

The Pastoral Search



Baptist General Conference of Canada

When a pastoral vacancy occurs, there is the opportunity for a church to pause and assess its purpose, values and vision. This is a time for BGC personnel to meet with a church board and help with an evaluation of the condition and needs of the church. With such perspectives, the elders will be able to give leadership to the search process and set parameters to guide the Search Committee in their task.

Search Committees will find helpful suggestions and articles in this section.

DOCTRINE AND CREDENTIALS PROCEDURES

A. Church Preparation

Before a church seeks to fill a pastoral vacancy, it should take stock of itself, analyzing its present situation and needs in order to be able to identify the abilities and qualities needed in a new pastor. Surveys are included at the end of this section for a church "self-evaluation". Also, advice with this process is available from the BGC National Office or District Ministers and other helps.

B. Stages in the Search

- The "beginning stage" is the contact with a potential candidate, either through church sources or BGC sources. Anything that takes place before the PASTORAL PROFILE stage should be kept clearly understood as "preliminary discussion or consideration" by the candidate, Search Committee, and congregation. There is a difference between having a man preach for pulpit supply and having him preach as a considered candidate. It is important to hear and consider a man carefully before having him in your pulpit as a candidate.
- The "consideration stage" begins with the Pastoral Profile and, if it is satisfactory, progresses through pulpit candidating and exposure to the congregation, discussions and EXAMINATION.
- The "final stage" is the Call and Induction process.

Please read the section of this manual entitled ENTERING THE MINISTRY for a more detailed look at the required steps.

A SUMMARY GUIDE FOR SEARCH COMMITTEES

by Christopher L. Summerville

The purpose of this guide is to help the committee that has been commissioned with the awesome task of screening and selecting the right men to candidate for the position of pastor-teacher of its local church. This is a guide to help the committee organize itself and go about its work in an effective manner. In the past the failure of most [Pastoral] Search Committees can be traced to their lack of understanding and knowledge of how to perform their task. Many times it has resulted in the wrong man being selected as the pastor. Consequently, "divorce" takes place after about two to three years.

It is my prayer that this guide be used to aid the work of the [Pastoral] Search Committee and to help arrange proper "ministerial marriages" between pastors and churches. Good "ministerial marriages" will take place when the candidate and church have been properly matched, fitting and complementing each other. The time of candidating is like dating. It is a period of looking at each other more closely and seeing what are the possibilities of a "ministerial marriage." But before candidating, a difficult time of screening must take place. This is the main task of the [Pastoral] Search Committee; finding and selecting the man who will best complement and enhance the ministry of the church.

God's blessings of wisdom be with each committee in the use of this guide.

A. GETTING ORGANIZED

Immediately following the selection of the Pastoral Search Committee it must meet to organize. It is suggested that the first couple of meetings be for the purpose of discussing and answering the questions in this guide. Thorough planning on the part of the Pastoral Search Committee at this stage will be the most important part of its work, for here it will determine how well and efficiently it carries out its job and if it is going to work "methodically" in choosing candidates. This stage of the process will define the kind of person to be called to the church.

1. Read the following article: "How to Choose A Pastor."
2. Answer and discuss the following questions:
 - a) What will be Pastoral Search Committee procedures?
 - b) What are the current needs of the church?
 - c) What is the history of the church? What kind of progress has it made? What are its distinctives theologically and culturally?
 - d) What kind of pastor-teacher does the church need?
 - e) What will be the basic qualifications and standards desired in him?
 - f) How should a resume be properly read?
 - g) How should prospective candidates be screened?
 - h) Who will act as chairman and as secretary to correspond with each person who submits a resume?
 - i) For those who will be called to candidate at the church, what procedure of candidating will be followed?
 - j) Where do we go to find prospects?
3. Consult with the District Minister and refer to the section entitled "Entering the Ministry" and the BGC Constitution. Be fully aware of the procedures of the Conference.

B. KNOWING THE PROCEDURE

There are several natural stages to doing an effective job as a Pastoral Search Committee.

