

The Pastor Search Committee

A Guide to Finding God's Leader for Your Church

Written By

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INTRODUCTION

No greater honor and no graver responsibility can come to a person than to be chosen by his / her church to help find a new pastor. The choice you make will likely have much to do with the future, the spirit, and the effectiveness of your church as anything you can do. To do your work right will demand your highest and best effort.

If your church is typical it may take from six months to two years to complete the task. During this time you will spend more time in meetings and you will pray more earnestly than you ever thought possible. You will develop a deeper appreciation for your own church than you ever had before. And you will develop a bond of fellowship with your fellow committee members that will last a lifetime. It will be demanding, but it will also be rewarding.

Many people who are chosen to serve on a pastor search committee have never served in that capacity before. So, you are being called on to do a job for which you have no experience and for which you may feel totally unprepared. That's why I have written this booklet. It is to help you with your difficult responsibility. While there is no one way to do it, I have dealt with scores of pastor search committees over the past 40 years. It is from this experience and from a concern for our pastors and our churches that I write.

I hope you'll find it helpful. The scriptures remind us, "Trust in the Lord with all throe heart; and lean not unto throe own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

The Process

The Queen of England reportedly said to William Gladstone, "There are not many good preachers anymore." The famous jurist is supposed to have replied, "My dear, there are not many good anythings." There is, of course, more to being a preacher than preaching. That's the public part, the ' most visible part, and in some ways the most important part of his work. But he is also to pastor (feed and lead) the people and to administer the work of the church. I am not sure how plentiful good preachers are today, but there are even fewer who can do all the things a good pastor should do.

But you'll likely discover that soon enough. Why do I say that? A good rule of thumb is to take a month for every year your former pastor was with you to find his successor. In the churches I have served as interim it has taken anywhere from twelve months to two years to find a pastor. It may take less time for your church, but my guess is, that is about standard. Your committee should avoid being in a hurry to find a pastor. This is often a disaster.

In the interest of time, yours and the church's, let me offer these suggestions that may help you and your fellow committee people shorten the process.

Elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary, to lead your committee. The chairman is to keep the group moving toward its task. He is to lead the group in selecting candidates, arranging for visits, and keeping the meetings on target. The vice chairman presides in the absence of the chairman. The secretary keeps the minutes of all meetings and saves them for the church records.

- Accept only written recommendations for prospective candidates.
- Don't accept at face value written character references. Do your own investigating. Sometimes, Christian workers have a hard time being candid about one another.
- Be congenial with one another. If two people on the committee are at odds and can't resolve their differences, they should resign. If one person tries to dominate or divert the committee from its primary mission he/she should be confronted for the good of the entire committee and the church.
- Vote on all matters of importance by secret ballot. It's the only way to get an honest opinion.
- Don't require a unanimous vote. You can't know that everyone on your committee is walking with the Lord.
- Alternates on the committee, if there are any, should sit in on the meetings at the church to keep abreast of the committee's progress, but they should not travel with the committee, they should not participate in discussions and they should not vote.
- Family members of committee members should not visit prospective candidates or be kept abreast of the activities of the committee. The church should be kept informed by regular reports from the chairman of the committee at the monthly business meetings or in Sunday worship services.
- Remember your responsibility is to find a pastor for the church, not for yourself alone. God will give you and the other committee members collective wisdom.
- Be patient. If your search goes on too long there is a danger you'll get impatient and act hastily. Pastors are easier to get than to get rid of. Remember, he who waits on the Lord loses not time.

- Adopt the procedure you will follow. Here are eight steps to consider.
 1. Study your church and your community.
 2. Develop a profile of what your church needs in a pastor.
 3. Know what you believe.
 4. Examine your financial support of the pastor.
 5. Investigate and evaluate your prospects.
 6. Get personally acquainted with one another.
 7. Reach agreement with the prospect on all "negotiable" such as financial support, time away, sabbatical leaves, relationship to staff and pastoral prerogatives such as selection of guest speakers and staff members.
 8. Invite your prospect to preach in your church and vote.
 9. Bathe all you do in prayer.

