable if they would like to see the community and schools.

Some churches prefer a Wednesday through Sunday visit; others have a week-long candidating experience to enable the church to get to know the pastor better. The longer candidating enables members of the church family to set up personal appointments with the potential new spiritual leader.

Friday through Sunday seems to be the most popular format. Friday evening might be used as a public get-acquainted occasion – either at a dinner or a dessert setting. The candidate and his wife would be introduced and asked to give brief testimonies of their conversions. The man could tell of his call to ministry and churches served. General questions of interest could be asked by the people present. Keep this to a reasonable length so that it does not drag on exhaustingly.

Saturday can be used for visiting the community, looking at potential housing or the parsonage, and perhaps a meeting with combined boards and leaders. You might schedule your guests into two key homes for lunch and supper. Allow the couple to get a good night's rest for a strenuous Sunday.

If the visiting candidate is expected to teach a class in Sunday School, be sure to notify him of this assignment in adequate time to prepare. In order to observe his leadership in worship, request that he read the Scripture lesson and offer the pastoral prayer. If it is a communion Sunday, the deacons should preview with him the procedures and his part in them. Most candidates would prefer not to conduct the entire morning service in a new situation. Let him know how and when the service usually ends.

A Sunday afternoon meeting with the candidate may be used to cover any matters not yet discussed. If there is an evening service, the candidate usually is expected to preach again. He will be interested in knowing if it is less formal, held in a different room, and if the style of ministry is usually more teaching-oriented.

2. Be sensitive to the children

If the children accompany the visiting pastor, introduce them to the congregation but do not expect them to speak or to feel comfortable with much public exposure. This scrutiny is difficult for children. Let them stay in the background. Perhaps arrangements can be made for them to be cared for during any sessions that their parents need to attend on Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

3. Reserve adequate accommodations

Your special guests will appreciate being lodged in facilities that allow them privacy for personal discussions and rest. This will demonstrate sensitivity and consideration to the candidate and his family. Be sure to make arrangements regarding the bill when you reserve the dates.

4. Publicize the schedule

The candidating schedule should be announced at least two weeks in advance. Check your constitution or bylaws in this regard. The date and time of the business meeting for extending a call may also be announced at the same time. In the publicity be sure to give a profile of the pastor, his family, his training, and the churches he has served. The people need to know as much as possible about him.

5. Arrange reimbursement

All expenses and an honorarium should be paid to the candidate before he returns home. Arrange with the treasurer in advance for this check to be presented. This kind of thoughtfulness communicates your concern for the potential pastor's financial well-being.

6. Review the weekend

Though a business meeting may have already been slated, the committee needs to review the candidating event and determine a final "go" for the big vote. If something detected in the weekend's encounter is cause for alarm or if the committee is not unanimous about proceeding, then the business meeting should be cancelled or used to give a report to the people. It is better to withdraw a recommendation than to proceed with misgivings. Your unanimous endorsement is weighty with the people. They would not want to vote to call a man if there are reasons for the committee's lack of confidence.

If the committee is in agreement to recommend that the candidate be invited to pastor the church, here's . . .

HOW TO EXTEND A CALL

1. Schedule the Business Meeting

Normally the Business Meeting is as soon after the candidating weekend as feasible. Everyone, including the candidate, is anxious to know what the action of the church will be. Often the meeting is held the Sunday night the man candidates and after he has left. If this is planned, the committee needs to do its final review prior to the meeting. Some churches prefer to make the decision the following Wednesday night, which allows some time for reflection and interaction among the church family. Still others feel that the next Sunday morning, after the service, is best because of maximum participation in the decision process. It is not the best procedure to vote on the candidate after the morning service at which he preaches, unless the church is very small.

2. Consult your constitution

Determine how the Business Meeting is to be conducted and who is to moderate it. Find out from your constitution what number constitutes a quorum. Be clear about the percentage of vote required to extend a call and the age requirements for voting.

3. Conduct the Vote

Begin the Business Meeting with prayer. The committee chairperson should state the recommendation of the committee and move that the attending members vote to invite the candidate to become the pastor, with the terms clearly indicated (see sample terms in Supplement 6). This is usually termed "the call." Actually, of course, it is acknowledging what a church senses may be God's call to a man to come and serve as pastor.

The motion should be seconded and then discussion allowed. A vote should be a secret ballot so as not to pressure conformity to the will of the majority or of the leadership. The vote should be taken in accordance with the stipulations of your constitution regarding eligibility for voting and percentage of vote needed to issue an official call. Be sure that people understand how to mark their ballots. "Yes" indicates a vote to call the candidate; "No" is a vote not to issue a call. "Abstention" should be written on the ballot by those who choose not to register a vote. Make certain that pencils are available for marking the ballots and that clerks are appointed to tally and report the result, including any abstentions.