1. Throughout this whole process, the committee should bathe itself in prayer asking God to superintend its work. Pray for God to lead the church to the right man and the right man to the church. Daily prayer should be offered by each committee member.
2. Organize as a functioning committee. Prepare the necessary introductory papers and questionnaire that will be used with each applicant. Perhaps a questionnaire for congregational survey would help the committee assess the needs of the people.

3. Send out notices to the denomination, Bible colleges and seminaries announcing the search for a pastor-teacher. Include a packet that gives information about the church and the kind of pastor that is desired.

4. Receive resumes and acknowledge receipt promptly.

5. Screen each resume carefully and prayerfully.

6. Send a complete packet of information to those applicants chosen to be followed up. This includes the Pastoral Profile, BGC Constitution and related literature. Provide statistical information about the church and a list of questions that the applicant can answer to help determine his suitability as a pastor-teacher for the church.

7. Receive the responses from step #6 and evaluate the responses. In determining which men are to be pursued further, be careful to ascertain those whose philosophy of ministry and individual strengths most closely correspond with what the church needs and desires.

8. At this stage there may be a need for getting more information. Telephone personal interviews, and guest preaching opportunities may be held.

9. By unanimous consent invite the most "desirable" applicant to candidate at the church. This should be done with the approval of the governing board of the church.

10. The congregation should be encouraged to consider one candidate at a time. No comparisons should be made by having more than one identified candidate presented to the church with the idea of selecting the "best" of the group. A congregational vote should be taken as soon as possible after the period of candidating. The candidate should be judged and evaluated on his own performance, qualifications, and merits.

C. CORRESPONDING WITH EACH APPLICANT

A letter of acknowledgment should be sent out immediately upon receipt of each resume. Do not procrastinate. It is rude, crude and insensitive to delay or not to respond quickly to those who have responded promptly to your announcement of a pastoral vacancy. Along each stage of the process, keep each applicant informed until his name is dropped from the list of prospective candidates. If photocopied letters are sent, make sure each letter is personally signed! Avoid vague, impersonal language. When an applicant is notified that he is no longer being considered for the pastoral position, let him know why. Be specific. This can act as an encouragement for him.

Each letter should be written:

1. Clearly
2. Warmly
3. Personally
4. Spiritually
5. Understandingly
6. Informatively
7. Promptly
8. Officially

D. READING A RESUME

It is said that an average of 70 resumes reach the Pastoral Search Committee when it announces a pastoral vacancy. It is difficult to read a resume and get a clear and true understanding of the person who submits the resume. Most resumes are written sincerely and honestly. Still, the committee must spend time analyzing each resume. A good resume will include the following:

1. Name, birth, home-town
2. Marital status, ever divorced or separated, children
3. Wife's age, home and occupation
4. Health and hobbies
5. Experience in secular work
6. Christian testimony of salvation and call to ministry
7. Ecclesiastical relationships and status (ordination, etc.)
8. Educational experience and special training
9. Experience in ministry with whom, when, where, how long, accompanied by references
10. Philosophy of ministry and personal emphasis
11. Spiritual gifts and expertise
12. Theological perspective and doctrinal emphasis
13. Understanding of ministry, pastoring, preaching, evangelism, discipleship, worship, counselling, administration, and missions
14. Christian preachers and organizations respected and endorsed
15. Periodicals read and used
16. Personal references from a professor, an unbeliever, an elder, member of last church, former employer in a secular job and a friend or neighbour
17. The following characteristics should be looked for in a resume:
 - a) Honesty
 - b) Originality

- c) Clearness of thought
- d) Theological depth and articulation
- e) Organization and writing ability
- f) Warmth and spiritual fervour
- g) What is the man saying? What is his emphasis? What do you learn from the resume about him? What do you not learn?

Much of the information above is included in the BGC Pastoral Profile.