CHAPTER I

STUDY YOUR CHURCH AND YOUR COMMUNITY

The first step to finding a new pastor is to get to know your church and your community. You already have a love for and a loyalty to your church and community. That's understandable and commendable. But are you knowledgeable? Do you really know the status of your church and your community? You must get to know both if you are to know the kind of pastor you need and if you are to be honest with prospects as you talk to them about being your pastor. So, begin by making a realistic assessment of both your church and your community. Don't let your love for and familiarity with them blind you to the facts. Be as honest and as fair as you can. Here are some things you'll need to know:

THE STATE OF YOUR CHURCH

- Ask a committee member or a secretary or a staff member to develop graphs showing the ten-year record of your church. This will enable you to see whether your church has declined, plateau, or is growing. This information can be gleaned from your Annual Church Profile or from your associational minutes. Make graphs of the following:

- Ten years average Sunday School Attendance.

Figure 1 (See Appendix 1)

- Total additions for the past ten years.

Figure 2 (See Appendix 2)

- Ten year giving record.

Figure 3 (See Appendix 3)

- The number and percentage of each age group in your Sunday School. (See Fig. 4.)

Figure 4 (See Appendix 4)

Sunday School by Age Group

| Department | Age | Average Attendance Per Week | % |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Gen. Officer and Library | - | 9 | 1.08 |
| Adult 1, 2, 3, 4 | 64 and Up | 272 | 32.54 |
| Adult 5 & 6 and Single 1 | 55-63 | 66 | 7.89 |
| Adult 7 & 8 | 45-54 | 63 | 7.54% |
| Adult 9 | 36-44 | 59 | 7.06 |
| Adult 10 | 35 & under | 45 | 5.38 |
| Singles 2 | - | 13 | 1.56 |
| Youth & College/Career | - | 116 | 13.88 |
| Children | - | 89 | 10.65 |
| Preschool | - | 85 | 10.17 |
| TOTAL | | 836 | 100.0 |

- List the names of the last three pastors of your church, the length of their tenure, and the reasons they left.
- Discuss the major challenges in your fellowship. A declining or aging membership?
- Poor location? Inept staff? Serious divisions in the church? A difficult power structure?
- Understand the potential for your church and your community. Be realistic about growth possibilities.

PROFILE OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Declining? Plateaued? You should know the population of your community, its ethnic makeup, its public and private school enrollment, and its projected growth for the future. A graph plotting some of these figures for the past ten years will give you a picture of your community. This information can be gained from your chamber of commerce or local school administration. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5 (See Appendix 5)

CHAPTER II

DEVELOP A PROFILE OF WHAT YOUR CHURCH NEEDS IN A PASTOR

You may want to survey your congregation to know their expectations of the new pastor and their preference concerning his age, experience, education, etc. Here is a simple survey you may want to use:

(Sample Survey to be used by Search Committee)

Your Baptist Church
Pastor Search Committee
Church Member Questionnaire

"What Do I Expect of My Pastor?"

In order to assist the Pastor Search Committee in its efforts, please prayerfully rank the following 10 qualities as you would perceive their importance for our next pastor.

Please use numbers 1 for the most important quality and number 10 for the least important quality. Your participation in this exercise will greatly assist the Pastor Search Committee in its task.

Age (circle one) 25-30 31 -40 41-50 over 50 No preference

Education minimum (circle one) College Seminary Doctorate No Preference

Pastoral experience (circle one) less than 5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 15+ years

| Quality | Rank |
|------------------------|------|
| Preaching Ability | |
| Teaching Ability | |
| Administrator | |
| Church Family Minister | |
| Community Supporter | |
| Counselor | |
| Denominational Leader | |
| Soul-winner | |
| Leadership Skills | |
| Visitor (Outreach) | |

What do you feel are the most important personal qualities or characteristics you would like to see in a pastor? _____

What changes, if any, do you feel our new pastor should lead us to make in our church? _____

What do you feel will be our new pastor's greatest challenge as he leads our church?

