



Pastor Search Handbook

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Southern Baptists of Texas Convention



Pastor Search Handbook

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Preface

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is committed to serving and equipping churches in a manner that extends and enlarges their great commission footprint. This Pastor Search Committee Handbook is offered as a tool to assist churches through their seasons of pastoral transition.

The period without a pastor or staff member can be one of the most challenging seasons in the life of any church. Thus, it is essential that the search committee be as prepared as possible, both spiritually and practically. This handbook will help to facilitate the most efficient search process and smoothest possible transition for the church's new pastor.

The SBTC stands ready to assist the committee in any way possible through training, consulting, resources and prayer support. Upon request, the Pastor/Church Relations Department of the SBTC will sometimes be able to provide resumes for a committee's consideration (any resumes sent from our office are intended as a service to our churches and are not recommendations from the SBTC). However, the most effective avenue for getting connected to potential candidates will be through our NextStep Connections Church Job Board. We strongly encourage you to post your open position there: <http://nextstep.sbtexas.com>.

It is our prayer that God would bless the use of this handbook to assist churches in finding the individual God desires for effective ministry in His church. Our goal is that through the work of the Holy Spirit in you and through you, your church will be led to God's man in God's time, with no exceptions.



"God's man, in God's time, no exceptions."



Chapter 1

Preliminary Considerations

Consider Forming a Transition Committee

In most cases, the Pastor Search Committee should not also be tasked with filling the pulpit during the interim. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that the appropriate church body/committee begin immediately after the pastor's resignation to form a transition committee.

The transition committee can be comprised of three to five individuals who will be charged with the weekly and monthly duty of scheduling pulpit supply, and/or selecting an interim pastor to bring before the congregation for approval. This committee will also oversee the weekly operations of the church during the interim. Often, a transition committee is comprised of church ministerial staff, the chairman of deacons, the chairman of finance, and other officers of the church as needed. (See APPENDIX I, "Pastor Transition Committee Formation and Responsibilities.")

Consider Employing an Interim Pastor

The SBTC is committed to training qualified and capable men of God to be successful interim pastors. We gladly connect these men to local churches seeking an interim pastor, based on the church's unique structure, size and season. Covenant agreements between trained interim pastors and the church are between those two parties alone; the SBTC offers connections, but employment arrangements, compensation and job responsibilities are the business of the church and the interim pastor.

The benefits of employing an interim pastor are many. Most importantly, the interim pastor is able to meet with and counsel the various committees and ministry teams of the church, helping them all move forward in the same direction together. He brings this contextualized understanding into the pulpit as well, leading the congregation in their expectation of a new pastor. The interim pastor builds the runway, but the incoming pastor flies the plane.



"The interim pastor builds the runway, but the incoming pastor flies the plane."

If an interim pastor is to be employed, the SBTC can help with a suggested covenant agreement form, suggested compensation and more. However, whatever agreements are made between the interim pastor and the church should be in writing. Both the interim pastor candidate and his covenant agreement should be approved by church vote. (See APPENDIX II, "Sample Interim Pastor Covenant Agreement.")

Contact the Pastor|Church Relations Department for names of trained interim pastors in your area, or for questions regarding the employment of an interim pastor.



"The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone..."

Titus 1:5, CSB



Chapter 2

Forming a Pastor Search Committee

A Pastor Search Committee may be elected one of several ways. The church must decide the best method to meet its needs and proceed from that point. Ultimately, a church's bylaws or other governing documents should explain the selection process.

Suggested Process for Electing a Pastor Search Committee

If your church has a Constitution and Bylaws, consult and follow it. A standing committee or Committee on Committees may be responsible for nominating all church committees, including a Search Committee for a pastor or staff member. The church Nominating Committee may have this responsibility.

Often, the church may nominate and elect the Pastor Search Committee from the floor. Ballots may need to be prepared with the names of all church members eligible to serve. The Constitution and/or Bylaws may give the voting requirements. For example, some churches require a member be eighteen years or older to be eligible to vote or to serve on the committee. Others detail the number of men and women on the committee, or a range of age representation. In such settings, a special business

meeting is usually called during which church members circle the names of five or seven persons to serve on the committee, usually with two alternates.

If no clear instructions are given in the church's governing documents, it will be acceptable to notify the church at least two weeks in advance that there will be a special called business meeting to adopt the process for electing a Pastor Search Committee. Explain that the purpose of the meeting is to adopt the process. Use the following as a guide for the motion to be made:

RECOMMENDATION: The _____ committee recommends the following process for electing a committee to search for a pastor.

- That _____(a church member or staff member) be elected to serve as moderator of church business meetings until a pastor is called.
- That the following process be adopted...
- The name of the committee will be: "Pastor Search Committee." No existing committee will be used (The Pastor Search Committee will give its undivided attention and prayer to the process of searching for a pastor). A business meeting will be called two weeks from today (give date) for the purpose of electing a Pastor Search Committee. This time should be used by every member to prayerfully seek God's will regarding persons to serve.
- The Pastor Search Committee will consist of five members and two alternates, all members of the church. (Where desired, consider specifying the number of men and women on the committee. For example, "the candidates receiving the most votes will populate the committee in such a way that at least two women are represented.")
- The Nominating Committee (or other appropriate committee) will be responsible for counting the votes. This committee's chairman will contact each candidate, in order, to request service on the Pastor Search Committee until the total number of committee members is filled.
- The results of the election will be published in the next mail-out, worship service, website and/or other communications.
- A record will be kept of the persons receiving the most votes. If any of those elected cannot or will not serve, the alternates will take their spot on the committee. In an instance where the alternates are also not able or willing, individuals receiving the next highest number of votes will be asked to serve.

- At its first meeting, the Pastor Search Committee will elect both a chairperson and a recording secretary. The chairperson will be the regular spokesman for the group. The recording secretary will take notes at all meetings for records, and update written communications to the church regularly.

Special Notes:

Representation on the Committee. The members of the Pastor Search Committee should represent the entire church—a healthy cross-section of the membership. As suggested in the selection process above, consider specifying age and gender requirements for representation on the committee. The best Pastor Search Committees are made up of a microcosm of the church membership’s demographics.



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Expenses for the Committee. All expenses of the Pastor Search Committee members should be paid by the church, including travel expenses/reimbursements, meals and any other costs incurred to perform this duty. At a regular business meeting, a special budget can be set in place for this purpose.

Prayer Support for the Committee. The church should pledge to support the search committee in prayer until a pastor is called. The Sunday morning following the committee’s selection, consider having all committee members come to the front to be recognized and prayed over publically.



“When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly.”

Acts 4:31, CSB



Chapter 3

Getting Started

Pray. If your desire is that the Holy Spirit will lead you together through your search then the whole process, from start to finish, must be bathed in prayer. Your search for a pastor will be an exercise in spiritual warfare so you must “pray at all times in the Spirit... and stay alert,” (Eph. 6:18). Carve out 15-30 minutes before every committee meeting to pray together. Prayer topics to consider for your committee’s regular seasons of prayer together include:

- Each other. Take time to pray for each other’s families, jobs, friends, health and any other areas of personal life where Satan may attack. The best Pastor Search Committees not only move forward together, but also grow together through the process. By the end of this pastor search, you should have grown together as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Future pastor and family. You do not know who this man is, but God does. Pray that God would begin to turn his heart toward your congregation, and that he would finish well where he is currently serving. Pray for his wife and children, if he has them. Pray that the Lord will put people around him who will confirm this new calling in his life and the life of his family.
- Future pastor’s current church family. If he is currently pastoring now, a group of

men and women will likely be sitting in your chair in less than a year. Pray that their future season of pastoral transition will be one of Spirit-filled unity and favor from God.

- Your church family. Transitions do not usually create problems; rather, they expose them. Many things can surface in seasons of transition: power plays, financial difficulty, frustrations, volunteer vacuums and more. Pray that the Lord will guard your fellowship against every attack of the enemy and that unity and peace would be evident through the entire search process.
- Your committee's work. Pray that the Lord will guide you together, in unity, toward the man He has selected to be your future pastor. God's man in God's time—no exceptions.

Communicate. You have most likely already heard it: "Have you found our pastor yet?" The church body has affirmed you as the team of men and women who will prayerfully seek their next senior pastor. What an enormous responsibility! And what a great honor! They are entrusting this duty to you, but if you do not keep them informed of the committee's activity and progress, they will become restless and frustrated.

It is not recommended that someone stand before the church in the weekly worship gathering to communicate that there has been slow movement. This has a tendency to disrupt the flow of the service and to put more emphasis on the fact that you do not have a pastor, than that you are searching for one.

Rather, consider a blog or newsletter that can be updated by the committee's recording secretary after every meeting or every few meetings (at least once or twice per month). At a minimum, you can communicate specific ways the church body can pray with and for the committee. You can let them know when you have met with a denominational leader for training, when you have developed profiles or posted the position, when you are narrowing down the field, when you are dealing with one candidate uniquely, etc. *Be very careful never to give any details at all about specific candidates. But be very intentional about keeping the church informed of the committee's progress.*



“Be very intentional about keeping the church informed of the committee’s progress.”

Review the Scriptural Basis for a Pastor (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

The Bible is very clear about the character of the man who holds the office of Pastor. In your first meeting, take time to read together through these two passages and make notes of character qualities the Bible requires for this position. Discuss these things openly. Come up with some non-negotiable items from these passages of Scripture.

Be careful not to fall into the trap of comparing your previous pastor to these. The goal is to move forward, not to think backward. Lean in to what God has ahead of you. Allow the Scripture to begin shaping your understanding, together, of the character qualities your next pastor should possess.

This may seem perfunctory to you at first, but understand that the task to which you have been called is an exercise in spiritual discernment and self-control. You will frequently be tempted to compare candidates against one another or against your previous pastor(s). Allow the Scriptural profile of a pastor to take root early and often in every committee member’s mind and heart. The biblical profile for a pastor is the foundation for comparison. Anything else will fall short of God’s design and has the potential to blind you from seeing God’s man.

Specific Concerns for Transition Management.

Transition Committee. It is best that the church form a Transition Committee as soon as possible, and that the Transition Committee handle all of the duties with regard to pulpit supply and Interim Pastor search and recommendation. However, if a transition committee was not named, the Pastor Search Committee may have to begin by filling this role.