E. PREPARING A PORTFOLIO OF YOUR CHURCH

After receiving resumes for a call, a packet should be sent to those selected, if not to all, to provide information about the church. A person the committee may be interested in might remove his name when he reads the portfolio and finds out the church would not meet his personal requirements and needs. The portfolio helps define the church's needs. This will help the applicant decide if he is still interested in the church. EXPECT the Holy Spirit to use this procedure to help find the right and suitable man for the church. The portfolio should include honest information about the church in the following areas:

- 1 . A history of the church; where it has come from. Include any major events, splits, or tensions. Are there any special days or events celebrated each year in the life of the church?
2. What kind of facilities are there? Are they adequate? Is there a pastor's study? How much property does the church own?
3. How many members does the church have? Give age groupings and numbers. Who lives in the community? What are the socio-economic characteristics of the congregation?
4. What programs and ministries are there? Are they successful? How do you measure success? Which programs are the most important? What is the attendance for each? Are there children and youth programs? Provide a copy of a church bulletin and any other literature and samples from tract racks, etc.
5. What was your budget for the last year? Send a copy of an annual statement. What is the church's indebtedness? How are people kept informed of the church's financial condition? What is the church's concept of giving?
6. What is the church's philosophy of ministry? Why does the church exist? What is its purpose? Where does it intend to go? Is it future or past oriented? Is it open to change, creativity, and innovation? What changes have recently been made? Who does the work of ministry? What is the pastor's role? How significant is preaching? What type of preaching ministry is preferred? How important are the following: pastoral visitation, study time, team ministry. How much administration is required? Is there a church secretary? How is worship viewed?

Is it formal or informal? Are changes in the worship services acceptable? Does the church practice discipline? How did the people react to the last discipline case? Is there a developed evangelism ministry? How does it operate and who is involved? How many people have come to Jesus Christ as a result of the witness of the church in the last three years? Does the church cooperate with any parachurch organizations? Describe the missions program. What are the recognized views on such ethical questions as abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and homosexuality? What social ministries is the church involved with?

7. What are the church's strengths and needs? What appears to be the major hindrance to the success of the church? Are there any current sensitive issues in the church family? Describe the "culture" of the church.

8. Describe the community in which the church is located. What are its climate, socio-economic levels, major interests, and surroundings? What is the potential for growth in the community? Is there cooperation with other churches?

9. Is there a job description for the pastor-teacher? What is expected of him? Set priorities that relate to the church, self and family. What protection and support will be in place for him when criticism comes against him? Is there regular ministry evaluation? How does it take place, who does it and how often? What are to be the ministerial qualifications for a pastor?

10. How long did the last pastor stay? What was the nature of his ministry? Were the people truly loyal to him? Explain. Were there any personal conflicts? What were they? Why did he leave? What is he doing currently?

11. What will be the compensation package for the new pastor? Are there allowances for the following: salary, car, housing, insurance, pension, books and periodicals, continuing education, vacation, conferences, moving expenses, sick leave, medical plan, days off, cost of living increase, contracts, etc.

F. QUALIFYING THE APPLICANT

As the names of candidates come in, be careful to screen them. Remember that potential pastors must complete a BGC Pastoral Profile. As candidates are selected that appear suitable, additional information from the applicant may be required to address all concerns. It is VERY important NOT TO OVERLOOK this section of the process. A lot of work is involved, but it will bring about blessings as THE man for the church is located. There must be a blending and harmony of thought in specific areas if he is to articulate the ministry and lead the church. It is suggested that the applicant answer the following questions and the Pastoral Search Committee use the responses to choose those men who best reflect the thought of the church and its needs at this time in its history.

1. What are your views on how a local church should ideally function with regards to:
 - a. The gifts of the Spirit?
 - b. Spiritual authority of the elders?
 - c. Relationship between pastor and congregation?
 - d. The place of children and youth?
 - e. Body life?
 - f. Church discipline?
 - g. Training and recruitment?
2. What is your plan for involving the members in the work of ministry?
3. What do you feel is the primary focus of your ministry? What are your spiritual gifts, strengths, and weaknesses? How has God used you in the past and present?
4. Comment as to your views on the following:
 - a. Preaching and your style.
 - b. Evangelism and its methods.
 - c. Worship and its format.
 - d. Music and its use in the church.
 - e. Cooperation with other churches and denominations.
 - f. Finances and housing for the pastor.
 - g. Pastoring as a shepherd.
 - h. Christian education and discipleship.
5. What do you feel is your primary role as a pastor-teacher within the government of our church?
6. How would you settle disagreements which might arise among the elders or deacons?
7. What steps would you take towards resolving differences and establishing unity in the local church?
8. How would you approach teaching on a subject which is not a fundamental issue and about which the congregation has differing views?
9. List the best three books and authors you have read in the last year. What impact did they have on you?
10. What are your feelings about small groups and using people to participate in leading the worship services?
11. What are priorities for you, your family, and the ministry?