4. Seek united support

If the tally of the ballots is sufficient for a call to be extended, but there are some negative votes, ask if there can be a unanimous vote of support if the man accepts the call. This may be done by raising hands or standing. This assures the man being invited to shepherd the church that all expressed willingness to cooperate with him and support the majority decision. The chairperson of the meeting should announce that the pastor will be contacted promptly and given the results of the vote.

Appreciation should be expressed to the committee. A motion to adjourn is then in order.

5. Notify the candidate

The candidate should be notified of the vote promptly. His decision may be asked for at that time. If he requests time to consider the matter, ask him to notify you within a week, preferably in time to announce it at the next service. If the motion did not carry to call the pastor, let him know the vote as graciously as possible and thank him for his availability and prayer.

6. Mail official terms

The official action of the church and the terms of the call, including all financial and living arrangements, should be mailed quickly to the pastor (see sample "Terms of the Call" in Supplement 6). This becomes a binding agreement and it should be absolutely clear.

7. Announce the good word

As soon as the candidate has indicated his acceptance of the call, release the happy news to the congregation and to the community. An arrival time should be announced. Give to your local newspaper a write-up. And also be sure to promptly notify your Mission Northeast Area Director.

One final concern of the committee has to do with . . .

HOW TO WELCOME YOUR NEW PASTOR

1. Plan his moving

The cost of this will already have been agreed in the negotiations, but let him know that he is now free to make moving arrangements. Offer to line up volunteer help upon arrival as may be needed.

2. Prepare the parsonage

If your church has a parsonage, make sure all is in readiness for the new occupants. Any fixing up, painting or cleaning should be cared for so that you are proud to turn over the home to your new pastor and family.

3. Hold a food shower

An old-fashioned custom that is still very much in order is to stock the cupboards with food prior to the pastor's arrival. A week or two of contributing food items can be a great welcome treat for the new family who has probably depleted their pantry prior to moving.

4. Arrange arrival help

It would be very thoughtful to send in dinner for their first evening in the parsonage. Child care during unloading might also be most helpful. Perhaps assistance with making beds and settling essentials for the first night would be appreciated, too. And, of course, help may be needed moving in the furniture.

5. Schedule an installation

It is customary and meaningful for the church to host an installation service as soon after arrival as possible. It probably ought to be planned prior to arrival and in consultation with the pastor-elect. Since it is appropriate to invite neighboring pastors and churches to attend, it usually is held on a Sunday afternoon or weekday evening. Several nearby pastors may be asked to participate by bringing greetings, a charge to the church, a word of prayer, and a welcome into the local pastors' fellowship. The chairperson of the committee usually speaks briefly, recounting the process and rejoicing in the cooperation received. Perhaps it would be possible for a representative from Mission Northeast to be present to share in this happy event (a sample installation service is in Supplement 7).

A reception after the service with simple refreshments is customary. It is always a nice touch when a large, attractively-decorated cake in the middle of a table welcomes the new family. A love gift is sometimes given to help with the costs of settling into a new home.

May God reward your hard work with a beautiful on-going relationship with your new shepherd. And may you marvel at the blessing of God upon your church! Thank you for the privilege of helping, and be sure to let Mission Northeast know how we can continue to serve you.

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Supplement 1

SEARCH COMMITTEE PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

ORGANIZING

- ! Committee tasks determined
- ! Meeting times established
- ! Committee costs arranged
- ! Interim pulpit arrangements made

DATA-GATHERING

- ! Complete Church Health Assessment
- ! Church Mission, Vision, and Values Clarified
- ! *Church Information Form* returned to your Mission Northeast Area Director
- ! Screening guidelines adopted
- ! Compensation package projected
- ! Vacation and Time-off Policy

SECURING NAMES

- ! Schools contacted
- ! Decide content of Letter in Inquiry
- ! Provide safe filing and handling systems

SELECTING CANDIDATE

- ! Prepare personal interview questions
- ! Compile information packet
- ! Arrange for reviewing sermons
- ! Duplicate reference form
- ! Plan travel and visit procedures
- ! Choose candidate

PRESENTING CANDIDATE

- ! Schedule date and details
- ! Reserve accommodations
- ! Publicize schedule
- ! Arrange reimbursement
- ! Review weekend