Find immediate pulpit supply and an Interim Pastor. Begin by scheduling pulpit supply for the coming weeks, while seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit for an interim pastor. The SBTC keeps contacts for pulpit supply preachers and trained interim pastors, and will be glad to connect you to some in your area. Your local association will likely be able to help you with these contacts as well. Anyone who fills the pulpit should be supplied with both an honorarium, and travel expenses.

Interim as a Candidate. As a general rule of thumb, do not allow an interim pastor to be considered for the position of pastor. If the interim pastor desires to be considered as a candidate, it is usually best that he resign the interim and submit a resume to the committee, submitting himself to be put through the process. A covenant agreement signed by the interim and church representatives prior to the interim's call will alleviate much confusion. This agreement should also include the interim job description, compensation and any other particulars either the potential interim or the church may deem necessary in order to prevent later confusion. (See APPENDIX XIII, "Sample Interim Pastor Covenant Agreement.")

Internal Candidates. Often someone who is already on staff, in an associate role, would like to be considered for the position of senior pastor. This is an opportunity for the church to celebrate that God has used the church to cultivate and develop this calling on the individual's life. When this is the case it is best not to use the staff person to fill the pulpit in the interim. If God is calling him to be a senior pastor, it is possible that he may be called to your church through the process outlined in this handbook. It is also possible that God's design may be for him to pastor a different congregation. Navigating these waters is difficult for a committee, but can be done successfully, to the glory of God and for the good of the candidate and the church body.

If the internal candidate is filling the pulpit regularly in the interim, (1) he will not be able to put as much time and energy into his current role as is needed, and (2) some in the congregation will begin to see him as their pastor, before the Pastor Search Committee has the chance to seek the Lord's direction in this.

There is more to the pastor search process than finding a good preacher or someone with great leadership skills. The work of the committee is to dig deeply into prospective candidates concerning leadership styles, theological convictions, church culture, community opportunities and so much more. If the internal candidate is fulfilling the function of the Senior Pastor while seeking the office of Senior Pastor, many in the congregation will decide quickly and opinionatedly that he either is or is not God's man. This carries the potential of splitting the church no matter what the decision of the committee may be.

Sometimes, the internal candidate is God's man, and this can be exciting for the church. Best practice suggests that the Pastor Search Committee go through the full

work of defining the process (as suggested in this handbook), then put the internal candidate through the process first. If the internal candidate will not be pursued for the position, let him know as soon as possible.



“There is more to the pastor search process than finding a good preacher or someone with great leadership skills.”

If an existing staff member submits his resume for consideration, or indicates a desire to do so, consider asking him to contact the Pastor|Church Relations department of the SBTC. This team leads pastoral transition management conversations, trainings and coaching in dozens of churches every year, for very small congregations and very large congregations. Someone on the SBTC’s Pastor|Church Relations team can help coach the internal candidate gracefully through the transition season.

Power Grabs. As much as it depends upon you as a committee, avoid allowing a vacuum to be filled by incorrect leadership. Sometimes during an interim season, individuals with the wrong motivations may rise to the opportunity to lead. It is imperative that during the transition, the church maintains a healthy understanding of the role and function of pastoral authority and church leadership structure.

Follow the church’s governing documents carefully. Do not fill a position—either volunteer or paid—simply because it needs to be done. It is better to have nobody than the wrong body. Be sure that individuals are called, qualified and capable where they are asked to serve. This may be the responsibility of the church staff, deacons or another committee in the church. Do not overstep the boundaries of your committee.



“it is better to have nobody than the wrong body.”

Also, be cautious of those who might approach you and declare that God has chosen them as the next pastor. If anyone is interested in the position, he must go through the same process as everyone else in order to be considered. Pray for God to work through the system. Then work the system, in faith that He will.

Candidates as Pulpit Supply. It is strongly recommended that individuals who are interested in becoming the next pastor do not fill the pulpit during the interim. Again, the Pastor Search Committee is evaluating much more than sermon delivery skills. Candidates should be evaluated holistically, by the small group of men and women who have been elected to do so. At the appropriate time, through the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the diligence of the committee, one candidate will be brought before the church for consideration.

Consistency of ministry is important. Regularly encourage the various committees and ministry teams of the church to keep functioning during the interim. Ministry, missions, worship, evangelism and outreach do not have to suffer during pastoral transition. God has gifted your church members and engrafted them into the body for this purpose. An interim period is not the time to disengage, but to dig in and be committed.

SBTC Assistance. The PastorChurch Relations Department trains dozens of Pastor Search Committees every year, in both very large and very small churches. It is their joy to invest in your church's future this way. They bring decades of departmental wisdom to this training. Many of these department employees have sat on every side of the Pastor Search Committee table through the years—as candidate, committee member and committee trainer.

Pastor Search Committee training, coaching and other matters of pastoral transition management are all fully supported ministries of churches participating through the Cooperative Program of the SBTC. SBTC employees who come to train or consult with your committee do not require any kind of honorarium, and the convention covers all of their travel expenses. Usually, the trainer will request permission to invite your associational leader and/or a field employee of the state convention. These men, geographically close to you on the field, can be an invaluable resource to you through the transition.

Through ongoing coaching, SBTC trainers and coaches are willing and available to help the committee at every turn during the process. Because local church autonomy is one of our foundational commitments, no SBTC employee can direct the activities of your church. Those who train will simply bring suggestions and best practices based on personal experience and the collective wisdom of the department's

history, and they will make themselves readily available for ongoing assistance as requested.

Even those who have served on a Pastor Search Committee before can use a refresher, and can allow the Lord to show them new things to apply to this process. The SBTC's Pastor Search Committee training provides the venue for the committee to listen and agree together on the way forward. You do not have to do this alone. Let the SBTC's Pastor/Church Relations Department help.



"You do not have to do this alone.

Let the SBTC's Pastor/Church Relations Department help."

Posting the Position. When the time is right, consider posting the position on the SBTC's NextStep Connections Church Job Board (<http://nextstep.sbtexas.com>). There, you will build a church profile then post the open position. For purposes of security and confidentiality, churches cannot search for candidates on this website, but candidates can search for churches and positions. Candidates prayerfully search for positions then apply directly to those where they feel the Lord may potentially lead them. Every church and every candidate using the site must affirm the convention's statement of faith.

Essentials for Success.

- Remain intentionally positive and expectantly prayerful.
- Elect a chairperson and secretary as soon as possible. The secretary will take accurate records of all meetings. The chairperson will be the face and voice of communication for the committee's decisions and progress.
- Move on God's timetable and not what others are urging you to do. Remember: God's man in God's time – no exceptions.
- Adopt the conviction that there is only one man God has for you. If you move through the process with your heart on one man, and that man is not God's man, then God's man is someone else. Resist the urge to compare candidates to previous pastors, or to one another. Do the work of building a pastoral profile, and

compare candidates to the profile God gives you.

- Confidentiality is essential for the committee. Observe ministerial ethics and etiquette in dealing with the candidates. Understand that every candidate name you see is one who is seeking the Lord's direction in a potential new ministry context. They have entrusted their identity to you with the expectation of careful confidentiality. Do not ever communicate the names, locations, current churches or any other information outside the boundaries of your committee's members and the SBTC's assistance.
- Communicate clearly and regularly with the church body.



*"Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us; establish for us the work of our hands—
establish the work of our hands!"*

Psalm 90:17, CSB



Chapter 4

Three Profiles

The SBTC strongly suggests that before the position is posted or resumes are viewed, the committee do the work of creating three profiles. This will keep the committee focused on forward movement through the process. It will also help provide a basis for comparing each candidate to the biblical profile and pastoral profile instead of comparing candidates to each other. The suggested profiles for your committee to begin working on immediately are as follows, in order.

CHURCH PROFILE.

This answers the question, "Who are we?" The committee should begin immediately to collect statistics and demographics on the church. Consult the church's reports from the Annual Church Profile over the past ten or twenty years. The SBTC can help you retrieve this information if needed.

Compile data from internal records concerning undesignated giving, designated giving and missions giving. Discover averages and trends in weekly worship services and small groups or Sunday School. If attendance statistics are not available, begin counting and recording weekly attendance statistics immediately. Use this data to

formulate a YTD average that you can share with prospective candidates.

Wherever possible, learn the demographics of the church membership including age ranges, ethnic backgrounds and/or pockets of residence represented in the church membership. Ask questions like, “How old/young are we as a church?” “Where do our people live?” and “What is our ethnic makeup?”

Every church has a culture. The church’s culture is determined by things that are valuable to the body of believers, combined with historical mile markers and current happenings (whether positive or negative). What things are important to your church’s membership? What are the non-negotiables? Consider launching a S.W.A.T. assessment: Strengths? Weaknesses? Opportunities? Threats?



“Every church has a culture. The church’s culture is determined by things that are valuable to the body of believers, combined with historical mile markers and current happenings (whether positive or negative).”

The new pastor may come into the church with a dynamic vision and all the skills necessary to cast and implement it. But, as Peter Drucker so famously noted, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” The Church Profile will help the committee and the prospective candidate understand the culture of the church.

Format all of this information into a single-page document that you will feel comfortable giving to a pastoral candidate when he asks for information regarding the church. (See APPENDIX III, “Sample Church Profile.”)

Spend time reviewing this document together, and understanding (as a team) who you are as a church body.

COMMUNITY PROFILE.

This answers the question, “Who are they?” “They” being ones you are hoping to reach for Christ in your geographic region. The committee should do the work of discerning information about the immediate community context. God has called the church not only to the nations, but also to its own Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). What are the demographics of your community? Median age range? Ethnic makeup? Median

household income? Education level? Unchurched and unsaved statistics? How many public school districts are in your immediate context?

You can review your specific city, county or zip code's US Census data at no cost by visiting this website: <http://www.city-data.com>. Also, request a demographics survey from the Pastor|Church Relations Department of the SBTC. The US Census data will give you hard, statistical facts. The SBTC's demographics survey will help you interpret those facts in light of your community's unique profile and your church's Great Commission purpose.



"The SBTC's demographics survey will help you interpret demographic facts in light of your community's unique profile and your church's Great Commission purpose."

