



The Work of a Pastor Search Committee

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Introduction

After over thirty-five years of dealing with Pulpit Committees as a pastor, and since 1990 working with Pastor Search Committees as an Associational Director of Missions, I am confident of two great truths.

First, there is nothing more important to the life and vitality of a church than the man who is called to serve as pastor. A wise choice yields bounty and blessing for the congregation. A poor choice can fracture the fellowship of the congregation... sometimes beyond repair.

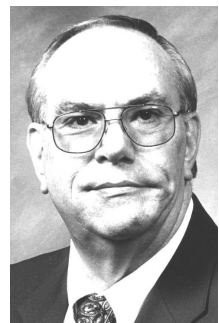
Second, Search Committees sometimes look from the outside as though they are totally lost. One member of a Search Committee said, "This process is so illogical that if I didn't believe that the Lord was in it, I'd get totally discouraged."

The purpose of this "workbook" is to provide a step by step resource to help Pastor Search Committees do their work more effectively. This workbook is intended to be exactly that... a book full of suggestions about doing the work of a Search Committee.

A very special word of acknowledgment is due to Dr. Clyde Cain, Director of Ministerial Services, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. Some years ago, Dr. Cain developed a packet of brochures to be used by Search Committees and many churches have profited from this wise counsel. With Dr. Cain's permission, these brochures provided an invaluable resource for this material.

An additional word of acknowledgment is due "**LEADERSHIP**" magazine (published by Christianity Today, Inc.). They have extended permission to reprint the cartoon material used to illustrate this work. They do, however, retain all copyrights of that material.

This material is very much a group effort. Although I have written the material in this book, it reflects the thoughts and observations drawn from many Associational Directors of Missions, pastors and Search Committee members. It has been my privilege to edit the material into this current form. Continual input makes this work more effective and more complete. I welcome suggestions and additional material for inclusion in future editions.



God bless you as your Search Committee undertakes it's work. It is important to the kingdom of God. I pray that you might find in this workbook insights which will aid you in your work.

Using An Interim Pastor

There were occasions, when a pastor resigned, that the church will use different preachers to supply the pulpit each Sunday. Most churches today will call an Interim Pastor. The Interim Pastor is usually a retired pastor, furloughing missionary, evangelist, denominational employee or a preacher not presently serving a church. It is always better to have an interim who is not seeking a pastorate because confusion can erupt between a congregation and search committee.

An Interim Pastor can serve in a wider capacity than just a continuing pulpit supply.

1. If congregational problems seem to recycle themselves with each succeeding pastor, and, the departure of a pastor does eliminate all problems, an interim, with grace, can be asked to intervene and often halt this process to assure a smooth transition for the next pastor.
2. Some active leaders step out of their places of service and some, rather inactive members step into leadership roles. The interim may be invited to assist in equipping the new group of leaders who have surfaced in this time.
3. Some persons go through a grief process: loss, anger, guilt and release. An loving Interim Pastor can help the members move through those feelings and become ready to have a healthy relationship with a new pastor.
4. The interim can lead the congregation to reflect on its rich heritage, develop a deeper sense of appreciation of its past and identity with its present. This can help the search committee in praying for and seeking a pastor who is compatible with and can lead the congregation.
5. The interim can meet with the Pastor Search Committee at their request, the

deacons and church council at their request, as well as spending time as a pastor/counselor.

6. The interim will conduct regular worship services, administer the Lord's supper and baptism, meet with the church staff for program planning and counsel, may be involved in some limited visitation and if the church desires, serve as moderator at church business meetings.

The interim pastor's work is one of giving stability, building bridges, and sometimes healing wounds. The interim period is a time of adjustment to a new era in the church and is fashioned in to prepare the church for its next stage of development.

While the interim is serving the church it must be with the understanding that emphasis be given to the congregation following the leadership of the new pastor and the interim's ministry must gradually diminish.

An Interim Pastor can help the church identify its real purpose and mission as a congregation.

Having an interim pastor has definite advantages:

- He provides a continuity in preaching (The congregation has the same preacher for each service)
- The church has the leadership it needs between pastors
- An interim provides the pastor search committee ample time to do its work
- Transfer of feelings from the previous pastor to acceptance of the new pastor by the congregation can be made

Many times the work of the church moves forward under the leadership of an

effective interim pastor: additions, new units in the Sunday School, and occasional improvements to the building can be made. The interim pastor is used of the Lord in helping to unify the church in a oneness of spirit for the coming of the new pastor.

Selecting the Interim

Churches use a variety of procedures in selecting the interim. Most use a committee for this process. Generally, a "Pulpit Supply and Interim Committee" is elected by the church to free the search committee of this responsibility. Occasionally, churches will ask the Pastor Search Committee to seek out and find an appropriate interim pastor. In most cases, it is done with one of these two committees. Occasionally, the church authorizes the committee to secure an interim pastor, but most often, the responsible committee brings their recommendation to the church.

The interim pastor should be dedicated to Christ and loyal to the denomination. He should not be one who is looking for a church to pastor. He should be familiar with the work of the association, state convention, and Southern Baptist Convention.

It is most beneficial to the church when the interim has the ability to love people, help heal wounds, and restore the local church fellowship. In some instances, a church needs the service of an interim who can lead the congregation to give loyal support to the cooperative work of the denomination.