EXTENDING THE CALL

- ! Plan Business Meeting
- ! Consult constitution and by-laws
- ! Prepare motion and ballots
- ! Notify candidate of vote
- ! Communicate the official terms of the call in writing to the pastor
- ! Announce his decision to the congregation

WELCOMING THE CANDIDATE

- ! Make moving arrangements
- ! Prepare parsonage, if applicable
- ! Hold food shower
- ! Arrange arrival help
- ! Plan installation service

Supplement 2

TOOLS FOR ASSESSING YOUR CHURCH AND CANDIDATE

Mission Northeast makes available a variety of tools to help a church understand its current needs and direction. An investment here is critical to helping a church find a pastor that shares the same mission, vision, and values as the church. Skipping this step usually leads to frustration, ineffectiveness, and a short pastoral tenure.

Contact Mission Northeast for help in determining which tool is the best one for your church.

TOOLS FOR ASSESSING PROSPECTIVE PASTORAL CANDIDATES

SEARCH - *The Pastoral Search Committee Handbook* by William Vanderbloemen

This practical handbook guides church members through the process of finding the right leader for their church and ministry context.

Vanderbloemen Search Group for Background Checks

One of the crucial steps in the hiring of Pastoral and Executive Staff members often overlooked is background checks. This needs to go beyond the background checks that churches need to do for ministry workers. In addition to the criminal check, churches would be wise to do a credit check and verify educational credentials. Vanderbloemen Search Group, a retained executive search firm, offers this service to churches that have already begun the search process for a fee of \$295. Access Vanderbloemen Search Group at www.vanderbloemen.com

Grip-Birkman Leadership Profile - A behavioral and spiritual gifts assessment looking at three primary questions: Where is the leader strong? Where is the leader weak? Who does the leader need? This in-depth tool provides new insight into how our natural behavior interacts with the supernatural empowerment of God. The focus of this assessment is how one can powerfully play their God-designed role in the Body of Christ most effectively.

TOOLS FOR ASSESSING CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Ministry Mapping assists a church in aligning its ministries to its mission, vision, and values. It helps clarify focus, unity, and synergy in accomplishing Christ's mission. Major roadblocks that must be addressed are identified so the church can accomplish its mission. It will guide the church in formulating practical steps to move forward to engage Christ's mission.

MissionInsite provides current year demographics for population, households, and families in your ministry area, as well as age, ethnicity, phase of life, and life-style. Many variables are integrated in five year projections to help the church as it develops its ministry strategy.

TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING PASTORAL STAFF COMPENSATION PACKAGES

Guidestone offers a wide range of financial resources including: a 403(b)(9) retirement plan, financial counsel, and planning. Guidestone may be accessed online at www.Guidestone.org.

The **Zondervan Church and Nonprofit Tax and Financial Guide** by Dan Busby is an annual reference guide offering tax and financial advice to churches and nonprofit organizations. Issues of financial accountability, receiving and maintaining tax-exempt status, accounting for charitable gifts, and other crucial topics receive careful and full discussion.

The **Zondervan Minister's Tax and Financial Guide** includes sound retirement planning helps, compensation planning guidance, and ways to maximize business expense reimbursements. The guide is also useful to church treasurers, business administrators, and tax preparers who assist ministers.

Compensation Handbook for Church Staff by Richard R. Hammer enables the church to compare its plan to other churches with similar positions and demographics and structure compensation packages that are both impartial and reasonable. The handbook is produced annually.

Supplement 3

THE "TEAM" INTERVIEW

The spiritual qualifications of a pastor, listed in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 must guide you in evaluating a man's fitness to be your candidate. Likewise, Ephesians 4; I Timothy 4; II Timothy 4; Hebrews 13 and I Peter 5 set forth some of the functions of a pastor. Study these Scriptures, then interview a prospective pastor regarding some specific matters. The "TEAM" concept gives you an outline of four areas of inquiry . . .

T – TESTIMONY

- When and how did you come to faith in Christ?
- When and how did you sense a desire to become a pastor?
- Is there anything in our doctrinal statement that you question?
- What do you believe are the marks of a Bible-believing church with baptistic convictions?

E – EXPERIENCE

- What ministries have you had and with what results?
- What education or special seminars have you had and how has this training strengthened your ministry?
- What are some special lessons God has taught you that would be helpful for our church?

A – AIMS

- What is your vision for local church ministry?
- What is your view of small group ministry?
- What is your view of seeker-sensitive services?
- How do you plan to develop leaders in the church?
- What personal goals do you have for your life?
- How would you seek to relate to the boards in our church?
- What method of preaching would you use?
- How would you aim to implement organizational changes?
- What is your burden for ministry to youth and senior saints?
- What would be your emphasis on evangelism, missions and stewardship?
- What is your plan for visitation?