If possible, invite the superintendent of the local school district to join you in one of your meetings and share with you insights pertaining to the children of your community. Other community leaders to consider inviting into one of your meetings: Chief of Police; Mayor or a City Councilman; City Business Development Officer. Tell these community professionals about your church's search for a pastor and the church's desire to be a blessing to the community. Then ask them to share any insights with you. Be sure to pray over them before they leave the meeting.

Format all of this information into a single-page document that you will be comfortable giving to a pastoral candidate when he asks for information regarding the church's community. (See APPENDIX IV, "Sample Community Profile.")

Spend time reviewing the document together, and understanding (as a team) who you are hoping to reach.

PASTOR PROFILE.

This answers the question, "Who is he?" You have developed a Church Profile and a Community Profile. Now do the work of prayerfully discerning the characteristics of the man who will lead your church to bridge the gap between the two: "Whom will God use in leading us to reach them?"

Resist the urge to nail down a specific age range, or an exact degree obtained.

While these are important considerations and must be discussed, they are not to form a rigid basis for exclusion of candidates. Focus more on general characteristics of the man who God would have lead your congregation to reach your community and the nations. What will he be passionate about? What character qualities will be of utmost importance? What will his leadership style be like? It is okay to have a target age range or a target education level. But be careful about allowing those to become most important.

To gather information about the pastoral profile, involve the congregation so they will know you value their input. Done well, this part of the process can give the congregation a voice into the process, and allow them to feel a sense of ownership in it.

Objective Measurement. Utilize the objective measurement included in this manual (See APPENDIX VI, "Sample Pastoral Profile Congregational Survey.") This survey should be distributed to the church membership one Sunday morning and returned the next Sunday morning. The church should be encouraged to prayerfully evaluate their answers to each question. They should be asking what would benefit the church as a whole, not just their individual desires and preferences.

Subjective Measurement. The SBTC suggests also using a more subjective assessment of the congregation, which we call "Listening Sessions." Follow this format for success in Listening Sessions:

- Divide the congregation into focus groups. If there is an existing structure for this, such as Sunday School or Community Groups, use it.
- Divide up the Pastor Search Committee and send them out into the different focus groups one day. Ask five open-ended questions and listen to the responses. Make notes of the responses and listen for common themes or key words.
- Possible Questions may include: (1) What is the most important job of a pastor, and why? (2) What kind of personality traits should our next pastor have, and why? (3) What should our next pastor's highest priorities be, and why? (4) What responsibilities do our church members have to our pastor and his family? (5) How important is theological education, for our next pastor?
- Each committee member should record his or her notes from the focus group's

responses, then share and compare with other committee members at the next meeting. Compile those answers by looking for common threads and common language. There will be some disagreements, but you should be able to discern some shared themes, and work those into the pastor profile.

Discuss both the objective measurement (Congregational Survey) and the subjective measurement (Listening Sessions) in a committee meeting. Format all of this information into a single-page document that you will be comfortable giving to a pastoral candidate when he asks for information regarding the church's pastoral profile. Be careful not to highlight division in the church body, but unity and common desires. (See APPENDIX V, "Sample Pastor Profile.")



*"Be careful not to highlight division in the church body,
but unity and common desires."*

Spend time reviewing the document together, and understanding (as a team) what, exactly, you are looking for in a pastor.



*"I will give you shepherds who are loyal to me,
and they will shepherd you with knowledge and skill."*

Jeremiah 3:15, CSB



Chapter 5

The Process

Satan is the author of confusion. God is the one who brings order out of chaos. Since the beginning of time, God has ordained systems, structures, processes, plans and order to accomplish His desired will. The following process is not of divine origin, and it is not fail-proof. But it has been tested, evaluated and fine-tuned for decades by Spirit-filled ministers and lay leaders who have your church's best interest in mind. If you have any questions about the process, the SBTC Pastor/Church Relations staff stands ready to assist you. Consider following this process carefully and prayerfully as you begin to search for your next senior pastor.



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Step One – Profiles.

Formulate the three profiles recommended in the previous section of this handbook. Once the profiles are completed, you are ready to begin receiving resumes. You may have already received some resumes without advertising the position. These resumes must be stored safely where they can be evaluated at the appropriate time. Resist the urge to begin evaluating resumes or looking up candidates before the committee is of one mind concerning the three profiles.

Step Two – Receiving Resumes.

Create an email account or online cloud location specifically for the reception of resumes. Every resume should be emailed to this address or dropped into this online storage space. Here, you will have all resumes in one place, available to every committee member as needed.

Decide how long resumes will be received. Usually, thirty to forty-five days is plenty of time. If the committee does not nail down a cut-off date to receiving resumes, they will constantly fight the idea that a “better” resume may come in soon. Pray for the Lord to help you define the process. Define that process. Pray for the Lord to work through that process. Work the process in faith that He will. Announce to the congregation you are receiving resumes and clearly communicate the cutoff date. Any resumes received after the cutoff date will be stored in a separate folder.



*“Pray for the Lord to help you define the process. Define that process.
Pray for the Lord to work through that process. Work the process in faith that He will.”*

Recommendations and referrals from trusted sources are preferable to resumes received from unknown sources. However, a committee should never receive a recommendation without also receiving, at some point, a resume of the man being recommended. If a recommendation is to be considered, a committee member must contact the candidate and request a resume. The resume expresses interest in the position. Without it, the committee cannot be sure of a candidate’s interest or

willingness to be considered.

For specific recommendations, ask your State Convention office, associational office, seminaries, colleges, church members or other pastors whom you respect. Be sure to clearly communicate the cutoff date for reception of resumes. Some of these entities will have online platforms for posting the job. Others will directly send you resumes based on the profiles you have developed. Some may request a physical flyer or written announcement to be displayed in a common place on their campus.

Resumes may also be obtained through job boards and position postings at SBC entities. The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention hosts a very popular job-posting site: NextStep Connections Church Job Board (<http://nextstep.sbtexas.com>). If you require assistance with posting a position on our job board, please contact the Pastor/Church Relations department. They will be glad to serve you.

After the cutoff date, copies of all resumes should be made for each committee member, whether digitally or in print, as is preferred by committee members. Keep in mind that resumes received after the cut-off date can be considered, but only if petitioned and agreed upon by all committee members. The point is not to work for the system, but to make the system work for you. Give grace in every moment, to every committee member, and take every action together or not at all.



*“Give grace in every moment, to every committee member,
and take every action together or not at all.”*

Letters to Prospective Pastors. Every candidate who submits a resume should receive Letter One (See APPENDIX VIII, “Letter One”) or one like it acknowledging the receipt of the resume and announcing the anticipated time frame for further communication. Email communication is sufficient for this notification.

Step Three – Narrowing the Candidate Field.

Committee members should keep the three profiles in front of them, to be referenced throughout the narrowing process. Narrowing the field of candidates to be considered can be a daunting task, but following the suggested procedure can help

alleviate anxiety and eliminate human error.

From the hundreds to the tens.

If more than thirty resumes were submitted, utilize the Resume Screening Tool provided in APPENDIX IX. Divide the resumes up evenly among committee members. Every candidate's resume will be evaluated using this tool. The Resume Screening Tool may seem cold and impersonal at first, but it is designed to keep committee members from disregarding candidates on the basis of one or two particular points of interest.

For example: if a particular candidate is strong in education and experience, but a little outside of your expected age range, this will keep him from being immediately disqualified simply because of his age. Especially when hundreds of resumes are received, there must be a process to narrow from hundreds to tens. This tool is designed for that purpose. Determine the "point" system on this tool according to your own pastor profile findings.

After two weeks of prayer and evaluation, every committee member should bring their top six or seven resumes to the next meeting. Consider allowing every committee member to have one or two "saves" (if a resume does not score well, but the committee member feels the Lord impressing on him or her that he should be considered, allow it). At this point, the committee should have narrowed the field from hundreds of candidates to about thirty or thirty-five. From now on, every committee member is looking at every resume.

At each stage of narrowing, candidates no longer being considered should receive Letter Two (See APPENDIX X, "Letter Two") or one like it, informing the candidate that he is no longer being considered. Email communication is sufficient for this notification.

From the tens to the few.

For the next two weeks, committee members prayerfully work through each of the remaining resumes (thirty to thirty-five of them, at this point). They will come back to the next committee meeting with their top five candidates. This is where the prayerful unity of the committee can begin to take clear shape. As it does, be sure to pause and give God thanksgiving and praise for leading your team together in unity.



*"As the prayerful unity of the committee begins to take clear shape,
pause to give God thanksgiving and praise."*

The chairman of the committee should ask around the room for the names of each committee member's top five candidates. He should write the names of the candidates on a whiteboard as they are called out, adding tally marks beside each repeated name. After all committee members' top names have been called out, one to three candidates should have risen to the top of the count.

Spend the rest of this meeting talking about the top three to five candidates, and any other candidates committee members may want to reconsider. Dismiss the meeting with the expectation that after a week of prayer, the committee will reconvene to solidify the top three candidates.

Keep in mind that just because a candidate rises to the top quickly does not necessarily mean he is God's man for your church. God can use even our misdirection and our misunderstanding to work His ultimate plan through the committee. Perhaps the Lord is working within you through the journey, as much as He will work in your new pastor through his eventual leadership.

Be flexible. Give grace. Move forward together at every step of the process, or not at all. If your top candidate is not the top candidate chosen, make your voice known on the committee and ask for reconsideration. Then, submit to the unity of the team. This is not about finding your candidate. This is about finding God's man.

You should now have agreed upon a list of your top three to five candidates for consideration. You are ready to make first contact.



"This is not about finding your candidate. This is about finding God's man."

Step Four - First Contact.

Begin by calling the candidates to make sure they are willing to be considered for the position. You may find that one or more have already accepted a position elsewhere. If so, agree as a committee to send the questionnaire to the top three/five that have agreed to be considered. Be sure to send Letter Two to all candidates who will no longer be considered at this point.

Email the top three/five candidates a questionnaire, along with a cover letter by the chairman requesting mutual confidentiality and explaining that the candidate is under consideration. As a committee, agree on five to ten questions to ask in the questionnaire. We recommend asking no more than ten questions. For suggested questions, see APPENDIX XI. Give the candidates a cut-off date to return the questionnaire.