Pastoral candidates will likely want to know the feelings of our members regarding the ongoing "politics" within the Southern Baptist Convention. Which group listed below, if any, would you personally favor or prefer to be identified/ aligned with?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fundamentalist conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> | Moderate conservative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-aligned conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-aligned moderate |

Using the information from these surveys, the chairman or secretary should write a one-page profile summarizing the desires of the congregation. The profile should then be shared with the entire church and with people from whom you seek recommendations. Not every minister will meet your qualifications. Unless you know what you desire in a pastor, you can waste valuable time in receiving and reviewing resumes and may miss the leader the Lord has for you.

Sample Pastor Profile No. 1

Your Baptist Church

Pastor Search Committee

The pastor must be a committed follower of Jesus Christ, a person whose life bears testimony of divine calling and gifts for ministry, and one who joyfully accepts his responsibility convinced of God's leadership and the enthusiastic affirmation of the church. He will lead the church in fulfilling the Great Commission.

He should have the gift of preaching, be a persuasive communicator of the Gospel, and provide encouragement and guidance for church leaders and committees in planning, coordinating, and evaluating the activities of the church. He should be knowledgeable of all aspects of the work

The pastor will supervise the staff, evaluate their work, and administer the program of the church. He will give leadership in developing and recommending strategic goals and actions which address the needs of the church and community, lead the church to develop a budget to meet these needs, and have skills to motivate lay leaders to achieve these goals.

He will visit and counsel with church members to provide encouragement and support during times of special need. He should be warm, outgoing, friendly, and approachable; able to relate to all age groups, and minister to every person in the congregation.

He must be an effective witness of Jesus Christ, provide leadership in evangelism, outreach, missions education, and missions projects, and emphasize the need for qualified persons to respond to God's call to missions and ministry.

His style of leadership shall be characterized more by influence and persuasion than by control and coercion. He will be inclusive in spirit and a proponent of the historic Baptist distinctives,

including the primacy of scriptures, the dignity and worth of every person, the priesthood of the believer, freedom of conscience, and religious liberty.

He should have graduate theological training in an accredited seminary, preferably an academic doctorate, or equivalent; ten years or more successful experience as pastor of a Southern Baptist church, or in a significant denominational leadership position.

The pastor will lead the church to cooperate with community groups and other Baptist entities at the local, state, and national level, and be an articulate interpreter of the ministry of our church.

Sample Pastor Profile No. 2

Your Baptist Church

Pastor Search Committee

But you, man of God, . . . pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:11-12

The next pastor of Your Baptist Church will evidence the characteristics outlined in the scripture for a Christian leader. His gifts will include leadership, proclamation, and encouragement. He will be a man of vision, with strengths in motivating others to follow God's leadership. He will be able to deliver the gospel message of redemption and growth with depth, understanding, and authority. He will be comfortable leading in a variety of worship styles. He will demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to others with an open and caring spirit.

The pastor's theology will be consistent with traditional Baptist beliefs. The application of that theology will be moderate, including embracing the concepts of the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local congregation. Although he will recognize the heritage of

Name of Church: _____,

he will also embrace diversity and seek out ways to create an open and hospitable atmosphere for seekers who are unfamiliar with church traditions. Our new pastor will be a family man between the ages of 35 and 50, seminary trained, with an advanced degree. He will have at least ten years experience in the ministry, including five years as the pastor of a reasonably sized congregation.

CHAPTER III

KNOW WHAT YOU BELIEVE

There are any number of issues that can easily divide a congregation. With some of them there is no right or wrong position. They are matters of preference, of tradition, of like and dislike. Baptist

churches are, and should be, fiercely independent. No hierarchy can tell any church how to "do" church, where to give, or whom it ordains or calls. But, if you and your prospective pastor do not share your views in these areas, it can lead to later conflict and division in the church. So it is important to know what both the church and the prospective pastor believe about certain volatile issues. Here are some of the important questions you need to answer as a committee:

- **How do you feel about women in ministry?**

There is a debate over the role of women in ministry. Some are being ordained as deacons. A few Southern Baptist congregations have called women pastors.