When the church calls an interim they should have an agreement concerning his responsibilities. Agreements should be reached on how much time he is to give for prospect visitation, hospital ministry, committee meetings and number of services conducted. One of the following structures is generally acceptable:

- * Preach in each service on Sunday
- * Preach in services on Sundays and Wednesdays
- * Other responsibilities as agreed upon by both the church and the interim.

As long as there is a clear understanding of duties and responsibilities the church and interim will generally have a very good working relationship.

Financial Arrangements

The interim pastor should be paid according to the responsibilities and time given to the church. He should be compensated for expenses incurred in meeting those responsibilities. Sunday afternoon housing, meals, and travel expenses should be taken into consideration when a church calls an interim pastor. Generally, a church will provide a salary of two to three times more than a regular pulpit supply if the interim serves on Sundays and Wednesdays. When the interim only preaches on Sunday and is not involved any other time, approximately one and one-half to two times the amount of a regular pulpit supply is paid.

A clear understanding regarding financial arrangements should be reached between the committee, congregation, and interim pastor. Attention should be given to designating a part of the remuneration as either business travel expense or if the interim is ordained as housing allowance in order to provide him with available tax benefits.

When The New Pastor Is Called

The interim pastor should never prolong his service with the church, but should be a source of encouragement to the Pastor Search Committee. When the new pastor has been called to the church the interim should make the transition easy for the new pastor. It is appropriate for the interim pastor to contact the new pastor who has accepted the call and offer assistance in any way he can to make the move as easy as possible. The interim pastor, in his last service with the church, should make it clear that he no longer is to be their under-shepherd. He should encourage the church to transfer their affection and love to the new pastor as their spiritual leader.

The interim pastor gives a congregation a new experience, an adjustment time. A fresh vision may be developed and shared

by a new voice. New possibilities and opportunities may become realities. When well used, a transition time with an effective interim pastor is important for a church's health and well being.

When the work of the interim is complete, he should leave the church in the care of

the new pastor. He prays for the church and the new pastor, but he should not initiate contact with members of the congregation. The transition is complete only when the interim severs all relationship with the congregation. **Let the new pastor be the pastor.**

I. Preliminary Considerations

1. Election of a Search Committee

a. Who Should Serve?



The individuals who comprise the Search Committee literally hold the future of the church in their hands. They should be people of the highest integrity and competence. Individuals who have given evidence of their commitment to the church and who have exhibited the highest expressions of sound judgment. They should be people that the church trusts.

Those elected to serve should be representative of the church. Remember that a potential pastor's first impressions of the church will come from this group.

They should be articulate individuals... able to communicate. Their contribution to the process is not only their ability to listen effectively and make sound judgments, but also to communicate the interests and priorities of the church to the candidate.

They should be involved individuals... *in the know*. They should be people who know the pulse of the church and can accurately reflect the interests of the church as a whole.

Selection for service on a Search Committee should never be based on a desire to "*get someone involved*" in the church. Remember that the selection of a pastor is the single most important decision that a church will make.

b. How Should They Be Selected?

There is no magical formula for how many people should serve, or how they are to be selected.

If your church has a constitution and by-laws, consult and follow it.

The church may ballot allowing each person to write on a blank ballot the names of seven individuals. The person receiving the most votes will serve as chairperson... etc. until the designated number of people on the Search Committee has been achieved.

Everyone who serves on a Search Committee deserves to be contacted privately and allowed to pray about the task... and to decline discreetly if they do not feel led to serve.

2. Approval of Search Committee Expenses

The church should remember that there will be expenses incurred in the search process... telephone calls, gas and meals. Some form of reimbursement process should be established. A Search Committee should never have to pay for the costs involved in searching for a pastor out of their own pocket.

3. Dealing with Strong Personalities on the Search Committee

It is not unusual for people with strong personalities to be asked to serve on the search committee. These are people with natural leadership skills or people who are very articulate. This can be an asset to the committee as these folks make good committee chairpersons and spokespersons. It can also create a problem when the strong personalities overpower the work of the committee.

Search Committees have several people on them because of the feeling of churches that selecting a new pastor is too important to leave in the hands of only one or two people. An uncontrolled strong personality can effectively reduce the work of the committee to the opinions of only one member.

Personalities of the committee members should be talked about openly as the committee is formed. Those more timid members of the committee must be encouraged to speak up... or at the very least... an avenue should be provided for them to express their opinions without intimidation. Group decisions can be done by ballot. However, nothing can take the place of mutual respect and trust where strong personalities recognize the need to solicit the input of everyone on the committee.

II. Initial Preparations

1. Prayer and Agreement on Procedures

A Search Committee would do well to spend its initial meeting times in creating an atmosphere of unity and trust within the committee through a common experience of prayer. The committee must operate within an atmosphere of trust. In order to maintain that trust, committee members should keep committee information within the committee. Names of candidates and other pertinent information should remain within the confidentiality of the committee. Spouses of committee members should be counseled to also maintain this trust and confidence.



The Search Committee should clearly settle on the following responsibilities...

- Who should receive names/resumes
- Who will contact prospective candidates
- Who writes letters for the committee
- Who makes reports to the church



The church may appoint a committee chairman, or the committee may wish to select one. However, it must be remembered that the work of the committee is a work among equals. Care must be taken to assure that every individual selected to serve on the committee is heard.