In this same communication, ask (1) permission to contact references, (2) permission to run background checks and (3) for video or audio links to a few sermons. Determine which background check organization the church will use, and include the required permission form for the candidate to complete. (For a sample Background Check Authorization Form, see APPENDIX XII.) The SBTC can provide information on background check services. Assure the candidate that background checks will only be run for final candidates. When the cutoff date for reception of the forms and questionnaires has passed, drop the names of those that did not return the questionnaire or the authorization form for background checks.

Step Five – Getting Serious.

Run Background Checks. Do not assume anything. Run every background check possible including city, state, and national criminal and sex offender records. The SBTC frequently uses Ministry Safe (www.ministrysafe.com), but there are many quality websites available for this purpose. Also, run a credit report. Discuss any findings with the committee.



“Do not assume anything. Run every background check possible.”

Check References. Only check references for up to three candidates. Each candidate should have provided at least three professional references and one personal reference (if they have not yet done so, ask for references). Determine three specific questions to ask, and divide the call assignments by committee member.

Consider asking questions such as these: (1) How do you know the candidate, and for how long have you known him? (2) What can you tell me about his character and his leadership style? (3) Do you have any concerns about this candidate's ability or willingness to serve our church as the senior pastor? (4) Is there any matter you feel we should consider if we are to pursue him further?

At the end of the reference call, ask for a secondary reference. This may provide the listed reference the opportunity to direct you to someone who can say something he or she cannot say. Be sure to get a phone number.

Do not to contact the candidate's current church, or anyone at the church, without written permission. Careful stewardship of every candidate's confidentiality is the responsibility of every committee member. Contacting someone's church before he is ready can disrupt his ability to lead them well, and can end very negatively for both the candidate and for your committee.

Evaluate the Questionnaires and References. Every committee member should carefully read through each questionnaire answer from every candidate. Make notes of concerning answers or positive impressions. Discuss these insights, along with the references reports at your next meeting, or next two meetings, as needed.

Listen to sermons. Remember, sermon delivery is not the only point of evaluation. The best preacher you consider may not be the best candidate for your church. Evaluate sermons for doctrinal fidelity, gospel clarity and relational ability. For assistance, utilize the Sermon Evaluation Form in APPENDIX XIII.



*“Remember, sermon delivery is not the only point of evaluation.
The best preacher you consider may not be the best candidate for your church.”*

Decide on one candidate to pursue. As all of this is being discussed in your committee meetings, one or two candidates will rise to the top. Pray, together, that God will bring clarity and conviction to the team as a whole. Double down on your prayers for unity in these final decisions. When the committee has decided on one candidate on whom to focus, you are ready to set up an interview and to begin to pursue him uniquely.

Keep in mind that committing to pursue one candidate uniquely does not necessarily mean that he is God's man for your church. This is a commitment to dig in—to dive deeply—into one man at a time. Such a commitment must be bathed in prayer. It must be pursued with the greatest diligence and care.

Resist the urge to interview more than one candidate at a time. The only reason for doing this would be to compare one candidate against another. But remember, this is not about trying to find the best of your many options; this is about seeking God's man in God's time, with no exceptions. Instead, compare one candidate at a time against the biblical and pastoral profiles you have developed. Do the hard work of prayer and discussion such that your committee will agree on one candidate to pursue at a time.

Send an email to the few who will no longer be considered. This letter will be different from the previous ones, because it will leave the door open for future communication if needed. (See APPENDIX XIV, "Letter Three.")

Step Six – Pursuing One Candidate Uniquely.

The committee should only deal seriously with one candidate at a time. This reinforces to the church the need to be dependent on the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It helps the committee in comparing a candidate against the biblical and pastoral profiles instead of comparing candidates to one another. The point is not to determine which of the top candidates is the best choice. Rather, the point is to determine if the top candidate is God's man. If he is not, there must be great humility in recognizing and admitting this, then moving on to another candidate.



"The committee should only deal seriously with one candidate at a time."

If at any point in the final stages of this process, the committee comes to the understanding that the top candidate is not God's man for the church, they must communicate this to the candidate, then ask the second candidate if he is willing to be reengaged. Such a communication warrants a personal phone call from the chairman, not an email or written letter. In this conversation, the chairman should notify the second candidate (or third, as may be the case) that the committee was wrong in its initial consideration of another candidate: "The committee has been searching for God's man in God's time, and we have come to the understanding that the previous man we engaged uniquely was not this man. If you are willing, we would like to engage you uniquely to see if you may be God's man for our church."

Once the committee has decided on one candidate to pursue, call and notify the candidate. Use this script (or something like it) to gauge his level of commitment to you: "At this point we have decided to pursue only you as a candidate for pastor. We will not be pursuing anyone else at this time. That is our level of commitment to you. What is your level of commitment to us?" He may reply that he is in serious discussions with another church. If the candidate would like time to pray about this, allow him a week.

If he has not yet received it, send the church's information to the one candidate. Include all three profiles and any other information the candidate requests. Items to include will likely be the church budget, attendance statistics, bylaws and constitution, personnel manual, etc. Remember that at this point, the candidate is just as interested in evaluating the church, as you are interested in evaluating him.



"Remember that at this point, the candidate is just as interested in evaluating the church, as you are interested in evaluating him."

While dealing uniquely with one candidate, expect that he may have certain requests you have not yet considered. After all, you are searching for a leader. Leaders lead. Any such request should be discussed with the whole committee before fulfilled. If the committee has any concerns about a request from a candidate, feel free to call the SBTC Pastor/Church Relations team for help.

Visiting the Candidate's Church. Most of the time it is good for committee members to personally visit the candidate's church, when possible. The point is not to evaluate sermon delivery—you have already done that through video and/or audio recordings. Rather, you want to see how the pastor interacts with his people and how his people interact with him. You want to get a feel for the environment and culture of the church, that the pastor has developed and facilitated during his tenure there.

If the candidate will not agree to allow members of the committee to visit his church, this is not a deal breaker. But it is helpful if an arrangement can be made. Should the site visit be a possibility, here are a few points to carefully consider:

- Do not show up at a candidate's church unannounced. Contact him to be sure he will be in the pulpit, and that the day you plan to visit will be a good day.
- Ask the pastor if he has any specific instructions for you. Abide by them as much as possible, out of respect for him and his ministry.
- Do not send the whole team. When seven visitors show up together unannounced, the church body knows something is up and it can potentially disrupt the pastor's ministry at his church. Instead, consider sending 2-3 members of the search committee who will take notes and report back to the committee.
- Do not take the pastor out to lunch, and try not to engage him directly if you can help it. It is best to slip in and slip out, unless it is obviously customary for guests to greet the pastor in some way before or after the service. If so, do so generically and discretely. The pastor knows who you are and why you are there. No one else has to know, unless he wants them to know.

Step Seven – Interviewing the Candidate.

Face-to-Face interviews are necessary to get a feel for the candidate's personality and personal life. We recommend two interviews.

The First Interview. First, interview the candidate by himself, at a neutral location such as a restaurant or church conference room in a town away from both your church and his. This will allow the whole committee to ask important questions without worrying about who sees them together or listens to the candidate's answers. If an in-

person meeting cannot be worked out, consider using an online videoconference platform.



“If an in-person meeting cannot be worked out, consider using an online videoconference platform.”

In this first interview, ask questions about the candidate’s leadership style, denominational involvement, and personal spiritual disciplines. See APPENDIX XVIII for a list of possible questions for the first and second interviews. Since he has received and reviewed the three profiles, ask if he has any questions for the committee about the church or the community. Allow all committee members to ask questions, by both assigning questions ahead of time and opening the floor in the moment. This interview should go no longer than two hours.

After the interview, allow the committee one week to think and pray through the interview. At the next committee meeting, discuss the interview and decide whether or not to pursue the candidate for a second interview, along with his wife (if married).

The Second Interview. This interview should be conducted on your church’s campus, at a time and location where he has the least potential to interact with other church members. Perhaps a Friday evening or Saturday afternoon would be best. Work with the candidate to schedule a meeting date and time that will work for him and the committee members.

If at all possible, the candidate should bring his wife along to this interview (if he is married). Assure him that his wife will not be interrogated, and she is not being officially interviewed. Rather, the committee just wants to get to know her and ask if she has any questions for them.

Consider offering to drive the couple around the community for an hour or two before the meeting. Allow them to get a feel for the community. Show them major areas of commerce and recreation. If they have children in the home, show them neighborhoods and schools that may be of interest. You want the couple to sense whether God might call them to minister to the whole community. You want them to be able to see themselves there, if this is indeed God’s will. Show them the church

property, and answer any questions they may have about it.

At the designated time, gather in the meeting room on the church campus for the second interview. This interview will focus on two things: (1) the candidate's marriage and family, and (2) his thoughts about the community and church. Ask the wife to share her salvation testimony. Allow the women on the committee to ask her a couple of simple questions, such as: "Tell us a little about yourself – your salvation testimony, what you enjoy doing, and about your family," or "What is the most important thing to you about the church your husband pastors?" Ask if she has any questions for the committee. Assure her that the committee understands that the church would be hiring the husband, and that you would only hope to be a support system for her as she undergirds his ministry there.

Ask the candidate about family worship, about his prayer life with his wife, and about how they view the calling to ministry as a family. After driving around the community and touring the church facilities, ask if he has any questions or any thoughts.

If there are any lingering concerns or questions on any committee member's mind, now is the time to ask. After this interview, the committee will hope to discern whether or not this candidate will be presented to the church for a vote.

Step Eight – Confirming God's Leadership

The committee should be enthusiastically unanimous about the one candidate they wish to consider. You have been through quite a journey to this point! Every member of the committee must be able to stand behind the decision with confidence. A candidate must be presented to the church either unanimously, or not at all.



"The committee should be enthusiastically unanimous about the one candidate they wish to consider... A candidate must be presented to the church either unanimously, or not at all."