- **What do you believe about divorced persons serving as pastors? As deacons?**

Kenneth Chafin is former director of evangelism for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and one time professor of evangelism at Southern Seminary. He said when he was a boy growing up in Oklahoma, churches used to debate whether a divorced person could be a member of a Baptist church. When he came home from college they were debating whether a divorced man could be a deacon. When he returned home from seminary they were debating whether a divorced man could be a pastor. The issue is still not settled in many churches today, and so the debate continues.

- **What form of worship do you prefer in your church?**

There are several different forms of worship practiced in our churches today. Some churches are formal, some are traditional, and some are contemporary. The formal worship style tends to be more somber, to sing the older, more stately hymns, and to play Bach for the prelude and postlude.

Traditional worship sings gospel type hymns from the hymnal and is more informal. Contemporary worship often discards the hymnals and either prints the text of choruses or hymns in the bulletin or flashes them on a screen behind the choir. The preacher may remove the pulpit from the sanctuary and pace the platform as he preaches. Some preachers wear robes. Some wear suits. Some wear sports clothes with open collar and no tie. What does your church expect?

- **What style of leadership do you prefer?**

There are different styles of pastoral leadership. Some pastors are autocratic. They are like a corporate CEO and run everything. Others have a laissez-faire style (a French word that means "allow them to"). This is a hands-off, just let it happen, approach to leadership. It relies on others - the deacons, church council, etc., to lead the church. And some have a shared leadership style. They involve committees and staff in the decision making process. What do you like? What do you need?

- **Are all races welcome in your church membership?**

Jesus said we are to preach the gospel to "all nations" (Matt. 28:19-20). The word "nations" in the original is the Greek word "ethnos," which literally means all races, all classes, and all cultures.

But some churches do not welcome all people of all races into their congregation. While they probably would not say that it was so, realistically it is so.

- **What are your attitudes on the church and social issues?**

The pastor should have a free pulpit, but how much of an activist do you want on such issues as gambling, liquor, pornography, abortion, tobacco, politics, labor unions, church and state, textbook selection, and environmental concerns? How much preaching do you expect on such issues? What is the candidate's custom for addressing such issues?

- **What do you believe about church governance?**

Baptist churches believe in congregational church government, but a growing number of ministers are opting for an elder form of church government (Presbyterian) or the pastor as head and ruler of the church.

- **Who should be in charge of the staff of your church?**

Disagreement over leadership has caused division in churches since the first century (1 Cor. 1:10-12). It is still the most common cause of conflict in churches today.

Some feel that all staff members are equally called by the church and should be free to set their own work schedule, determine their own program, and stay at the church until they feel called elsewhere. Others believe the staff serves under the leadership of the pastor and if they do not share his philosophy of ministry or respect his leadership they should leave.

How does your church feel about this? Who has authority over the selection and supervision of the staff? The pastor? The personnel committee? The deacons? Or the church?

The committee should discuss these issues so you understand what you believe and so you can be honest with your prospective pastor.

CHAPTER IV

EXAMINE YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This is a good time for the church to reexamine its financial support of the staff. Clearly, the church has a spiritual duty to take care of the financial needs of its leaders. The scriptures say, *"The laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7); and "Let the elders (one of the scriptural titles for the office of pastor) that rule well be counted worthy of double honor (honorarium or pay), especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17).*

I realize there are financial limitations related to the size of the church, but most pastors are underpaid and your church needs to do the best it can in this area.

Many churches give their pastor a package, i.e., a lump sum and allow him to divide it up as he wishes. It is much better if the church requires participation in the Southern Baptist Church Annuity Plan, provides adequate insurance plans, and then lets the pastor provide an estimate for tax-excluded housing as a part of his salary.