2. Survey Congregation's Desires



Copy the *Search Committee Church Information Survey* (**APPENDIX A** in the back of this workbook) and ask church members to offer their input as you prepare to consider candidates.

Probably the best process is for this survey to be circulated on a given Sunday through the Sunday School classes and the morning worship service. Collect the survey forms at the close of the worship service and compile the results. Such a survey does not restrict the work of the Search Committee, but will give them valuable insights into the preferences of the congregation.

3. Review or Develop Job Description

Some pastors and churches will presume that the New Testament is all the job description that a pastor needs. However, without clarification, misunderstandings about the nature and details of the work may develop between the pastor and church. A job description for a pastor should include the church's expectations of a pastor, and what the pastor can expect from the church, in the following areas:

Ministry Performance

The church should state its expectation about well-prepared sermons, personal involvement in visitation, pastoral care in crisis situations, administrative and organizational leadership and the willingness of a pastor to improve his pastoral skills through continued study.

Availability

The church should state its expectations about the availability of the pastor to church leaders for consultation and individuals in times of crisis. Vacation time and days off should also be defined.

Leadership

The church should state its expectations about leadership in worship, in evangelistic outreach, in cooperation with church leaders in the various organizations and programs of the church. The church should clarify who invites pulpit supplies, revivals, etc. If this is not the pastor's prerogative, then the process of approval should be outlined.

Loyalty

The church should state its expectations about loyalty to Baptist beliefs, to the Cooperative Program, to associational, state and SBC participation. It should also state clearly a commitment to express loyalty to the new pastor.

Civic & Community Affairs

The church should state its expectations about its desires for a pastor to be involved in civic and community affairs.

4. Develop Profile of Church

The Search Committee should gather the following information prior to interviewing candidates and preferably compile it into a written report to share with potential candidates.

- Location and brief history of the church including the names and dates of service of previous pastors

- Membership information including age breakdown as drawn from age group Sunday School department enrollment as well as Uniform Church Letter statistics on the church for the last five years. This information can be obtained from the associational office.

- Organizational charts of the church including:

- Other staff members and employees (including lines of supervision)

- Church committees (including deacons & trustees) and their job descriptions

- Worship bulletins for the last few weeks and any recent church newsletters

- Chamber of Commerce information about the community.

- A summary of the priorities of members as seen by the committee including potential growth, the spirit and uniqueness of the congregation, any special problems or concerns that face the congregation or community.

- Financial condition of the church and a copy of the church budget.

- Mission commitment of the church: Cooperative Program giving, associational missions support and other mission-offerings.

- Information on the process that the church will follow in calling a pastor.

- Position of the church on doctrines.

- The church constitution and by-laws or, how the church conducts its business.



5. Develop Profile of a Prospective Pastor

When a church is without a pastor, it is at a crisis point in its history. It is imperative that the Pastor Search Committee bring God's man before the church. This is a tremendous responsibility for the committee. Spend some time as a group considering the characteristics of Church leaders. Note those



characteristics you would consider most important given the needs of your church.

Some of the important things to look for in a pastor are:

Personal integrity - The character of the man, including honesty and convictions. A confident knowledge of a call from God to preach and pastor, as well as discerning God's will and doing it.

A good husband and father - Priorities right regarding love and respect for his wife and children, as well as one who disciplines his children.

Understanding of people (A good listener) - A concerted effort to know and understand people. Will the pastor work with his people? Is he sensitive to needs and personalities, with insight toward workable solutions.

Enthusiasm - A spirit of enthusiasm about the ministry, as well as some enthusiasm in his preaching style.

Well-founded and consistent work values - Personal discipline in work. No room for "laziness." Pastors do not "punch a clock." He needs a work discipline for the exercise of professional skills. Is he a "self starter?"

A genuine interest in people - Generally expressed in hospital, nursing home and pastoral visitation, as well as limited counseling.

Approachability - Is the minister comfortable in a one-on-one basis and is the member comfortable in that situation? Does one feel free to talk with the pastor?

Ability to communicate effectively - Sermons need to be plain, acceptable in length and well prepared. This requires a great deal of personal, dedicated study. Knowledgeable of Biblical subjects, as well as the ability to communicate.

Acceptable appearance - Neatness in dress, shoes shined, hair cut, clean shaven, etc. This needs to be true during the week, as well as Sundays. It communicates a belief and respect in and for self and others.

A Southern Baptist - Committed to Southern Baptist principles, purposes and doctrine.

Involved with Association/State - Committed to the associational and state convention programs by being involved in and supportive of each.

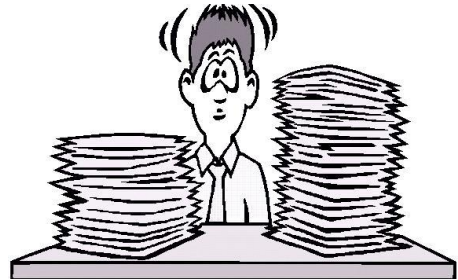
Financially accountable - Meets all his financial obligations on time.



6. Work with Personnel and Finance Committees to define the Compensation Package.

All decisions regarding compensation, moving expenses and vacation/leave should be approved by both the Personnel and Finance committees and presented to the congregation. All of these actions should be put in writing for the benefit and protection of both the church and the new pastor.