If there are one or more committee members who refuse to support the decision of the group to such a degree that the committee cannot move forward together, the disagreeing committee member(s) should voluntarily resign the position to the elected alternate(s). If division continues and no agreement can be made moving forward with a single candidate, the committee may need to dissolve and allow the church to reelect a different committee to begin the process all over again. The chairman can make this recommendation to the church body in a business meeting. In such a drastic situation, no member of the current committee should be allowed to serve on the new committee.



“If there are one or more committee members who refuse to support the decision of the group to such a degree that the committee cannot move forward together, the disagreeing committee member(s) should voluntarily resign the position to the elected alternate(s).”

When the committee is unanimous in its decision, now is the time to inform the candidate of the salary package and compensation, including any relocating expenses or other conveniences offered. This communication must also include details concerning vacation time and ministry leave, and appropriate information about personnel policies and other expectations. The candidate needs to receive all of this, clearly communicated, in written form.

If the candidate has any concerns or would like to discuss amendments to the salary, compensation, or personnel agreements, hear him out and take those requests to the appropriate committee(s). It is possible that he would prefer one less week of vacation and an allowance to spend one day per week going to seminary. Or, he may desire more compensation in health insurance and less in housing allowance. Etc. Work with him on this.

Set a time for the candidate to come in view of a call. This needs to be a weekend that works with his calendar needs and yours. Allow him to have input into this process. The in view of a call weekend may include several days of activities, depending on the needs and size of the church.

Designate someone on the committee to be responsible for hospitality (meals, housing, childcare, etc.). Be gracious hosts, putting a basket of treats in their hotel room, and leaving thoughtful cards for each member of the family. The church should pay/reimburse all related expenses for meals, travel and accommodations.

All in view of a call weekend activities, and candidate's information, should be communicated to the church body two weeks in advance of the vote. In most cases, the candidate will desire the church to wait until the Sunday morning or Wednesday night before to release his biographical information. But the vote and activity schedule for the weekend should be announced two weeks in advance.

On Friday night, the candidate and his family may want to meet with the committee one last time over dinner. On Saturday sometime, he may desire to meet with the existing church staff and/or deacons. Saturday evening, consider having a coffee and ice cream social, where the candidate will share some personal words about himself and his family. Allow plenty of time for socialization and personal interactions. At the church wide social event, the committee chairman should do the introductions and set the pace for the evening, but committee members should not dominate the candidate's conversation.

Each committee member should either write or video their support of the candidate. This written or video affirmation should be made available or played during the Sunday morning worship time. Where appropriate, coordinate with the church's media or communications team to accomplish this with excellence. It will be important that the church sees the unanimity with which the candidate is being recommended to them.



“It will be important that the church sees the unanimity with which the candidate is being recommended to them.”

Create a biographical sketch of the candidate and his family and make it available for the church. Some items to include are a family picture, resume, information about his family, testimony, doctrinal statement, covenant agreement between prospective pastor and the church, etc. In some church contexts, a short video introduction of the candidate can take the place of these written pieces of

information.

On Sunday morning, in view of a call, the pastor and his wife may desire to visit several small groups as possibility allows. Be sure to gather as a committee to pray with the candidate and the worship leader before the service starts. Pray for a fresh anointing from the Holy Spirit, and for clarity in the proclamation of the Word. Pray also for an overwhelming display of unity in the church body as they vote.

The candidate must preach in all morning worship services. At the beginning of the worship service(s), the chairman of the search committee should introduce the candidate and his family. He should clarify that at the end of the service(s) a secret ballot vote will be taken on whether or not to call him as the church's senior pastor. Follow the bylaws carefully as they pertain to when the vote is taken, how it is counted, and when it is announced. Usually, votes are counted and the announcement is made either before church members leave the worship service, or early that afternoon via social media or a church-wide email.

Be sure to ask the candidate privately if he will accept the call, before revealing the results to the church. Even if the church votes affirmatively, the candidate must choose to accept.

What if the Candidate Is Not Confirmed? If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. An announcement to the church must be made as soon as possible, should the pastor either decline or not receive enough votes to confirm the call. The committee may return to any point in the process. One possibility is to go back to the second candidate and consider him. However, you may want to start the process over at some other point, such as reevaluating the top five candidates, or even the first thirty. Perhaps it would be appropriate at this point to discuss the resumes received after the initial cut-off date.

Should the recommendation be overwhelmingly rejected by the church, the committee may need to willingly dissolve and allow the church to elect another search committee. This recommendation can be made by the committee chairman at a church business meeting.



“Should the recommendation be overwhelmingly rejected by the church, the committee may need to willingly dissolve and allow the church to elect another search committee.”

Step Nine – Assimilating the Pastor and His Family

When the pastor accepts the call of the church, there is much cause for rejoicing! Although once the call is extended and received, the Pastor Search Committee is officially disbanded, there is still some work to be done toward healthy assimilation for the pastor and his family.

Send a letter or email to the church membership from the new pastor, and/or have the new pastor record a short video, addressed to the church family, that you can share on the church’s website and social media accounts. Notify the church when the new pastor will be moving to the area. Arrange for help with unloading a moving truck at the house or office if needed. Consider holding a special reception for the pastor and his family the first or second week he is on the field.

Work with appropriate committees to ensure that the pastor’s office is cleaned and furnished appropriately. If the church has a parsonage for the incoming pastor, do the same for it. If the pastor and his family will be buying or renting a home, offer to get them connected with real estate agents if they so desire, or to answer any questions they may have about neighborhoods or area schools.

Ensure that salary payments and benefits are being set up with the church. Offer to be of any assistance in this process if needed. Communicate with the appropriate committees or teams regarding arrangements for moving expense payouts.

Once the pastor is called, the people he knows best in the church and community are those members of the Pastor Search Committee. For the next year, the committee should act as a liaison between the pastor and church by helping him get acquainted in the community as well as the local association and state convention. The committee should continue with intentional encouragement and relational bridge building over this period of time.



Chapter 6

Process Summary

Step One – Profiles.

- Community Profile.
- Church Profile.
- Pastor Profile.

Step Two – Receiving Resumes.

- Create email/cloud account.
- Set open and close dates for resume reception.
- Seek referrals.
- Post the position to job boards.

Step Three – Narrowing the Candidate Field.

- From the hundreds to the tens.
- From the tens to the few.

Step Four – First Contact.

- Call top 3-5 candidates to verify interest.
- Send questionnaire.
- Ask permission to run background checks.
- Ask permission to contact references.
- Ask for links to sermon video or audio.

Step Five – Getting Serious.

- Run all possible background checks.
- Check all references & secondary references.
- Evaluate responses to questionnaire.
- Watch/listen to sermons.

Step Six – Pursuing One Candidate Uniquely.

- Decide, unanimously, on one candidate to pursue.
- Send relevant church info to the candidate.
- Arrange a Sunday morning site visit.

Step Seven – Interviewing the Candidate.

- First interview at neutral location.
- Second interview on church property, with spouse.

Step Eight – Confirming God’s Leadership.

- Set date for in view of a call weekend.
- Plan activities for the weekend.
- Announce date and schedule of activities.
- Church votes to approve the candidate.

Step Nine – Assimilation of the Pastor and His Family.

- Notify the congregation.
- Help with the move.
- Build relationship bridges.



“And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness.”

Ephesians 4:11-13, CSB



APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

Pastor Transition Committee Formation and Responsibilities

Pastoral Transition Committee: Upon the vacancy of the pastorate, the Transition Committee (TC) will convene and elect a chairman. The purpose of the TC is to manage the basic administration and affairs of the church in the absence of the Pastor.

The TC will be comprised of the following personnel:

- Chairman of Deacons.
- Chairman of Personnel Committee.
- Chairman of Finance Committee.
- Ministerial Staff.
- Interim Pastor (after selected).
- Sunday School Director.
- [VARIATION: The TC will be comprised of 3 church members in good standing, who will not be considered for the Pastor Search Committee. This selection may take place in a specially called business meeting with nominations coming from a standing committee and/or from the floor.]

The TC's responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

- Scheduling the preaching assignments in the event there is no Interim Pastor.
- Searching for and recommending an Interim Pastor to the church for a vote of approval.
- Managing the daily concerns of the church.
- Setting the agenda for Church Council meetings and business meetings.
- Supervising the election of the Pastor Search Committee (unless other provisions are set forth in the bylaws).
- Any other responsibilities as assigned by the church in business session.

APPENDIX II

Sample Interim Pastor Covenant Agreement

Interim Pastor Job Description:

_____ (name of church) and _____ (name of Interim Pastor) enter into this covenant employing him as Interim Pastor (IP), effective _____ (date). This covenant shall continue for one year or until a permanent pastor is called by the church and has begun his pastorate, whichever comes first. After one year this agreement must be reaffirmed by church vote. Either party may, for any reason, terminate this covenant at any time with notice of a minimum of forty-eight hours. The terms of this covenant have been discussed with the IP candidate.

Compensation:

Compensation has been set at \$_____/week. _____ (name of church) will compensate IP, withholding appropriate taxes and providing a W-2 at year's end. No insurance or other allowances are provided to IP.

Work Schedule:

Inasmuch as the IP has responsibilities that cannot be exactly measured in definite schedules of time, he will give care to scheduling his time and activities to best serve the Lord and the interests of the church, allowing time for his own personal and family needs. The IP is requested to establish a good working schedule that allows him time to evaluate the church's needs, engage with church staff and leaders and help develop a working interim transition strategy.

General Responsibilities:

1. To provide the congregation a sense of stability in leadership.
2. To be the primary preacher, providing consistent quality Bible teaching.
3. To be responsible to fill the pulpit those times he is not available.
4. To lead the ministerial staff, ensuring that they are able to minister joyfully and effectively in alignment with the interim church vision and strategy.
5. To help address any issues or problems as necessary to make the church more attractive to, and prepared for, permanent pastoral candidates.
6. To ensure adequate pastoral care of the congregation. He will not be the primary

provider of pastoral care. He will work with the staff, deacons and volunteers to ensure that shepherding, visitation, baptism, ministry, and counseling needs are addressed. He will not, as the rule, coordinate or officiate weddings or funerals services. This will be a delegated responsibility to church ministry staff.