12. What are the characteristics of the committees and congregations you have served?
13. What are your chief interests and recreational activities?
14. What do you consider to be spiritual growth in a church?
15. How does your wife view your calling and what does she perceive as her role in the church and her ministry? Is she happy in the role of a pastor's wife? Will she work? For her, what are the most difficult areas about being a pastor's wife?

G. CANDIDATING TIME

This is a special time in any candidate's life and ministry. He is on trial; he is being examined. Try to make the time profitable, informative, enjoyable and a time of ministry in the Word of God. Plan ahead. Be well prepared. Make the candidate and his wife feel at home. The basic guidelines which make for redeeming this time are as follows:

1. Invite the candidate and his wife. Pay for their travel and lodging expenses ahead of time. Most pastors do not have the financial reserves to take care of this. Be sensitive.
2. Arrange for the candidate to minister two consecutive Sundays. He should be given the opportunity to bring prepared messages/lessons for two Sunday School periods, two Lord's Day morning worship services, two evening worship services, and one Wednesday night Bible study or prayer meeting. Let him know in detail what you want him to do.
3. Arrange for the candidate to stay in a local hotel or in a member's home during his stay. If necessary, provide a vehicle without charge for his use.
4. Arrange for him and his wife to be invited guests in a different member's home for each lunch and supper mealtime. This allows him to meet as many people as possible on an informal, personal level so they can ask him questions and get to know him.
5. Plan a meeting with the Pastoral Committee and elders to discuss any of the above questions.
6. After the last message of his visit, provide for an informal fellowship time for the congregation to ask questions.
7. Show him around the community and nearest town.
8. After the candidating time send him a letter of thanks and appreciation along with an honorarium. This is in order, for you may not see him again. Leave a good impression of being sensitive and generous. If he is not accepted, send

a warm letter of notice explaining the reasons your church does not feel led of the Lord to extend a call. Be encouraging.

CONCLUSION

I believe that any Pastoral Committee that seeks God's direction and follows these guidelines will find the man of God's choosing. It may take a long time, but patience, planning, and petitioning God will result in God's blessings with a fine "ministerial marriage." No church is perfect. No man is perfect. You are not looking for a perfect pastor. Look for a man who meets your requirements and needs and one who manifests:

1. A deep love for God
2. A deep love for the Word of God
3. A deep love for the Church of God
4. A deep love for the lost from God

God bless each committee that takes its task seriously and takes the time to use this guide.

The following article "How to Choose A Pastor" offers an excellent outline for the Pastoral Committee. Dr. Babcock offers some good insight and wisdom.

A questionnaire for use with the congregation is helpful.

HOW TO CHOOSE A PASTOR

by Wendell K. Babcock

Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music Used
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The Christian religion, and the Christian ministry in particular, has fast become a profession like many of the education-related areas of our society. Teaching used to be a calling; now it is a profession. Farming used to be a way of life; now it is a business. Practicing medicine used to be a way of life; now it is a position for making money. Likewise the Christian ministry has degenerated into a comfortable setting of beautiful building, padded pew, paid parsonage, warrantable wage, voluptuous vacation, planned pension, and tax-free travel. Oh, to be sure, this is not true in every case, but this is the expectation of the incoming pastor, beware! What the congregation needs is a man of God! Having said this, however, let me remind you that there are responsibilities of properly caring for a pastor. If the Christian leader is worth his salt, he ought to be taken care of and well.

Congregations and church boards all over the country are perplexed and concerned about selecting the right man for their pulpit. Pastors are not always assigned, nor are associational contacts the complete answer. Churches need some guidelines, some suggestions that may save them from confusion and ill consequence. It is our purpose, therefore, to set forth ten brief points for careful consideration, that choosing a pastor be an enjoyable rather than a burdensome task.