When considering the compensation package, be careful to include Southern Baptist Annuity health, life and disability insurance. **DO NOT allow these coverage's to be optional** (i.e. never allow a pastor or staff member to choose cash in lieu of coverage). Far too many churches find themselves confronted with the medical expenses of a pastor who has chosen to take the package in cash rather than coverage. Remember that this insurance is as much for the protection of the church as it is for the protection of the pastor or staff member. When unexpected medical expenses, death or permanent disability happens the church will be very glad that this decision was not negotiated away.



The church should provide an amount equal to 15% of the salary and housing expenses to be put into the Southern Baptist Annuity retirement plan. Be cautious about allowing a pastor to spend his retirement on present needs.

III. Gathering Resumes

It is not unusual these days for churches to receive 30-50 resumes of men recommended to be their pastor. The Search Committee should remember that it is always free to seek resumes on its own.

1. Developing Contacts

The following individuals are in a position to know of individuals who might be worthy candidates, but may not have sent out resumes.

- a. Associational Directors of Missions
- b. Office of Ministerial Services, BGCO
- c. Trusted former pastors or neighboring pastors

2. Information to Solicit

- a. Send profiles of the church & prospective pastor to those from whom you are seeking resumes in order to aid them in best evaluating their recommendations to you.
- b. Solicit names of potential candidates with or without resumes on file. Most often these individuals will have some information on hand about men they may wish to recommend. They can always contact the pastor they wish to recommend and ask him to provide them a resume to be forwarded to your committee.



3. Evaluating Resumes Received

Evaluating resumes is an art not a science. Look for what the resume tells you... and look between the lines for what it may not tell you about the candidate. Always consider the references offered to be important.

a. **Spiritual Walk** - Does the resume give any indication of the spiritual sensitivity of the individual... is there evidence of a continuing developing spiritual relationship through personal discipleship.

b. **Experience** - Notice how many churches he has pastored and how many years he has served. Take a look at his tenure (how long he has stayed) and performance (what he was able to lead the church to do). Take note of the size of churches to evaluate the kind of experience he has accumulated.

Be careful not to judge a man solely on the size of churches served, or on numerical growth. There are many good men who are fully capable of handling more responsibility than they have had and providing more leadership than their circumstances have allowed.

c. **Age** - Age is important to the extent that the church has expressed its preference. It is not necessarily a good indicator of maturity.

d. **Education** - Has the church expressed its preference in the educational achievement of a potential pastor? Is a basic seminary degree a necessity. Is a doctorate an important criteria? Would a college degree be sufficient.

The Pulpit/Search Committee desires to find God's man for their church. This search will include matters related to preparation. However, unless the committee consists of persons oriented toward the academic world, there is often confusion by the array of degrees a potential pastor or staff person may have.

Many have served the Lord effectively without much formal education. Thank God for each contribution made by these men. Educational degrees alone do not qualify a man for ministry. No level of education can substitute for the sense of mission and commitment associated with a call from God.

Historically, Baptists have not required levels of education for ordination. God's call means that the individual will develop his special gifts to the highest level consistent with opportunities God provides. But, preparation for effective ministry requires a balance of intellectual growth and personal emotional growth. Thus, a major emphasis is continually being given toward academic preparation for ministry.

e. **Continuing Education** - An increasing number of churches recognize the value of providing the time and paying the cost of periodic continuing education for the pastor and other staff members.

Upgrading of skills, stimulation of thought and the inspiration of new exposures to learning raise the minister's self-respect, improve his confidence and increase his values to the Kingdom of God and the church he serves.

As pastor search/pulpit committees investigate prospective pastors/staff members, consideration may well be given to the staff person participating in opportunities of continuing education.

f. **Family** - How many children are still living at home? Is there room for a large family in the parsonage? Is the church more interested in an older couple with no children at home?

- g. **Ministry Goals** - Is there any information about the candidate's personal ministry goals and objectives in the resume. What does that tell you about what the man feels called to do... and how that fits the needs of your church.

4. Ranking and Prioritizing Resumes

It is not unusual for a church to receive a large number of resumes. In most cases a few resumes will "float" to the top. The order in which each person ranks the resumes will differ, but there will be several men who made it to everyone's "short" list. These should be the first resumes that the committee deals with.

- a. **Objective Criteria** - As the work of developing a profile of the church and the characteristics and qualities desired in a prospective pastor develops, some objective criteria will emerge... education, age, experience, etc. These are by and large *check off* issues that will tend to rank the resumes in terms of their attractiveness to the committee.
- b. **Subjective Issues** - There will always be those highly subjective evaluations of resumes and candidates. It may be a feeling that a neat resume reflects a man with a conscientious personality. Or it may be that someone just likes the looks of the pastor or his family if a picture is included with the resume. Subjective evaluation will always be present. It may be simple intuition, or it may be the activity of the Holy Spirit. These *feelings* should always be defensible. No one should be called... or rejected from consideration... based solely on intangible feelings within the group.



IV. Doing The Work

1. Running the References

These are preliminary reference checks using the references listed on the resume. This type of inquiry should be conducted on every person you have an interest in talking with. Do not be surprised if all of the information you receive at this point is positive. Few men will list a person as a reference on a resume which is likely to give them a bad report.





a. **The Mail Out Reference Questionnaire - Appendix C** is a mail out reference form which may be reproduced and mailed (along with a self-addressed stamped envelope) to the references supplied on the resume.

b. **The Telephone Interview** - The committee may wish to have different members telephone those references. The group should standardize the questions asked if various members of the committee will be calling. The group may wish to ask key questions from the Appendix E form.