7. To work with the Worship Leader and his team for planning and delivery of Sunday Morning Worship.
8. To provide ongoing evaluation of the general church health and help develop actions for correction or improvement.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. To assist the church transitional leadership team, committees and staff in the pastoral transition process as requested and schedule permits.
2. To assist the pastoral search team as requested and schedule permits.
3. To attend all leadership meetings and participate as requested and schedule permits.
4. To provide counsel regarding leadership issues as requested and schedule permits.
5. To at all times uphold the integrity, doctrines, values, statement of faith, constitution, and by-laws of the church. Failure in any of these areas may result in termination with no severance to be paid.

Reporting Structure and Authority:

1. The Interim Pastor operates under the authority of, and reports to, the Personnel Committee of the church. As such he has no independent authority except that delegated to him by this Committee.
2. The Personnel Committee will grant the Interim Pastor the authority necessary to accomplish the responsibilities as listed above.
3. The Interim Pastor will not have the authority to hire or fire; to operate outside of the budget, Constitution, or By-Laws.
4. The Interim Pastor is not a member of the Personnel Committee and will not vote at their meetings. He will however, attend any meetings necessary to provide leadership as requested, and participate fully in all discussions.

_____ Date: _____ | _____ Date: _____

Transition Committee Chair

Interim Pastor

APPENDIX III

Sample Church Profile

Searching Baptist Church (SBC) of Pastorless, TX is a church family that values biblical preaching, heartfelt worship and Great Commission engagement above all else. At 157 years old, we are the oldest Baptist church in the county. Through the years SBC has enjoyed many seasons of numerical and spiritual growth, but is currently experiencing a season of gradual decline.

At our highest in the past twenty years, we averaged 412 in worship attendance and 367 in small groups. Over the last three years, we have seen a gradual decline in attendance so that today we average 278 in worship and 153 in small groups. However, the morale of the church family has never been better. There is an excitement in the air and a fresh wind of expectation as we search for our next senior pastor.

In 2018 our annual budget was set at \$1.3 million, but undesignated receipts totaled \$974,000. We did underspend the budget such that our receipts outweighed our expenditures, and we ended the year in the black. This year, we are on track to meet budget, set at \$1.12 million.

Today, the age ranges of SBC members reflects a shift in generational attendance patterns. In any given worship service today, 73% of our worshippers will be 65 yrs. old and up. Only three years ago, however, the average age would have been much younger. There are many unchurched young families in the community, and SBC desires to be the church that reaches them with the gospel of Jesus Christ and plugs them into the church. We reflect the ethnic diversity of our community well. On average, worshippers at SBC will be approximately 67% Anglo, 17% Hispanic, 9% African American, and 7% Other.

Overall, SBC is a warm and welcoming church family who is serious about the Great Commission, and about reaching the next generations in our community. We value expository preaching and practical community ministries. We are excited about what God will do through the leadership of our next senior pastor.

APPENDIX IV

Sample Community Profile

The city of Pastorless, TX is home to 23,479 people. The majority of these are two-parent families with children in the home. There is, however, a significant population (31%) of single mothers within a 2-mile radius of our church. The people of Pastorless, TX make their livings in a wide variety of occupations including as business professionals, construction workers, school teachers and more. About half of them work in the city of Pastorless, and half of them commute to a nearby city.

The ethnic demographics are about normal for our county: 61% Anglo, 22% Hispanic, 11% African American, and 6% Other. The median age of our community members is significantly lower than the Texas average, at 31.5 yrs. old.

The economy of Pastorless, TX is thriving. There has been a 12% increase in population over the past ten years, and it is projected that we will see another 21% population increase by the year 2025. Two major businesses are currently building distribution centers on the North side of town. Several new professional businesses have opened downtown in the last few years including a law firm, a staffing agency and several higher-end retail shops. The housing market is skyrocketing. 750 new homes are planned for construction within 1 mile of the church in the next three years.

The Pastorless Independent School District is working to manage the influx of new enrollment. The Superintendent shared with our committee earlier this year that enrollment in elementary schools has doubled over the past four years, and is expected to continue on that trajectory over the next five to ten years. Soon, the school board will vote on the construction of two new elementary campuses and one new secondary campus.

Overall, the community of Pastorless, TX is thriving and growing. As the population is increasing and demographics are becoming more diverse, there is still a feel of togetherness and friendliness in the city. Pastorless, TX is a great place to live.

APPENDIX V

Sample Pastor Profile

The Pastor Search Committee of Searching Baptist Church sought the input of our church family to help us understand the kind of man we will be searching for in our next senior pastor. Conversations have been full of joyful expectation, and while there was a wide range of variety on answers in some degree, there was great unity overall.

SBC is searching for a pastor who is committed to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible. He will agree with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, and will lead our church on the strong foundations of biblical authority. We desire a man who is being transformed by God's Word himself, as he leads our congregation to be transformed by God's Word as well. He will be a text-driven expositor of the biblical text. He will be relational in his delivery, and firm in his conviction.

Our next pastor will be easily approachable, a man who is skilled in relationship building. He will lead our staff with a team-based approach, but will steward well the authority of the office of pastor for all matters of final say. He will value the insight of long-time members of the church, but not cater to any one (or group's) desire to the neglect of another's. He will make biblical decisions concerning the direction of the church and communicate them with grace while leading gently over time.

If he has a family, he will put God first, his family second and the church third. We desire a pastor who models faithful leadership in the home and allows that to overflow into his leadership at church.

The children of SBC would like to add that he should wear flannel shirts and look like Santa Claus. Obviously these are not requirements, but we wanted you to know that the children are also excited about their incoming pastor. Whoever he is, he will be a gift to them and they to him.

APPENDIX VI
Sample Pastoral Profile Congregational Survey

[To be given to every member of the church
and returned to the Pastor Search Committee]

Your Pastor Search Committee would like for you to give this matter your prayerful and thoughtful attention. You are the church. We desire your insight in regards to the selection of a pastor. This will help in the work you have asked of us.

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

- Under 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- Over 20 years

2. While age should not be the primary factor, approximately what age pastor do you feel our church should seek at this time?

- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-55
- 55+

3. What educational qualifications should our new pastor have?

- High School
- College degree
- Some seminary training
- Seminary (Masters)
- Post-Graduate (Doctorate)
- Does not matter

4. A pastor has many important responsibilities. While he ought to be interested in each of the following, which do you feel should receive most of his time? (check five)

- Visiting prospective members
- Administration and office work
- Personal Bible study and prayer
- Visiting church members
- Promoting church ministries
- Spending time with his own family
- Sermon preparation
- Counseling and advising
- Personal evangelism
- Civic affairs
- Attending church meetings
- Denominational service & attendance

5. On which of these should he spend the least amount of time? (check two)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting prospective members | <input type="checkbox"/> Sermon preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration and office work | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling and advising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Bible study and prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal evangelism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting church members | <input type="checkbox"/> Civic affairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting church ministries | <input type="checkbox"/> Attending church meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with his own family | <input type="checkbox"/> Denominational service & attendance |

6. What do you feel is the most important quality our pastor should possess? Feel free to express your feelings about other characteristics you would like to have in a pastor.

I would like to present the following name(s) for the committee's prayerful consideration. (Please provide a resume.)

APPENDIX VII
Congregational Health Assessment

[This survey is designed to reflect the congregation's perception of their involvement in the major functions of the New Testament church as reflected in Acts 2:42-47. Results should remain anonymous. The survey should be given to church members only.]

1. My age group is:

- Pre-Teen (4th-6th grade)
- Middle School (7th-9th grade)
- High School (10th-12th grade)
- Young Adult (18-35 years of age)
- Median Adult (36-55 years of age)
- Empty Nest Adult (56-65 years of age)
- Senior Adult (66+ years of age)

2. Other than attending church services/activities, I read and/or study the Scriptures personally at least 4 days/week.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. I have friends in this church with whom I enjoy fellowship on at least a monthly basis.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

4. I often tell others who Jesus is and how they may know him.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

5. I financially tithe (10%) to the church.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. Other than the tithe, I give often of my possessions, finances, time, and energy to serve people inside and outside the church.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

7. I have frequent private times when I find a quiet place to pray to the Lord and listen for him to speak to me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

8. I know how to pray with faith in such a way that I am confident I am being heard by God.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

9. I sense the presence of God in our worship services.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

10. I feel like the church is effective in helping me grow spiritually.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

APPENDIX VIII

Letter One (Narrowing the Candidate Field)

[To everyone who submitted a resume. Email is appropriate.]

Dear _____,

We have received your resume for consideration of the position of senior pastor at _____ (name of church). We ask for your prayers during our time of transition. Be assured that we are committed to faithfully and prayerfully seek God's will, as well as maintain the highest level of confidentiality through the search process.

We will receive resumes until _____ (cut off date). Your resume will be placed with the others we have received. After a period of prayer and discussion, a selection will be made to narrow the candidate pool. We hope to have made this first narrowing decision by _____ (anticipated date). Should we be led to consider you further as a candidate, you will be contacted at that time for further information. We are committed to an orderly process and will seriously consider only one man at a time.

Thank you for your submission to the Lord's will. We pray that God will continue to use you in your current place of service to the fullest, and will direct your steps clearly in the future.

In Christ,

Pastor Search Committee Chairman

APPENDIX IX
Resume Scoring Tool

Candidate Name: _____

Committee Member _____ Date: __/__/____

EDUCATION:

Undergraduate	3pts.
M.Div./MRE. (either)	5pts.
Additional Masters Degree(s)	7pts. ea.
D.Min./D.Ed./Ph.D.	10pts.
Other non degree Cert.	1pt. ea.

SCORE: _____

AGE:

60+	1pt.
51-59	3pts.
40-50	5pts.
35-39	7pts.
30-34	5 pts.
23-29	3 pts.
22 and under	1 pt.

SCORE: _____

YEARS PASTORAL EXPERIENCE:

0-4 yrs	1pt.
5 yrs	3pts.
5-10 yrs	5pts.
10+ yrs	7pts.

SCORE: _____

AVERAGE TENURE:

2-4 yrs	3pts.
5-7 yrs	7pts.
7yrs.+	9pts.

SCORE: _____

BILINGUAL (Spanish):

No	0pts.
Yes	10pts.