M – MATE (Directed to the wife)

- When and how did you come to know Christ?
- How do you maintain the priority of the family?
- How do you view your husband's ministry?
- What are your spiritual gifts?
- How do you view your role in the church?

Supplement 4

LETTER OF INQUIRY

(Note: Be sure to adapt for your use and type personally. Do not use a form letter with blanks filled in.)

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Pleasant Town, USA

Date

Dear Pastor Nicename:

Your resume has been referred to us by *(Insert appropriate source)* as one who might be interested and available for a new challenge.

Our church is located in a community of great opportunity in the western part of our state. Average Sunday morning attendance is 105, and our fine facilities have space for anticipated growth.

Are you interested at this time in exploring with us the possibility of pastoring our church? We realize that much prayer and much exchange of information are necessary in the process of determining God's will. We simply want to know if we may pursue the matter further with you.

Kindly let us know within two weeks of receipt of this letter if you are open to consider the possibility of becoming our pastor. We will then forward a packet of information and seek to become better acquainted.

Sincerely in Christ,

Mrs. Ima Asking
Secretary, Search Committee

Supplement 5

REFERENCE FORM

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Pleasant Town, USA**

Date

YOUR NAME . . . _____

has been given as one who knows Rev. John Nicename.

He is under consideration as a possible candidate for the pastorate of our church. Credibility for God's service is a serious matter. Would you, therefore, comment briefly on as many of the following areas as possible.

Your response will be accorded the highest confidentiality. Thank you for your help and promptness. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Ima Asking
Secretary, Search Committee

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. His reputation . . . | 6. Any cautions . . . |
| 2. His personality . . . | 7. Leadership style . . . |
| 3. His preaching . . . | 8. His marriage and family life |
| 4. His past ministry . . . | 9. His wife's role in ministry |
| 5. His strengths . . . | 10. His relationship with Conservative Baptist ministries |

Your relationship to our potential candidate:

Additional comments:

Please provide contact information for any others who may serve as confidential references.

Signed: _____

TERMS OF CALL

(Please adapt to suit your particular Constitution and By-laws)

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Pleasant Town, USA

Date:

TERMS OF CALL

VOTE TO CALL: *Rev. John Nicename*

Yes votes: _____; No Votes: _____; Abstentions _____

TENURE:

The term of service is to continue indefinitely. Notification of termination is to be by thirty day notice and mutual agreement (be sure it matches what is in your church bylaws or constitution).

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS:

Personal Compensation and Benefits

Annual cash salary	
Housing allowance	\$
(parsonage or personal home)	\$
Social Security offset	
Health insurance	\$
Disability insurance	\$
403(b)(9) Retirement plan	\$
Other:	\$

Professional Costs and Reimbursements

Automobile expenses	\$
Books and journals	\$
Office Expenses	\$
Continuing Education	\$
Conference Fees	\$
Professional Hospitality/Entertainment	\$
Cell Phone	\$
Other	

HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS:

Many churches are encouraging their pastors to purchase their own home. Sometimes churches assist with the down payment. A housing allowance is provided for the expenses of the home.

Continued on next page

Other churches provide a parsonage with utilities and phone included. Repairs on parsonage should be cared for by the Board of Deacons/Trustees. The church should specify the responsibilities of the pastor for the lawn care and snow removal.

CHURCH CONFERENCES:

It is expected that the pastor attend the annual conference of the regional CB fellowship. Actual expenses of registration, travel, food and lodging to be paid by the church. If the pastor's wife is able to accompany him, her lodging and meals will be paid by the church. Time spent at CB conferences or church camping functions will not be deducted from vacation allowance.

TIME-OFF CONSIDERATIONS:

- Four weeks of vacation with full salary will be granted within each twelve months. This time may be taken in two or more segments, if desired. Arrangements of time away and a schedule of suitable speakers are to be worked out with the leadership team.
- At least one day off each week is encouraged, and sufficient other time to give quality attention to the needs of the pastor's family.
- Two Sundays for ministry elsewhere will be permitted.
- Time off for medical needs will be granted up to thirty days within a calendar year. More time needed than that will be reviewed by the church leadership.

MOVING ARRANGEMENTS:

Moving costs and family travel expenses (including lodging and meals) will be prepaid or reimbursed by the church in accordance with arrangements made with the Search Committee.

The above terms have been authorized by the congregation along with the invitation for you to become pastor. Please sign and return one copy of these arrangements, indicating your agreement. Please indicate, too, the date of your arrival in the parsonage and the first Sunday you expect to be in the pulpit.