1. PRAY for the Lord's direction.

There is no substitute for prayer. What the machinations of men cannot accomplish, prayer can. It is the obligation of every serious Christian assembly to pray. If the church is new, the handful of saints must pray for a leader. If the church has been disappointed, people must pray. If there is a division for some reason or other, Christians must be agreed by confessions, reconciliation, restoration, then intercession. Whatever the circumstance, God's people must seek the Lord in prayer. Sooner or later the Lord will raise up just the right man. To bathe the whole matter in prayer will make the difference between heavy heartache and bountiful blessing. Though all other advice fail, the necessity of prayer will not. And how shall you pray? After clearing the atmosphere, pray simply and definitely. Pray for guidance, wisdom, discernment, and above all, God's perfect will. In these God will hear and answer.

2. ANALYZE your particular situation.

Since it is not always easy for people to really see themselves as they are, it may be wise to call in a servant of God to give advice, to relate what he has observed about the situation, or to set up a steering committee. There will be contacts to be made, letters to be written, but all within the framework of the local setting. Every church circumstance is different; no two works will operate exactly the same. Ask yourself some questions:

- (1) How old is our church?
- (2) What are the possibilities for expansion?
- (3) What are the age groups of our congregation?
- (4) Is there a particular area of need?
- (5) Are we predominately an urban or rural culture?
- (6) What are our financial capabilities?
- (7) Are we in a state of revival or spiritual decline?

These and many more questions will help you to think of the type of man you should call. Be objective in your approach, but continually ask God to control your ideas and your attitudes. Seek proper balance between objective data and the spiritual tug of your hearts.

3. KNOW what you are seeking.

Human wisdom is not the answer, and perhaps you will not succeed in gaining total agreement and approval on all points of candidacy. But having prayed, you should be able to resolve any conflicting opinions and thus itemize certain requirements. Here is a list of questions which may be helpful in the preliminary stages of seeking someone for your pastoral ministry.

- (1) Are we looking for a Bible teacher and an expositor of the Word of God?
- (2) Do we expect him to be a soul-winner in the community and a leader of a soul-winning campaign?
- (3) Will he fit into our church building program? How much leadership do we need in this direction?
- (4) How much time do we anticipate being allocated to home and hospital visitation?
- (5) What kind of organizer and supervisor do we desire?
- (6) How old a man would best suit our congregation? A youth worker, a grandfatherly gentleman, or a middle-aged experienced pastor with a five or ten year expectancy?
- (7) Must our pastor possess certain personality traits, as persuasiveness, zeal, vivacity, or ease, composure, cultured stature? What is our collective image?
- (8) Do we expect our pastor to be a jack-of-all-trades? Must he be an errand boy, a carpenter, a musician, a choir director, a bus driver, an electrical technician? Just what are we looking for?

Sometimes a church is spoiled by what a previous pastor has been and what has been accomplished under that ministry. It is unwise to project an imagined comparison into the future and thus try to enumerate prescribed qualifications on that basis. On the other hand, there may be certain pitfalls that should be avoided, especially if there has been a history of unfortunate circumstances. Be careful, however, not to make injudicious

comparisons; only disappointment will result. Use sanctified common sense and outline your procedure prayerfully and carefully.

4. REMEMBER that a pastor is only a man.

You want him to be God's man, to be sure; nevertheless, he is still a man. There will always be those times in which he will fail. He may not always act wisely. Sometimes he may make wrong decisions. Personal idiosyncrasies will reveal themselves soon enough. Though he may be friendly to everyone, do not be so naive as to think that everyone will like him, for occasionally there will be personality conflicts. Expect human weaknesses, but also expect an undertaking and growing sanctification. Far too often a church has the attitude that the pastor should never make a mistake, that somehow he has "arrived" spiritually, that he will always be "on top". Over a period of time, however, average church experience will tell you that the pastor is very, very human. He will not be a genius, or a superman, or a perfect person in every regard. Human frailty will accompany him in illness, or incapability, or incapacity somewhere along the line. Remember these things when you begin searching.