The following financial support summary suggests items to be considered in the financial support of a pastor:

FINANCIAL SUPPORT SUMMARY

CHURCH MINISTRY AND MISSION

ChurchMinistry-Related Reimbursement Funds (not compensation)

- Automobile Conventions /
- Conferences Books,
- Periodicals, tapes
- Continuing education
- Hospitality

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Protection Coverage

- Insurance - medical, disability, term life,
- Personal accident
- Retirement
- Social Security (Salary offset)

PERSONNEL

Personal Income

- Cash pay
- Housing allowance (the home, utilities,
- Household furnishings, etc.)

Breaking his financial support down in this manner Guarantees that he has adequate insurance and retirement. And it gives a more realistic picture of his Church-ministry related expenses.

The church also needs to protect itself. Suppose your pastor becomes disabled for a year or more?

Could the church afford to continue to pay his salary and also pay someone else to serve the church until he is well? Suppose he died without life insurance? What would you do about his widow? It would be difficult to continue to support her and a new pastor at the same time. And it would be difficult to put her out of the parsonage if she had no place to go and no funds to live on. These are reasons why some protection is needed. Your state convention and the Annuity

Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has a workbook, "Planning Financial Support of Pastors, Other Ministers and Church Employees," that will help you with these matters. It is available by calling 1-800-262-0511.

You may want to meet with the finance committee and personnel committee regarding the pastor's financial support early in your process. For sure you will want to know your prospective pastor's salary and benefits before you call him, so you can equal or exceed what his is presently receiving.

CHAPTER V

INVESTIGATE AND EVALUATE YOUR PROSPECTS

Recommendations of pastors will come to you from many sources. Chances are you will have more recommendations than you can adequately deal with. Getting prospective pastors' names will not be a major problem. Evaluating them will be.

Don't put too much stock in resumes and written character references. Sometimes friends and Christian workers have a difficult time being candid about one another - especially in writing. Do your own investigating. Contact denominational leaders, associational directors of missions, other pastors, and former church members, to inquire about the person you are interested in.

Five attributes to look for:

1. Character
2. Preaching ability
3. Love for people
4. Administrative skills
5. Vision

• **Does he live a good life?**

By far the most important thing about a pastor is his character. If he does not live the gospel he preaches, then nothing else matters. It has always been true that the impact of a message or an idea depends on the character of the one who says it. We simply believe good men more readily than we do others. So unless a man's message and ministry is backed up by a life that is above reproach, you had best look elsewhere for a pastor. Ask yourself: Is he a person of integrity? Is he respected by those who know him? Does he tell the truth? Does he pay his debts? Does he live the gospel he preaches? These are basic questions that need to be answered about any prospective pastor.

• **Can he preach effectively?**

While pastoring, as I've already said, involves more than preaching, it is often through his preaching that a pastor makes his greatest impact. Unless he is a strong preacher he will never be able to effectively influence individuals or to lead the church.

So consider: Do his sermons show ample study and adequate preparation? Are they well organized and easy to follow? Are they well illustrated? Do they speak to the needs of the congregation? Are they Bible-based? Are they delivered with enthusiasm, and a sense of urgency and expectancy?

There is an intangible to preaching that I call "heart." Heart is hard to define, but when it's present you recognize it. It's the power to move an audience? It is a message that comes from his heart to your heart. It moves you to action.

• Does he have a pastor's heart?

A pastor is a shepherd, one who is among the flock, feeding it, leading it, and bleeding for it. This necessitates a special love and temperament. So find out if he really cares about people. There is a well worn saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Does he visit the hospitals regularly? Nursing homes? Shut-ins? Will he visit among the flock and care for their needs, especially in times of crisis?

• Can he run the church?

If the pastor is full-time he must have the ability, the skills, to lead an organization, to run a business, to administer a program. As much as they would like to, laymen simply cannot administer the program of the church on a part-time basis. It must be done by someone who is present, on the scene, day in and day out. It's only as you are there on a daily basis that you see what needs to be done, can evaluate the performance of individuals, and can see projects through.