Sincerely in Christ,
Mrs. Ima Asking
Secretary, Search Committee

I understand the above terms and agree to them,

(Signed) _____

(Date) _____

Supplement 7

INSTALLATION SERVICE

Plan this in consultation with your new pastor to be held as soon after his arrival as convenient. Someone other than the pastor should emcee it – perhaps the Search Committee chairperson.

Prelude

Song of Worship

Invocation (Guest pastor)

Scripture reading (Guest pastor)

Welcome to Pastor and Family (Chairman, Board of Elders/Deacons)

Presentations (Flowers may be presented to the pastor's wife. If a love gift has been collected, it can be presented here.)

Special Music

Welcome to Mission Northeast (Representative of the regional or local association.)

Charge to the church (Guest speaker)

Charge to the pastor (Guest speaker)

Response by the Pastor (A few words of appreciation and challenge.)

Closing song

Benediction (Guest pastor or new pastor)

Postlude

Guests are invited to a reception in the fellowship hall after the service.

(Information about the new pastor may be included on the facing page of the special bulletin for this occasion. Also, a "thank you" for the work of the Search committee is in order.)

Supplement 8

RECOMMENDED SCHOOLS FOR PASTORAL RESOURCES

When contacting a school, they will typically be interested in the title of the position you are seeking to fill along with a brief ministry description and the qualifications for that ministry. You will need to provide your address, a contact number and an e-mail for potential candidates. Schools will not only provide contacts with recent graduates seeking their first ministry but also with alumni who are seeking a change of ministry.

Bethel Seminary

3900 Bethel Drive, St. Paul, MN 55112
651.638.6400
www.bethel.edu/seminary

Biblical Theological Seminary

200 North Main Street, Hatfield, PA 19440
800.235.4021
www.biblical.edu

Columbia Biblical Seminary

P.O. Box 3122, Columbia, SC 29230
800.777.2227
www.ciu.edu

Dallas Theological Seminary

3909 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, TX 75204
800.387.9673
www.dts.edu

Denver Seminary

6399 South Santa Fe Drive, Littleton, CO 80120
800.922.3040
www.denverseminary.edu

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

130 Essex Street, South Hamilton, MA 01982
978.468.7111
www.gordonconwell.edu

Grace Theological Seminary

200 Seminary Drive, Winona Lake, IN 46590
866.974.7223
www.grace.edu

Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary

1001 East Beltline NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505
866.697.1133
www.cornerstone.edu

Lancaster Bible College & Seminary

901 Eden Road, Lancaster, PA 17601
800.544.7335
www.lbc.edu

Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary

2810 Curry Road, Schenectady, NY 12303
800.209.3447
www.mabts.edu

New England Bible College & Grace Evangelical Seminary

502 Odlin Road, Bangor, Maine 04401
207.947.1665
www.nebc.edu

Northeastern Seminary

2301 Westside Drive, Rochester, NY 14624
716.594.6800
www.nes.edu

Cairn University

200 Manor Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047
800.572.2472
www.cairn.edu

Davis College

400 Riverside Drive, Johnson City, NY 13790
607.729.1581
www.davisny.edu

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

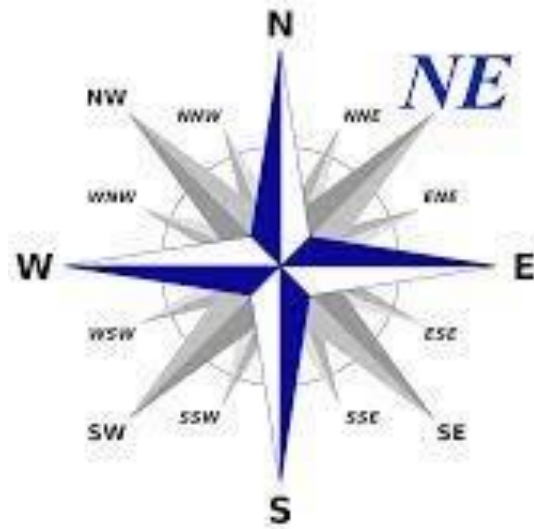
2065 Half Day Road, Deerfield, IL 60015
847.945.8800
www.divinity.tiu.edu

Western Conservative Baptist Seminary

5511 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd., Portland, OR 97215
800.547.4546
www.westernseminary.edu

Wheaton College Graduate School

501 College Avenue, Wheaton, IL 60187
800.888.0141
www.wheaton.edu/Graduate-School



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