2. The Telephone Interview with prospective pastors

An initial telephone interview should not exceed 15 minutes.

- a. Identify yourself and your church
- b. Ask the person if he is open to talking with you about a move.
- c. If you have no resume on the man, ask if he is willing to send a resume.
- d. BE HONEST... tell him exactly where the committee is in it's process... preliminary contact or serious interest.
- e. Briefly ask him a few specific questions... Ask him to give a brief history of his call to minister. Ask what his goals are in ministry. Ask him to share what's happening in his church. Ask him about his family... how would they feel about a potential move?
- f. Tell him if you will contact him again... to at least indicate that you are moving in another direction... and then stick to that pledge.

3. Listening to Candidates Preach

- a. **Call Ahead!** Ask his permission to come and hear him and schedule a convenient time.
- b. **Work Out Details in Advance.** Be pointed in your preparations. Do you plan to visit with the man that day... do you wish to visit with his family? Will you visit before or after the worship service?
- c. **Consider a Preliminary Personal Visit** - Many pastors will appreciate an opportunity to visit with the committee before they create any unsettledness in their congregation by having a search committee visit. This can also be an excellent opportunity for the committee to consider whether they want to listen to the man preach. The Pastor Search Committee would do well to interview the prospective pastor and his wife before hearing him preach. There are benefits in knowing the man informally. First impressions are significant.
- d. **Pursue One Man At a Time** - If you are listening to several preachers to "get a feel" then be honest and tell the man up front. Don't raise his expectations by interviewing him or making any promises. Don't begin any serious conversations with any candidate until you are ready to get serious.

Delay a formal interview until you are ready to deal only with that man!

- e. **Listening to the Man Preach** - Once the committee has decided to hear the pastor, a contact should be made to be certain he will be in his pulpit. If he is not currently pastoring, arrangements can be made with a church to give the committee an opportunity to hear him preach.

Listening to the preaching of pastors under consideration is a very important function of the Pastor Search Committee. It is good to remember that the effectiveness of sermons depends upon the listener, as well as the preacher. The committee members should pray that God will speak to each of them through the message they are to hear.

- f. **Communicate Afterwards** - If the man has been courteous in having you in the service... extend him the courtesy of letting him know where he stands. If you are not going to pursue conversations with him, tell him "*Thanks, but we're still searching.*" If you are interested in him, tell him what you are going to do next.

At any point that a man is no longer a candidate, have the courtesy to tell him so. A poorly written "no thank-you" is better than no communication at all.

V. The Preliminary Interview

1. Selecting the Time and Place

You may wish to meet with the man at a neutral site if you are going to schedule the interview before you listen to the man. Don't ask the man to meet with your group in a public restaurant unless there is a private meeting room available. Don't create problems for the man with his church by making him appear to be *sneaking around*.

You may wish to meet briefly following a worship service in his study. Understand that this must be done discreetly and quickly. **Never ask to take the man out to lunch in his own community!**

If you are serious about the man as a candidate, you will want to invite him to visit at your church. This will allow him to get a look at the church field.

2. Questions To Ask

Appendix F contains a multitude of potential questions to ask the candidate. Not every question has to be asked, and not every question has to be asked at the first interview. There are two basic thoughts to keep in mind in asking questions.

First, some questions are asked just to listen to how the candidate answers the questions. Don't get so involved in listening for the "right" answer that you forget to listen *between the lines*. Evaluate what the answer reveals about the heart and spirit of the candidate... about his grasp of church issues... about where his heart is with people.

Other questions arise out of specific concerns. A good rule of thumb is that specific concerns deserve specific questions... and specific answers. A broad answer to a broad question may leave the committee not sure that the



prospective pastor ever addressed their concern. Don't ask the man how he feels about women in the church when what you really want to know is how he would feel about a woman leading the singing.

- a. Ask the man about his church, building and field... listen for his interest in his work and his feeling for his field.
- b. Ask him about himself. Where has he come from? Where is he going? What are his dreams?
- c. Ask him about ministry. What excites him in ministry? What frustrates him in ministry? What kind of church would he like to pastor? What groups does he most like to work with? What groups does he least like to work with?

3. Share with him the information you have gathered about your church and church field.

This material should be written and organized into a nice three ring binder. How you present the material to the candidate conveys your attitude about how the business of the church should be handled. A verbal presentation, or a gathering of loose pages may convey that your church really doesn't have much pride about itself.

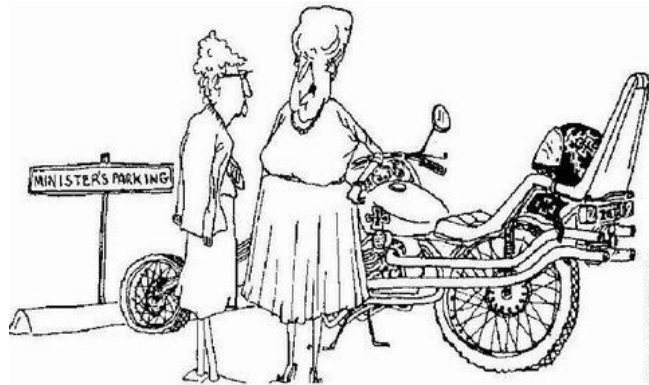
4. Clearly communicate the process.