SCORE: _____

***TOTAL CANDIDATE SCORE: _____**

Other Notes: _____

APPENDIX X
Letter Two (Narrowing the Candidate Field)

[To all who are no longer being considered. Email is appropriate.]

Dear _____,

The Pastor Search Committee of _____ (church name) has narrowed the field of candidates toward the selection of a senior pastor. We have prayed over and reviewed all the resumes. Although you possess a number of positive qualities, we feel led in a different direction at this time.

Thank you for your willingness to allow your name to be considered. We acknowledge that the process is not perfect, so should we feel led to come back to you at a future time we hope you would be open to talk with us.

May the Lord bless you and show you favor in your life and ministry. We would appreciate your continued prayers as we continue our search.

In Christ,

Pastor Search Committee Chairman

APPENDIX XI
Suggested Questionnaire

[To be sent to the top 3-5 candidates. Give 2 weeks for response.]

Do you sense leadership from the Holy Spirit to allow _____ (church name) to prayerfully consider you as a potential candidate for pastor?

Yes No

If you are willing to be considered, we will need the following from you in order to begin our process.

- A current/updated copy of your resume listing ALL previous employment, education, and references.
- Links to (or a USB drive containing) at least three sermons. Video is preferred, but audio will be accepted if necessary.
- May we have permission to contact your references?
 - Yes No
- May we have permission to contact your previous churches/employers?
 - Yes No
- Please complete, sign and return the permission form for required background checks.
- Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return to _____ (email address or cloud link) by _____ (date).

I AM IN AGREEMENT WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND GIVE MY PERMISSION FOR _____ (church name) TO BEGIN THEIR PROCESS OF CONSIDERATION OF ME AS A CANDIDATE FOR PASTOR.

(Signature)

(Date)

_____ (church name)
Pastoral Candidate Questionnaire

1. Share your salvation story and your call to ministry.
2. Describe in-depth your thoughts on biblical inerrancy and authority.
3. Explain the gospel: Who can be saved, what is required for salvation, and what happens to those who die apart from it?
4. Are you a proponent of young-earth creationism or old-earth creationism? Why?
5. Explain your interpretation of I Corinthians 12-14, as it pertains to spiritual gifts and the exercise of them within a local church body. Do you consider tongues to be an operative gift today? If so, are there any restrictions upon the use of tongues?
6. Explain your position on Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Who should be baptized and how? Who can participate in the Lord's Supper, and how often should it be served?
7. From the Scriptures, what is your understanding on the role of women in the church? In light of the fact that the Bible does not give a description of the role of a pastor's wife, what role will your wife have in your ministry?
8. Do you believe in, practice and teach Biblical tithing? Why or why not?
9. Discuss your understanding of church governance, structure and leadership.
10. Is there anything else you feel the committee should know in consideration of you as a candidate for pastor?

APPENDIX XII
Background Check Authorization Form

AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK

(Please read and sign this form in the space provided below. Your written authorization is necessary for completion of the application process.)

I, _____, hereby authorize [name of church] to investigate my background and qualifications for purposes of evaluating whether I am qualified for the position for which I am applying. I understand that [name of church] will utilize an outside firm or firms to assist it in checking such information, and I specifically authorize such an investigation by information services and outside entities of the company's choice. I also understand that I may withhold my permission and that in such a case, no investigation will be done, and my application for employment will not be processed further.

Signature of Prospective Employee Date

Prospective Employee's Name (Printed)

APPENDIX XIII
Sermon Evaluation Form

Name of Preacher: _____

Church Where Preaching Today: _____

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

General Evaluations:

1. Overall, the message was both challenging and encouraging.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. The presentation was clear and easy to understand.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. Personal appearance and attire were appropriate.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

4. The sermon was obviously well prepared.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

5. The speaker connected well with the congregation; he was engaging.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. There was a clear gospel-appeal and an invitation to respond.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

7. The sermon was doctrinally sound.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

See reverse side for short answer reflections.

Short Answer Reflections:

8. What were some sermon points that resonated well with you?

9. Was there anything about the sermon that caused you concern?

10. Do you think the people of your church would connect well with this pastor's sermons? Why or why not?

Other Observations/Notes:

APPENDIX XIV

Letter Three (Narrowing to One Candidate)

[To the top 2-3 who are no longer being considered. This letter should be sent after a personal phone call is made from the chairman of the committee. Email is appropriate.]

Dear _____,

The Pastor Search Committee of _____ (church name) has decided on one candidate to pursue uniquely. While we have deeply appreciated your cooperation and your prayerful consideration, and while we believe strongly that the Lord has gifted you in pastoral leadership, we believe that He is leading us toward another candidate to pursue uniquely at this time. As of now, we will no longer pursue you further as a candidate.

At the same time, we acknowledge that this process is not perfect, and neither are we. Should we have misunderstood God's direction, or should we come to realize that the candidate we are now pursuing uniquely is not God's man for this season in our church, we may come back to you and ask that you consider a conversation with us again. If so, we would ask at that time, in great humility, that you be open to being reconsidered.

Thank you, again, for your willingness to search out the Lord's direction in this call. Thank you for your interest in the pastorate at _____ (church name). We are praying the Lord will direct your steps clearly and compellingly in the future.

Sincerely,

Pastor Search Committee Chairman

APPENDIX XV

Checklist of things to share with Serious Candidates

- Church Constitution and Bylaws
- Current church budget
- Church mission statement and vision statement
- The church's long and short range goals (if available)
- Pastor's job description
- The 3 Profiles (Community, Church, and Pastor)
- Information on church ministries
- Information on current church staff
- Information on current lay leadership
- Current pictorial directory (if available)
- Recent newsletters, bulletins, website, etc.
- Other material about the church or community you deem valuable

APPENDIX XVI

Considerations for Pastoral Compensation Arrangements

[For assistance with estimating a fair compensation/salary range, visit www.compstudy.lifeway.com or ask your Associational or State Convention office.]

Vocational Compensation

- Base Salary \$
- Housing Allowance \$
- TOTAL Compensation \$

Other Benefits

- Retirement ___% of Salary = \$
- Family Health Insurance \$
- Life Insurance \$
- Disability Insurance \$
- TOTAL Benefits \$

Professional Expenses

- Automobile Expenses/Mileage Reimbursement \$
- Monthly Cell Phone Reimbursement \$
- Convention/Conference Expenses \$
- Book Allowance & Professional Development \$
- TOTAL Professional Expenses \$

Other Considerations

- Social Security Tax Allowance \$
- Worker's Compensation Insurance \$
- Christmas Bonus or Gift \$
- Home Owner's Insurance \$
- Insurance on Parsonage or Office Contents \$
- TOTAL Other \$

TOTAL Package \$ _____

Moving/Relocating Expense Allowance \$ _____

APPENDIX XVII

Considerations for Weekly & Annual Work Expectations

Due to the nature of the pastor's job, the church acknowledges that crisis situations, emergencies and heavy schedules may arise. There may also be times when the pastor will need to arrange his work schedule to accommodate ample time for family and personal needs.

Things to consider:

- Allowances for days off per week.
- Number of weeks of paid vacation.
- Number of sick days allowed.
- Number of days/weeks allowed for ministry leave (preaching revivals, Bible conferences, camps, etc.).
- List of Holidays off.
- Number of days/weeks allowed for study or continuing education.
- Number of Sundays allowed to be out of the pulpit.

APPENDIX XVIII

Possible Questions for Face to Face Interviews

1. Describe your conversion and your call to ministry.
2. What is the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's free will, pertaining to salvation?
3. How do you relate to other ministries/entities outside the local church?
4. What is your position on the inspiration, authority, and inerrancy of the Bible?
5. How, and on what levels, should the church be engaged with mission work?
6. Describe your personal evangelism practices.
7. What is your policy on pastoral counseling? Please give any background in the field, if applicable.
8. What do you think is the most important thing for you to do during the first year as the new pastor of a church?
9. Describe and explain the ideal church polity structure: pastor-led, committee-led, team-led, deacon-led, etc.
10. How would you describe an effective worship service?
11. How do you go about making changes in the church?
12. What style of public worship and preaching do you prefer?
13. What are your greatest strengths and your greatest weaknesses?
14. What do you like most about ministry? What do you like least about ministry?
15. What do you consider in the order of their importance, your chief duties as pastor?
16. What should be the core values of the church you want to pastor?
17. What interests you about serving at _____ Baptist Church?
18. What have you learned in the congregation you now serve that will make you a better pastor?
19. Have you had a positive or negative experience with a church building program?
20. Do you have plans regarding future education? What role do you believe the church should play in your continuing education?
21. Describe the mission of your present congregation. In what ways have your ministry influenced this mission?
22. Describe your leadership style.
23. Give an example of how you have relied on someone else to give you direction in ministry.
24. What measures have you put in place for personal accountability?
25. How do you respond to criticism?

26. To what degree if any do you differ with the historical doctrinal positions of this church?
27. Do you openly identify yourself with any particular political group?
28. Do you consider yourself a Southern Baptist? Why or why not?
29. Do you already know of any changes you might make to in our congregation if you became our pastor? If so, what are they?
30. What would be your most important priorities in the first 6 months as our pastor?
31. How have you approached issues of financial stewardship in congregations you have served?
32. How (and how often) do you prefer to conduct business meetings?
33. Describe an effective worship service.
34. Describe your routine and/or process of preparing sermons.
35. How much time do you devote each week to sermon preparation? How does that compare to time spent counseling or administration?
36. How long do you typically preach?
37. How do you feel about other ministers preaching at our church?
38. Are there any topics you feel uncomfortable preaching about, such as finances or current moral issues?
39. What role does pastoral care and counseling play in pastoring?
40. What duties are more important than pastoral care? What duties are less important?
41. Do you consider yourself a counselor? If so, what type of counseling do you perform?
42. More recently, sexual misconduct within the church has become a more visible issue. What safe guards have you initiated to protect yourself and the church from such misconduct?
43. How do you view your role in visiting members and church guests (visitors)?
44. Do you have any restrictions on the performance of marriages? Describe your approach to premarital counseling.
45. Do you regularly encourage participation in state and associational trainings? Why or why not?
46. Describe your idea of an effective discipleship ministry in the church.
47. How do you equip the church for personal evangelism?
48. How do you view the responsibility of world missions in your current church?