So, find out: Does he come to work on time? Can he supervise a staff? Can he plan a year's program for the church and lead the staff to do the same? Can he manage the finances of the church so that he and the staff live within the budget? Can he supervise the maintenance of the buildings and grounds?

Is he self-motivated, driven from within? Or must someone always be prodding him? Can he motivate others, including his staff?

Does he have wisdom, common sense in dealing with the problems of the church and individuals? Can he make hard decisions? Can he say no when he needs to? Is he able to get along with other people? Does he handle conflict so as to resolve it and not let it fester?

How will he relate to the power structure of your church? Every church has a power structure, i.e., people who basically control it. That's not necessarily a bad thing. In smaller churches, if there were no power structure, often nothing would ever be done. They have to run the church because preachers come and go with such regularity that there is no continuity except in the lay leadership. How will the new pastor relate to these people? Will he respect them? Listen to them? Be able to work with them in such a way as to lead the church forward?

• Does he have vision?

The church is not to be a defender of the status quo. It is to be constantly on the advance, winning the lost, teaching disciples, and ministering to the needy.

Get the facts: Is he content for the church simply to meet Sunday after Sunday or does he look ahead at what the church could and should be doing? Will he get a vision, develop a strategy, and lead the people to go forward? Is he a hard worker or is he lazy?

These five things are vital in a new pastor. You dare not assume any of them or accept less than what you want in these areas. If you do, the church will suffer for years to come.

- **Study his record as a pastor.**

You will want the same kind of information about his church as you have gathered about your own, i.e., the average Sunday School attendance during his tenure, number of baptisms and other additions annually. If he has been at the church any length of time this information will give you some idea of his leadership, evangelism, work ethic, etc. Find out where and how long he has pastored in the past and why he left. Consideration, of course, must be given to where he is or has served. If he is serving in a small, static community, you would not expect his church to have had much numerical growth. If he is pastoring in a growing suburb you could reasonably expect different results.

- **Call others about him.**

It may be a deacon chairman of a former church he pastored, a director of missions in his present association or a past association, a state leader, or a businessman from the community. Here are some questions you may want to ask other people about him.

1. What is his work ethic?
2. Does he pay his debts? Does he tithe?
3. Does he get along well with people?
4. What are his strengths?
5. What are his weaknesses?
6. If you were on a pulpit committee would you consider him for pastor again?
7. How do you evaluate his preaching? Delivery and content?
8. Has the church progressed under his leadership? Can you cite an example?
9. What is his involvement in the denomination?
10. Does he have the support of his family?
11. Does he manage his staff well? Has he had any major staff problems?
12. How does he relate to the deacons? The Sunday School?
13. How does he relate to the age group over 55? In most churches 70 percent of the budget comes from people over 55. Can he build leadership with the under 50 group?
14. Did he have any major conflicts with members of the congregation that were not resolved?
15. Are there any questions of morality that might surface?

- **Listen to him preach.**

When you are interested in a candidate, ask the person who recommended him for two audio or videotapes of his sermons. Have the entire committee view the videos or listen to the tapes at the same time and evaluate his preaching.

All this involves time and work, but it will be time well spent. A little sweat now may save you a lot of tears later.

CHAPTER VI

GET PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED WITH ONE ANOTHER

When you are interested in a candidate, contact him and see if he has any interest in talking to you about your church. Don't try to be secretive. Almost invariably he will know if he has been recommended to you or if you are inquiring about him.

You may choose to hear him preach in his own church first or invite him to visit your field during the week before you visit his church. To do the latter first can speed up the process, save your committee lots of travel time and money, and may tell you as much about him as hearing him preach in his own church. It will give your committee a feel for him and enable him to develop a feeling for your church. After his visit either one of you may not wish to continue the process for any number of reasons. When he visits your church field be sure to promptly pay his travel and lodging expenses.

If his visit to your church is late in the process and you are serious about pursuing him as your pastor, you should arrange a meeting for him with the staff of the church (if there is any), with key lay leadership of the church, and with the interim pastor if he would like.