When can he expect to hear from the Search Committee and at what point will it become a *serious* consideration of only him? What steps does the group anticipate in the process?

VI. Getting Serious

1. Advanced Screening

Once the committee has settled on a man and has moved beyond preliminary conversations, a second level of reference checking should take place. This detailed exploration is inappropriate when dealing with several individuals during the preliminary selection process... but should be considered mandatory before a man is considered in view of a call. In fact, there are test court cases which may hold Search Committees and churches legally liable for negligent hiring if a man with a past history of misconduct is called to the church and repeats offenses. The courts are determining that it was the church's responsibility to have checked on these prior issues before the man was called to serve. *It would be advisable to ask the candidate to give you a letter of permission to do background checks.*



Financial History - Most churches have access to a local banker or business man who can help the church do a credit check on a candidate.

Criminal Background - It seems absolutely ludicrous to think that pastors should have a criminal background that needs checking. Yet the courts are pointing to this as a necessary step. The last three pages of this workbook contains information about requesting a criminal background check through a private investigating firm.

Sexual Misconduct - This is very shaky ground for both Search Committees and churches. Yet it is **the** current hot issue in the courts. Should the church employ a man with a history of sexual misconduct... known to the church or not... and those actions are repeated, the church could be looking at a multi-million dollar lawsuit. At present, there is no clear advice to a Search Committee on handling this issue. Needless to say, places of previous service should be **discreetly** contacted. You need to know that legally, members of former churches are limited in what they can tell you because of invasion of privacy issues. You should ask if there were any concerns about the candidate's relationship with adults, youth or children during his service. Don't press the individual because of invasion of privacy laws, but if there were concerns, you may wish to counsel with your Associational Director of Missions about how to proceed.

Never contact any member of the man's current church or any person in that community without the specific permission of the candidate. It is in poor taste to embarrass a man by having the word that he is talking to your committee come from someone in the congregation or community before the man himself is ready to make that information known.

2. Church Field Visit

Once the committee has moved to seriously consider an individual as a candidate, an on field visit should be scheduled. Bring the man and his family to the field.

Pay his travel expenses. Mileage expenses should be reimbursed at the IRS approved rate. Any lodging or meals should be completely reimbursed. If the lodging is within your community, make the reservations and pay for the lodging directly.

Remember that first impressions are important. How the Search Committee takes care of his needs... and his families needs... will make a lasting impression. Consider putting the family in the best accommodations available. If there are children, consider reserving adjoining rooms so that the parents can rest more comfortably. These cost for these extras is minimal, but the impression upon that family may be priceless.

Present him with the best salary package that the church can manage... do not make the man "negotiate." If he is making more in his present pastorate than you are offering... immediately communicate **if** there is willingness to adjust to the package. **Don't promise things that you have no right to promise.** Remember that this information includes cash salary, housing allowance (information about what the church provides in terms of housing, utilities, etc.), professional expenses, benefits (medical, life, and disability coverage and retirement), vacation time and days off for revivals, etc. including the church's responsibility



for the cost of pulpit supply. This information should always be presented to the candidate in written form.

Show him everything about the church, the parsonage, and the community. Tell him what he would like to know. If there are school age children in the family, make sure that they see the school s.

3. The Interview

The group may choose to ask the deacon body to participate in this conversation. This is especially valuable if there are issues of continuing concern which will need to be discussed or implemented beyond the life cycle of the search committee (i.e. future salary considerations, future considerations about physical changes to the parsonage, housing allowance adjustments or remodeling of pastor's office.). The deacon body provides the continuity for dealing with these long range issues.

4. Committee Evaluation

Very soon after the interview, the committee should meet. The central question to be addressed by the group should be, "Has anything come up that keeps us from feeling that we should proceed?" The group should express their feelings and observations. If the deacon body was represented in the interview, their insight should be invited. Following an open discussion, the committee should be polled by ballot. The decision of the committee should be unanimous.

5. Communicate the Committee's Decision

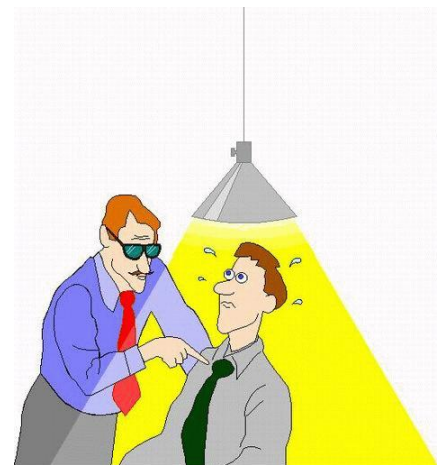
If the committee's decision is "NO" then tell the man that the committee desires to continue the search process. Don't give any encouragement of further consideration. **All contact with that candidate should cease.**

If the committee's decision is positive. Contact the man to ask his feelings about the conversations. Is he willing to proceed? Does he feel a need for any further conversations with the Search Committee and/or deacon body prior to his willingness to come in view of a call?