5. OBSERVE the trend and general activity of a church, a pastor or an institution.

Perhaps you will get a lead from personal contacts, either from a church that is already operating successfully, or from a college or seminary which can advise you about the potential of a candidate or prospect. The future may be marked by the present. What is going on right now? Is there an observable degree of success in the current situation? What kind of reputation has developed thus far? You must keep your eyes and ears open before you can even begin to engage a man for your pastorate. You need a general panoramic view before you narrow your interest down to an individual man. Often you can obtain a list of several prospects from leading men of your particular church fellowship or from a placement bureau of a school of your church persuasion. A person who is already at work is the kind you want. One already busily engaged, like Gideon and Elisha, is the type of man who will help you. Someone who is available to God will also be available to supply your church needs according to the leading of the Lord. Once you have observed from broad perspective, then you can begin having candidates.

6. ASK certain questions in regard to the qualifications of the man who should lead your work.

Just as you analyzed your particular situation, (#2), now begin coupling the details of the prospective pastor to the details of the situation. After all, there must be God's man in God's place. Some of the questions we offer here may at first seem too obvious and too elementary. But in our day little can be taken for granted.

- (1) Does he love God SUPREME? This must be the evident qualification, for not every pastor has a proper chain of values.

- (2) Where does he stand doctrinally? Can he subscribe to the tenets of the Bible and of your church? Do you know of any "pet" or "hobby" doctrinal issues which he holds or emphasizes?
- (3) Is it obvious that the men recommended to you have a love for people? Sometimes a good pulpit ministry is not balanced with a warm attitude toward souls. Or the reverse may be true, that hearty fellowship supersedes a solid ministry backed by consistent study.
- (4) What value should any pastor place upon the ministry? Can you easily discern his attitude of dedication to his work? Or is there a taint of worldly philosophy which colours his preaching? You should be able to detect whether a pastor is sold on what he is saying and doing.
- (5) Are there some extra-curricular activities in which your pastor might engage? What interests do your prospective candidates have? How much time should a pastor expect to spend in recreation? What outlet does a candidate have as a means of relieving tensions and the steadiness of demands upon his time?
- (6) Do the financial expectations of your prospective pastor match your church capabilities? Until you investigate, you will be able to only estimate theirs. But observation will tell you something about parsonage, facilities, study, transportation, insurance, etc. Some of this information may be obtained in general terms by the "going rate" and by your index of contacts.
- (7) Have you found a man who meets most of your projected requirements as to personality, ability, talent, etc.? There is no need to investigate a man who does not fit the needs of your church.
- (8) Does the life measure up with the preaching? Here again, you will not be able finally to know this until you investigate. But upon careful observation you will be able to determine such tones as unreality, suaveness, any lack of interaction with people or failure in communication. An awareness on your part will help you pick up clues on initial contacts.
- (9) What educational qualifications do the candidates have? If you have already enumerated certain qualifications along this line, then expect your men to possess these.
- (10) How old are the men you expect to contact? What experience have they had? How long have they been serving the Lord? Except for temporary supply, a church usually does not want a novice. Small churches, however, may feel that a young man will help their young people, or a new work may need a zealous beginner to grow with the work. But think this question through; know what you need and what men can fit this need.

1. INVESTIGATE the reputation, background, previous circumstances of your prospects.

- (1) Has the individual been faithful to his ministry?

- (2) Have souls been saved recently?
- (3) What blessing is evident in his present congregation?
- (4) Is he "itching" to leave his present work?
- (5) Have young people been encouraged to attend a Christian college or institute?
- (6) How long has your candidate lasted in previous fields of service?
- (7) What relationship exists with present board members?
- (8) What training or what schools compose his educational preparations?
- (9) Will his health have any bearing upon his ministry?
- (10) What about his wife and family? Do they also speak of his influence.
- (11) Will their lifestyle and passion for ministry be complementary to his ministry?