If you prefer to visit him at his church first to hear him preach, again don't try to be secretive. In most churches the pastor will notice two or three strangers in the worship service and figure out who you are. I suggest you call him in advance, take him and his wife to lunch after the service so you can get acquainted. In addition to what you learn as you talk, there is a lot you can learn by looking around. Remember Yogi Berra's famous line: "You can observe a lot by just looking."

• **Things to look for when you visit him:**

1. Does he dress for success? Are his shoes shined? Is he well groomed?
2. Are the buildings and grounds of his church well kept? Is the lawn mowed? Are flowerbeds clean? Shrubs trimmed? Are there adequate signs to direct the people?
3. Is the church bulletin well done?
4. Is the worship service well structured?
5. Is his sermon well prepared and well delivered?
6. Does he use good grammar?
7. Is he warm and approachable?
8. Are his people warm and friendly?
9. Is his office neat and well decorated?

Either at this time or on another face to face visit, you must ask him some hard questions and you must do some honest sharing. I have listed some of the things you should share and some questions you might want to ask as you seek God's will. If at any point you decide he is not the man for your church, call him or write him immediately. Don't keep him hanging.

• **Things to share with the candidate:**

1. Goals and vision of your church that have been approved.
2. The ten-year record of your church that you have compiled.
3. Major problems in your church - aging or declining membership? Poor location? Internal conflict?
4. Profile of your community - growing suburb? Stable community? Declining inner city?
5. Evaluation of your present staff.
6. The potential for your church. Your growth expectations.
7. Condition of your church's facilities, and needed additions and/or renovations.
8. Financial support, including expense reimbursements, protection coverage's, and cash pay plus housing.
9. His administrative authority. Staff relations are a major source of conflict in churches. Who is in charge of the staff? What authority will he have over the staff? How will new staff be chosen and called/employed?
10. Things that are sacred at your church - things that should not be tampered with, i.e., music program, pulpit furniture, schedule, etc.
11. Financial strength of the church, including debt and required payments.
12. Your work expectations - office hours, days off, vacations, revivals.
13. How you expect him to relate to deacons and committees.
14. How you expect him to relate to the association and to the state and national conventions.
15. How you support missions, local and foreign through various funding agencies.
16. Your views of Sunday evening worship.
17. Your views of baptism by non-Baptists and any restrictions on the Lord's Supper for non-Baptist visitors.
18. The worship style you are accustomed to and prefer.
19. How the vote for a new pastor will be handled.
20. Is it acceptable for his wife to work outside the home?

Questions you may want to ask him:

1. About his personal life:

- Share your conversion experience and call to preach.
- What do you consider your spiritual gift to be?
- What is your involvement in the community?
- Do you have the support of you wife and family?
- How involved is your wife in the life of the church?
- Are all your bills current? Do you tithe?
- What are your ultimate goals in life?
- Who are your closest friends?
- Who are your pastoral role models?
- Tell about your devotional life.

2. About his work schedule:

- What is your daily work schedule.
- What are your days off.
- How many Sundays was your out of the pulpit last year
- What is your vacation benefit?

3. About his administration:

- What is your leadership style?
- Do you have regular staff meetings? How often?
- What do you do in the meeting?
- What are your expectations of your staff?
- What time do you expect them to be at work?
- Will you work with our present staff? If after 12 to 18 months it is evident that one or more of your staff members need to relocate, will you give them adequate time (up to a year) to do so?
- How do you think staff members should be chosen?
- Are there staff members you would want to bring with you?
- What worship style are you most comfortable with?
- What kind of music do you like in worship?
- What is your understanding of the office of deacon?
- What is the role of the Sunday School?
- What part do you play in budget planning and promotion?
- Tell of a recent conflict you had and how you dealt with it.
- How do you relate to committees in the church?
- What new programs have you inaugurated in your present church?

4. About his pastoring:

- How often do you visit the hospitals? Nursing homes? Shut- ins?
- Do you personally lead people to Christ? Tell of a recent experience.
- What is your visitation schedule? How many prospect visits do you make each week?
- Has your church grown in the past two years?