6. Extending the Invitation to Come in View of a Call

Once both the Search Committee and the candidate are comfortable, the Search Committee should bring a recommendation to the church that the candidate should be invited to come in view of a call. This recommendation should carry the enthusiastic endorsement of the Search Committee.

Job descriptions, compensation, leave and moving expense issues should be settled by



the church before a man is asked to come in view of a call.

VII. Extending a Call

1. Presenting the Recommendation to the Church

A Search Committee should never recommend a man to the church without being enthusiastically supportive of that recommendation. A Search Committee should never recommend a man just to see what the church thinks of him. There should be a certainty in the heart of the committee that this is God's man for their church.

The Search Committee, perhaps in harmony with the deacon body, should present their recommendation to the church to invite the potential pastor to come in view of a call.

There is significant value in having the deacon body involved in this recommendation. Their opinion usually carries weight with the congregation, and will strengthen the committee's recommendation. These are also the men that the new pastor will have to work with on a continuing basis. It is a distinctive asset to a new pastor to know that he has the support of the deacon body from the very beginning.

2. Presenting The Candidate to the Church

Following the long, laborious and joyful task of finding a pastor for the church, the Pastor Search Committee is now faced with the process of bringing the man before the church in view of a call as pastor. The Search Committee should take the lead of presenting the candidate to the church in the best possible light. This should be a climactic experience for the church and can be done with excitement, grace and dignity. When properly planned it will provide a lasting impression for the church and pastor, culminating in the will of God expressed through His church.

It is strongly recommended that the prospective pastor be in your church more than one day.

The Pastor Search Committee can help the church prepare for the coming of the prospective pastor. Ample time must be given if the church is to be ready for the experience. Consider a minimum of two weeks and three weeks is preferred.

Prayer - Encourage the church to consistently pray about this important event. It is certainly one of the most important decisions the church will make. Pray for God's will to be done in the decision, pray for unity in the decision and pray for the prospective pastor and his family.



Promotion - The church needs general information about the prospective pastor. Announce the exact weekend the man will be in your church. Have each member of the search committee share why he/she believes this is God's man for our church. This may be done with a committee member speaking briefly in each service, Sunday and Wednesday during the two or three week period. Provide information regarding names of all family members, background, his call, experience, education, age, hobbies, etc. This may be done through the church paper or special mail-outs. The information pieces should include a picture of the pastor's family or the pastor. The final mail-out before the prospective pastor is presented should include a complete agenda for the weekend. The agenda for the week-end should be negotiated with the candidate in advance of any specific planning.

3. A Hospitality Committee should make preparations for the week-end.

Select a Hospitality Committee of three from the Pastor Search Committee. Spouses of these committee members may serve, as well. If the church has a Hospitality Committee and wants to use it that would be very acceptable.

Responsibilities would include:

Make arrangements to meet the pastor and his family at the church at a designated time. If they are flying in, arrangements should be made to meet them at the airport. Get the family to the hotel, motel or home where they will be staying. They will need to rest before the activities begin. A basket of fruit in their room will provide a nice, inexpensive "welcome gift." Let them know the schedule for the weekend. This should be in written form. Plan and provide the transportation for the candidate and his family, especially for adult meetings where youth or children would be uncomfortable. Completely plan the evening meals, coffee and donuts for the Saturday morning Sunday School Staff Meeting and the refreshments for the Saturday afternoon reception. Mail invitations for the Saturday reception.

4. Suggested Agenda

Friday Evening - Dinner for the Search Committee, Deacons, Staff and Spouses. The purpose of the dinner is to get acquainted. The chairman of the Search Committee may serve as the "MC" and share some information about the prospective pastor and family. The prospective pastor may speak briefly.

Saturday Morning - A Question and Answer time with the candidate. Special attention should be given to make time for key leadership groups in the church (i.e. Sunday School workers). This is a good time to talk about vision and strategies.

Saturday Afternoon - ALL-CHURCH reception 2:00-4:00 p.m. - a casual, get acquainted time for the church family. This may include a *brief* Question and Answer time, but this needs to be guarded both in scope and duration. An MC should handle introductions and indicate time restraints and handle questions about church personalities or politics about which the prospective pastor would have no knowledge of. The majority of the time should be used as a mingling fellowship for getting to know one another.

Saturday Evening - Avoid scheduling any responsibilities for the candidate and his family after supper on Saturday. Allow the man time to be fresh for the pulpit the following morning.

Sunday - The prospective pastor preaches in morning service.

5. Make preparation for the Sunday morning worship service.

Work carefully with the music director and all involved in the morning worship service to assure that the candidate has adequate time for his sermon. Do not plan so much in the service that the candidate feels rushed... or that the service is pushed past noon.

6. The Vote of the Church

The vote should be scheduled immediately following the Sunday service in which the prospective pastor preaches.

A vote following the morning service will allow the maximum number of people in the church to voice their opinion. This also allows the Search Committee to meet with the candidate during the afternoon and work out any final details.

The vote should not be postponed later than the evening service. The candidate deserves to be able to communicate immediately with members of his own church the direction he will be moving... either as he remains as their pastor... or as he prepares to become your pastor.

- a. The Search Committee should prepare for this time by selecting a Ballot Counting Committee to count the ballots, prepare the ballots and pencils and have them in the service.

SAMPLE BALLOT



Yes, I accept the recommendation of the Search Committee and believe our church should extend a call to Brother _____ as pastor.