49. Are you a proponent of the Cooperative Program? How do you now allocate financial resources to the local association, state and national mission endeavors?
50. What is the primary role of the deacon body? What responsibilities, priorities or boundaries should the deacon body have in defining our church ministry?
51. What accountability should exist between the deacon body and the pastoral staff members?
52. Describe how your leadership style affects your relationship with other church staff members.
53. What measures of accountability might be put in place for staff members?
54. What type of conflicts have you experienced with other staff members, and how was it resolved?
55. How do you feel about a church member being employed as the church secretary, janitor, etc.?
56. Have you ever had to terminate a church staff member? If so, how did you handle it?
57. How would you respond to other staff members who in your opinion are doing a poor job?
58. What are your salary expectations?
59. On what basis would you expect future raises?
60. How many weeks of vacation do you presently receive?
61. Do you have a retirement plan?
62. What insurance plans do you have?
63. What responsibility do you feel the church has to serving our community?
64. Have you ever worked with ecumenical activities within your community? Why or why not?
65. Tell us about your family. How does your family feel about the possibility of this job change?
66. How can a church best provide support to the pastor's family?
67. If you were to move here, what type of housing would you be looking for?
68. What motivates you as a pastor?
69. How do you cope with stress?
70. Have you been previously married?
71. Do you take regular vacations?
72. Have you ever been charged and/or convicted of a crime?

73. Do you smoke, dip, or chew tobacco?
74. What is your attitude regarding the social use of alcohol?
75. Do you have outstanding debts with which you are struggling?
76. Do you have any unusual difficulties with your children or teenagers?
77. Do you have any outside business involvements? If so, how involved are you?
78. How familiar are you with the history of our church? Do you have any questions about our past?
79. How familiar are you with the current life of our church? Do you have any questions?
80. What do you see that you like about our church?
81. What questions do you have about this position that have not been answered?
82. Are there any concerns about which we have not asked, which might be of a sensitive nature for you or our church?



CONCLUSION

Top 10 Mistakes Pastor Search Committees Make

A church in pastoral transition is in an important and delicate season. How a church walks together through pastoral transition carries the potential of either unifying the body or dividing it. The weight on the shoulders of a Pastor Search Committee is intense. And they feel it constantly.

Most of the men and women we meet through the ministry of Pastor Search Committee training and coaching are passionate about their churches, and are committed to finding God's man in God's time, with no exceptions. Every Pastor Search Committee is different. Every church is different. However, there are some common mistakes that are easily identifiable among Pastor Search Committees we train.

1. Reacting against their previous pastor. It's just human nature, really. Church folks have this tendency to want their incoming pastor to have none of the perceived faults of their outgoing one, especially when the previous pastor's tenure has ended negatively (or when it is perceived as such). This tendency leads them to focus on what kind of man they *do not* want at the helm instead of what kind of man God *does* want there. So how do we keep from being mostly reactionary in a pastor

search? How do we help committees lean in to what's ahead instead of purely reacting against what's behind?

Do the work of the three profiles and prayerfully follow the process recommended in this handbook. The committees who do this prayerfully and diligently are usually more unified in determining the profile of their prospective pastor. They tend to lean into the man God has ahead of them instead of reacting against what is behind them.



“Lean in to the man God has ahead of you instead of reacting to what is behind you.”

2. Lack of communication with the church body. “Well, have you found our pastor yet?” That’s funny once or twice. But three, six, twelve months into the process, it’s not. The church usually, in some way, affirms the members of the Pastor Search Committee. They know who these men and women are, and they most likely had a hand in their selection. The members of this committee are acting as delegates on behalf of the church body. And the church body wants to know that there is forward movement.

We encourage churches to communicate with the church body at least biweekly. This is easily accomplished through a blog or printed statement. The committee should only stand before the congregation when there are significant things to report (and even then, this should never interrupt the flow of the worship service or take more than 3-5 minutes). Otherwise, biweekly communication is best accomplished in written form and located where the members of the church body know to find it – either digitally or in print.

What should they communicate? A short report of what the committee has been working on together. Specific prayer concerns. When they are opening and closing resume reception and how they are receiving resumes. When they have narrowed down to 5-10 candidates. When they are closing in on one candidate. Dates for the candidate’s reception and details of the in view of a call weekend.

What should they never communicate? Names, locations, or current churches of candidates. Disagreement or division within the committee. Frustration with the process or with candidates. When there seems to be no progress.

Always keep things moving forward, and always communicate that things are moving forward.



*“Always keep things moving forward,
and always communicate that things are moving forward.”*

3. Not reaching out for help. You do not have to do this on your own. Your local association and your state convention have trained and experienced ministerial employees who will gladly come train your committee and coach you through the process. As for the SBTC, this ministry comes to you at no direct cost because it is a fully funded ministry of churches participating through the Cooperative Program.

Often these men or women have helped dozens of committees through this process and have personal wisdom on top of the departmental wisdom their organization possesses from years of service in this area. They can help your team avoid common pitfalls and give practical suggestions for process. They can listen to your specific needs and help you think through contextual issues. They can coach you through moments when you seem to be “stuck.” They can help you get resumes from good, reliable sources. They can encourage you and pray for you through the process.

The key is not to wait until you are stuck or overwhelmed to ask for help. As soon as the committee is formed, have someone from the local association or state convention come in to train the committee at your first or second meeting. This establishes the helping relationship early, and it will keep you from burning bridges you did not know existed.

You do not have to do this on your own. You have a larger family of faith who loves you and is for you. Reach out for help.

4. Refusing to work as a team. We know it is hard to believe, but sometimes a member of the Pastor Search Committee just refuses to bend to the overall direction of the committee. Remember, this is not about the kind of pastor you want. This is about finding God’s man in God’s time, with no exceptions. We pray and trust that the Lord will work through the team, as a team, to make His will known.

Everyone has his or her own ideas and preferences. Committee members must

learn to curb those desires and fit them within the overall direction in which God is leading the team. If all other members of the committee are leaning toward one candidate, but you prefer a different candidate, (1) graciously let your concerns and desires be heard, (2) ask for a reconsideration of your preferred candidate, then (3) after reconsideration, if the direction of the committee has not changed, go with the flow.

5. Rushing to Resumes. Your first responsibility is not to start looking at resumes but to prayerfully seek God in searching out the kind of man He would have lead the church in the future. Often, when committees post the job and begin receiving resume immediately, there is no plan in place for processing candidates. In such instances, members of the committee will give their hearts to a particular candidate early in the process, without having done the diligence of the three profiles, of searching the Scriptures and of getting input from the church body.

When committees rush to resumes, they look for the wrong things and they are not all looking for the same things. One committee member will see a picture of a candidate's family and be sold in him immediately. Another will watch a sermon video and develop an unhealthy priority on pulpit delivery or charisma. The process in this handbook is outlined for a reason. It will keep your team moving forward together, in pursuit of God's man in God's time, with no exceptions. Embrace the process, and prayerfully expect God to work through it.



“When committees rush to resumes, they look for the wrong things and they are not all looking for the same things.”

6. Not following proper Pastor Search Committee ethics and etiquette. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance throughout the process. Every resume you handle and every name you entertain represents a man who is prayerfully considering uprooting his family, ending his tenure of ministry at one location and beginning a new season of life and ministry elsewhere. When a candidate's confidentiality is breeched his family suffers, his church suffers and your church suffers. We firmly believe that if the committee's careless actions disrupt God's work in the life

of a candidate or his current church, the committee members will answer to God for it.



“We firmly believe that if the committee’s careless actions disrupt God’s work in the life of a candidate or his current church, the committee members will answer to God for it.”

Social media is where many committee members make their first mistakes with regard to confidentiality. It is not appropriate to “friend” or “follow” any candidate. As you search through his profile and postings, be sure not to react to or comment on anything. The way social media platforms matrix their respective feeds, any activity at all on a candidate’s page or postings will invite the social media site to make secondary and tertiary connections based on your activity.

Another common breach of confidentiality is in verbal conversations with friends a committee member thinks are trustworthy. This is not a social club. This is a serious matter—a grave task. If you share a name or any clues (biographical, city, age range, family, etc.) about a candidate, the potential to create chaos within the church is increased exponentially.

Follow proper etiquette and ethics when it comes to the confidentiality of each candidate.

7. Failing to ask the right questions. Do not assume anything. If you sense a red flag, ask the question. If there is a check in your spirit, make it known. Some questions are difficult or awkward to ask, but they must be asked anyway. For example, questions need to be asked regarding pornography, personal spiritual disciplines and salvation testimony.

Sometimes, during an interview, a candidate’s response to a question will give rise to another question. Ask it. For example, if you ask about the candidate’s leadership style, perhaps a good follow up question would be whether he has ever had any conflicts in his leadership, how he handled them, and what he would do differently given the chance.

Use the questions in this handbook as a guide. Pour through all potential questions and, as a team, select the ones you feel need to be asked. Do not leave any

important question unasked. Do not assume anything. Failure to ask the right questions will be detrimental to the church in the long run.

8. Forgetting the details. Cover all the bases. Work through salary packages and moving expenses. Put things in writing. Communicate all pieces of information and arrangements with the appropriate committees. This handbook is extensive enough to help you think through all the details. Read and discuss it thoroughly.

9. Not notifying candidates after narrowing the field. Every candidate who submits a resume should be contacted in some way. When the candidate field is narrowed, those who are no longer being considered deserve to be notified. Some rejected candidates will respond and ask for reasons. Do not feel obligated to answer these questions—otherwise you may get into conversations in which you need not engage. Simply notify candidates when they are no longer being considered (using the suggested letters in this handbook), then move forward as a team.

10. Finishing or quitting too soon.

God's man in God's time, no exceptions. When it all boils down, your church is still pastorless for one of two reasons. Either (1) God's man is not yet ready to pastor your church, or (2) your church is not yet ready to receive God's man. Allow the Lord to shape and mold you, and your committee members, through the process. Don't get so caught up in the end goal that you miss what God has for you through the journey.

We promise there will be unexpected hang-ups in this process. There will be moments you feel stuck. Do not give up. Do not quit. Reach out for help. Your SBTC employees are available and willing to help coach you through any part of this process.



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