It is not at all unusual to send a delegation from the local church to hear a minister preach. Sometimes observations are better when the pastor is uninformed of the delegation's coming. Neither is it unusual that several church boards correspond, for both failures and victories may be voiced in order to gain a fair appraisal of the candidate. At the same time, always be sure to consider ample time for growth in the Lord, for as a Christian your prospect must learn spiritual lessons too. And of all the suggestions we could give you in regard to selecting a pastor, INVESTIGATION is probably the greatest point. Failures in churches can often be traced to improper or incomplete investigation. Know whom you are calling!

8. INVITE the minister you have selected to come to speak to your congregation.

There should be a clear-cut understanding as to his purpose for coming. Is he there simply to speak for one day? Is he definitely being considered as a candidate? Will he make himself available if the Lord so leads? It may be wise to let him know that his transportation and accommodations will be taken care of. Perhaps a meeting with the official board could be arranged while the visiting speaker is there. And ask the people to pray continually for the Lord's direction, even in the details of communication. Often a congregation gets that "new pastor feeling". A church should guard against this, lest conclusions be drawn too suddenly or prematurely. Some people will eat up a new pastor when he comes, and after two or three months they wish they had! However, during the first visit of a prospective pastor, the assembly should observe, listen carefully and prayerfully, evaluate without being unduly critical. Then shortly after the initial services, call the congregation together to discuss the pastor and the possibilities of a return engagement. Whatever you do, don't fall into the trap of having a popularity contest among several possible candidates. Evaluate a man on his own ground rather than by comparison. Determine whether he meets the qualifications and objectives you set up initially. This method will save you from debate over likes and dislikes, or from your own varied opinions.

9. DECIDE to call the man who seems to meet the need of your church.

Almost all factors will fall into place if the move is of the Lord. There may be a few details that will have to be worked out, but for the most part both sides of the matter will resolve, the call and the response. If the understanding is clear, the result will be clear. Any points of disagreement or disapproval will be revealed at the outset, making the future comparatively free from internal communications problems as well. The beginning will often determine what follows. To call a pastor is a sacred responsibility and ought not to be done too hastily. To wait a short time is better than to bite at the first nibble of a young enthusiast. A steady, seasoned ministry of the Word of God will prove to be more lasting and enduring than a diet of only evangelism, for proper ministry of the Word will prove its own results. Wait on the Lord until the proper answer comes; then decide with full persuasion and full assurance of faith.

10. MEASURE all that transpires by the truth of the Word of God.

The light of the Word will instruct you, will reveal any erroneous teaching or preaching in a pastor, will condition a church with holy sensitivity to make proper choices and proper commitments. An assembly should make no allowance for compromise and should require complete agreement with the doctrinal statement and constitution. A reading of the epistles of Timothy and Titus will be both informative and protective, for a pastor and his relationship to a congregation must be based upon Scripture rather than upon comparison with other pastors and churches. The new pastor may not do everything just like the previous.

Above all, pray that the Lord will lead you to the very man of God's choice to your particular pulpit and pastorate. God has someone just for you; find him, love him, support him, work with him, and watch God work in a glorious way!

ADVICE FOR THE SEARCH COMMITTEE RE: A PROSPECTIVE PASTOR

(Compiled by Carl Friedrich)

- A. If possible, visit the candidate's church, hear him preach and observe how he works in familiar surroundings.
- B. If possible, try to meet with the candidate in his own home, with wife and children present, before a call is extended. Order in the home; management of children; attitude toward wife, etc. will tell you something of how he might lead in the church.
- C. Interview husband and wife together at the same time, perhaps even the wife alone. Learn how the couple interacts; do they allow each other to talk and express ideas?; how the wife feels about the pastorate, moving, opportunities for children, her role in the church.
- D. Carefully discuss finances: what is expected by way of salary; what benefits are essential; how allowances should be divided.
- E. If you have a parsonage, ask if it is acceptable. Almost all churches now encourage pastors to own their homes or rent on their own. A loan to purchase a home may be agreed upon. If so, make sure a proper document regarding repayment is drawn up and put in the minutes and/or a safety deposit box.