- What is your counseling philosophy?
- How much time do you spend counseling?
- Is your phone number listed?
- Do you return phone calls?
- Are you available to your members after hours if they need your ministry?
- How do you view Sunday night worship?

5. About his preaching:

- What are some of your sermon subjects for the past year? (This enables you to get the scope of his preaching)
- What are your favorite books and authors?
- How many books do you read a year?
- Who have you had as pulpit guests the past two years?
- How much in sermon preparation do you borrow from other preachers?

6. About his beliefs:

- How do you feel about divorced staff members? Deacon
- Do you conduct weddings for divorced persons?
- How do you feel about women in ministry?
- How do you feel about baptism by non-Baptists and any restrictions on the Lord's Supper for non-Baptist visitors.
- How do you feel about the use of alcohol?
- Do you personally affirm The Baptist Faith and Message?
- How often do you preach on stewardship? Doctrine?
- How do you classify your sermons? Topical? Expository?
- What do you do in Wednesday night prayer meeting?

7. About the denomination

- How do you feel about the present SBC controversy?
- What offices have you held in the association? State convention? Southern Baptist Convention
- What is your view of missions – world and local?

CHAPTER VII

INVITE HIM TO YOUR CHURCH

You have investigated thoroughly, prayed earnestly, and discussed candidly. Now you must make a decision. You can't wait for a voice from heaven or a vision in the night. I realize this doesn't sound very spiritual, but you must pray and then make up your own mind. By now you know

your church and what it needs. By now you know the person you are considering. You have asked God for wisdom. Now trust God's leadership and move ahead confidently.

If the committee is in agreement, invite your candidate to preach in your church in view of a call and then recommend him as your new pastor. You may want him to preach in both morning and evening services and vote at the close of the evening service or the next Wednesday night. Or you may prefer him to preach in the morning service only and vote in the evening service.

- **If he agrees to preach in your church in view of a call, ask him what information he would like used in publicizing his visit to the church.**

- **Things you need to decide and include in your recommendation to the church:**
 1. Financial support
 2. Date for beginning of his ministry with you.
 3. Time off each week
 4. Tim off for revivals and conferences
 5. Payment of supply preachers
 6. Secretarial help
 7. Office equipment he may need
 8. Moving expenses
 9. Renovations/redecoration's, if needed to pastor's office.
 10. Perhaps a yearly study leave at church expenses and extended sabbatical leave after five to seven years of tenure with the church.

CONCLUSION

When your new pastor is called, your task is not over. Now you should lead the church to welcome him with a reception the first weekend he is with you. Naturally, you should respond to his call to serve when he asks and pray for him daily. Hopefully it will be a long and happy relationship.

AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR FINDING A PASTOR SOONER

Unless your church needs time to heal from a bad experience or to grieve over the loss of a popular pastor, it should not take one year, much less two, to find a pastor. Here is a slight variation of what I have already suggested that could help you expedite your search:

1. Don't wait for resumes to be sent. Ask several pastors or denominational leaders who know your church to recommend several potential candidates. In all probability, the same names will surface on several occasions. Those candidates will be the best ones to start with.

2. Ask a retired professional church member (employ this person if necessary) to do the research and graphs I mentioned earlier on your top five candidates and to call leaders in churches where they have previously served to inquire about the other things you need to know about them.
It is important that the same person do the investigating of all candidates for the sake of consistency.
3. Ask for tapes of the candidates' sermons for the past several months and distribute them among your committee for their evaluation. By hearing several different sermons, you will get a good idea of what he preaches week-by-week.
4. If you like their record and their preaching, invite your top candidates (plural) to your city for interviews. Hopefully, several people on your committee will be experienced at hiring and supervising. If not, ask a couple of your best businessmen to assist you with the interviewing. You can learn more about a person from one interview than from several visits to his church to hear him preach.
5. After the interviews, rank your candidates and visit your top choice to hear him in his own church.

Using this method, you should be able to save months of travel and find God's man much sooner.