Consider carefully the BGC insurance and pension plan if you have not already done so.
- F. Ask what kind of salary increases are expected and arrange a method by which deacons or some appointed leaders in the church can discuss money matters openly at least once a year.
- G. Clearly agree on vacation time, work load, days off, office hours, church expectations: eg. Sunday School, Youth, prayer meetings, etc.
- H. The divorce and remarriage issue is a thorny one in many churches. The Bible is used sincerely to support more than one point of view. Ask what the conviction and practice of the candidate is. The church must carefully and graciously recognize this issue, study it, be advised and not closed-minded. Today's church must receive and seek ways to minister to single parent families, divorcees, etc.
- I. Ask what his feeling is about church growth, seeker services, contemporary music, worship teams, and any of the modern issues so talked about and written about today.
- J. Ask what "involvement of people" and "congregation participation" means to the candidate. Is the man one who likes always to work alone? Is he open to skits, etc.?

Younger pastors today are being trained for change. There is a growing emphasis being placed on reaching the unchurched. Church and pastor must prayerfully and wisely work together for change. Change is painful but needful.

A new pastor must be given room to do things "differently" but you must determine if your candidate is a team man and whether he will lead or dictate.

Determine whether or not you are "team people" too. Do you work with a pastor or dictate to him?

- K. Ask who his model for ministry might be. Naturally, Christ is our example, but many men have a hero after which they pattern their ministry (books, tapes, videos, etc.). Make sure you respect his hero or you will soon be in conflict.
- L. Ask the candidate what ten books are the most important to him. It may help you understand his goals and philosophy.
- M. Ask for a written philosophy of ministry and keep a record of it in your minutes. His position on women in ministry leadership should be included in this section.
- N. Ask if he is a pastor who visits his people or if he delegates visitation (both can work well if an understanding is reached).
- O. Ask how he feels about counselling and what he plans to do in that area.
- P. Make sure you pass on to your pastor any policies that the church has decided on that may not be covered by your constitution i.e. weddings, funerals, outside groups using the church, involvement with other churches, involvement with community groups or programs.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE:

Over the past number of years there has been an increase in the number of counselling malpractice suits against pastors on both sides of the border. It would be very prudent to check the church's Liability Insurance to make sure that there is a rider covering the pastor in the area of counselling. Coverage has been, in the past, rather inexpensive.

In this vein a new trend has begun to emerge with claims against members of the clergy for sexual misconduct. With all of the charges that have been made public, over the last few years, there are those who see the area of alleged sexual misconduct as a way to make a quick buck. It would be wise to look into the possibility of getting a rider on the church's Liability Insurance for this as well.

Before hiring a pastor or any staff, churches would be well advised to do background checks to determine if an applicant has previously been convicted or accused of sexual misconduct.

BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE OF CANADA

Job Description Outline for a Senior Pastor (Sample)

Date to Review this Job Description: _____

Date Revised: _____

Purpose: To provide spiritual oversight, vision and leadership to assist in developing a healthy reproducing church.

Leadership Profile:

The Pastor will:

1. have a personal commitment to Jesus Christ which he clearly articulates, submitting to Holy Scripture as his authority for faith and life,
2. have ministry experience which has clearly evidenced the blessing of the Holy Spirit,
3. subscribe whole-heartedly to the Affirmation of Faith and Pastoral Code of Ethics, mission and policies of the Baptist General Conference of Canada.
4. be able to communicate his vision, work well with his fellow church leaders and apply the Word of God to all areas of life and the church's ministry,
5. (Add additional items to suit your own situation)
- 6.
- 7.

<u>Areas of Responsibility:</u>	<u>% of Time</u>
1. Have a balanced dynamic preaching/teaching ministry. (Provide your own description here)	35%
2. Provide proactive leadership and leadership training . (Provide your own description here)	15%
3. Provide pastoral care personally and through other trained care-givers. (Provide your own description here)	15%

4. **Disciple and equip** others to do the same.

(Provide your own description here)

5. Provide **administrative management** in operations 15%

(Provide your own description here)

6. Continue in his **self-development** to remain current and effective in ministry. 10%

(Provide your own description here)

Organizational Relationships:

1. The pastor is directly responsible to the elders and indirectly responsible to the congregation of the church.
2. The pastor is responsible for the leadership of any support staff.