No, I DO NOT accept the recommendation of the Search Committee.

- b. At the end of the chosen worship service, the church is called into conference by the church moderator. The moderator should indicate clearly what percentage of the vote will constitute the call if it is stipulated in the church's constitution or by-laws.
- c. The chairman of the Search Committee should let the church know that this man is being presented to the church as the unanimous choice and recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee.
- d. The vote should be taken by secret ballot. The ballots are distributed by the ushers or Search Committee and the vote taken. One ballot to each member of the church.
- e. The pastor and his family should be escorted to a separate room. Allow them privacy to talk as a family about their impressions of the week-end and the worship service.
- f. The ballots may be counted as the congregation sings. The results should be announced, and if the pastor is ready to give his decision, he may do so before the service is dismissed. His decision may be to (1) accept the call, (2) delay the decision or (3) decline the call.
- g. Following the service the pastor should be given a check that will cover the following items:
 - * Reimbursement for travel
 - * Pulpit Supply in his own church
 - * An honorarium for being with and preaching for your church.

7. Transition Schedule

If the candidate accepts the call, it may be well to visit about transitional issues before he leaves. This will include moving schedule and the new pastor's first Sunday in the pulpit. It should also include:

Scheduling the man's service to the church to begin the day following his last day on his present field. The time during moving should be as pastor of your church and his compensation should not have a gap due to this move.

Make sure that everything that needs to be done to the parsonage is completed before his family arrives.

Make arrangements to pay all of the moving expenses to the mover directly... either a mover of the church's choice or the individual's choice. Don't make this a reimbursement.

Consider the extra expenses in moving (deposits and new items for the house.) \$250 of miscellaneous expense money provided for such needs would be a



very inexpensive way to help a new pastor and his family feel good about settling in.

Make sure that a hospitality group provides food during the first days of unpacking. Offer help in unpacking... but also respect the family's need for privacy.

8. First Sunday On The Field

Work with the new pastor to plan the first Sunday. An installation service recognizing the new pastor and his family is always appropriate.

9. When to Disband

Keep the Search Committee intact for a brief time following the arrival of the new pastor to serve as a liaison to the church and its organizations. Allow the Search Committee to disband once the pastor is comfortably in place.

APPENDIX A: Prospective Pastor Church Survey

This form is designed to be reprinted as an insert in the Sunday worship bulletin. It is intended to allow the congregation to express their opinions about what they would like in a pastor.

Prospective Pastor Survey

Member Non-Member	How long have you attended this church? _____	Circle Your Age Group B-12 13-20 21-40 40-65 65+
----------------------	--------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------

Please express your opinions about what the church needs in a prospective pastor in the following areas:

Age <input type="checkbox"/> Under 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 <input type="checkbox"/> 60-Over <input type="checkbox"/> Not Important	Education <input type="checkbox"/> College <input type="checkbox"/> Seminary <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/> Not Important	Pastoral Experience <input type="checkbox"/> Seminary Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time <input type="checkbox"/> One full-time <input type="checkbox"/> More than One <input type="checkbox"/> Not Important
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Skills	Must Have	Needed	Average Need	Less Need
Preaching				
Worship Leader				
Bible Teaching				
Organizer/Administrator				
Pastoral Care				
Pastoral Visitation				
Evangelistic Visitation				
Outreach Leader				
Sunday School Leader				
Focused on Church Growth				
Missions Oriented				
Social Ministries				
Family Ministries				
Ministry to Senior Adults				
Ministry to Singles				
Ministry to Youth				
Ministry to Children				
Denominational Involvement				
Active In Local Association				
Community Involvement				

List our church's strong points...
Where do we need to improve?

APPENDIX B: Educational Degrees

The following information is provided to assist a search committee in understanding more about educational degrees most often held by vocational Christian ministers.

DEGREE TERMINOLOGY

The best known college level degrees are Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

All degree programs offered by Southern Baptist Seminaries are not listed here however, those that laymen usually see listed on biographical resumes of Baptist pastors and other staff ministers are as follows:

Degrees Related Primarily to Pastoral Ministry

Associate of Divinity (ADiv) or the **Diploma in Theology** (DipTh)
Requirement: two full years of full-time study and is for the student who is thirty years of age or older without a college degree.

Bachelor of Divinity (BD) or **Master of Divinity** (MDiv)
Requirement: A college degree plus three years of seminary training. These degrees are equal and the BD can now be exchanged for the MDiv upon request.

Master of Theology (ThM) or **Master of Systematic Theology** (STM)
Requirement: A college degree, an MDiv and one year of graduate work.

Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
Requirement: A college degree, an MDiv and one year minimum of graduate work emphasizing practical aspects of pastoral ministry plus a written project.

Degrees Related Primarily to Religious Education

Master of Arts in Religious Education (MA in RE) or **Master of Religious Education** (MRE)
Requirement: A college degree and two years of seminary work.

Doctor of Education (EdD)
Requirement: A college degree an MA, MRE, or MDiv and two years minimum of graduate work.

Degrees Related Primarily to Academic Theology

Master of Theology (ThM)
Requirement: A college degree, an MDiv, and one year of graduate work.

Doctor of Theology (ThD), **Doctor of Sacred Theology** (STD), and **Doctor of Philosophy** (PhD)
Requirement: A college degree, an MDiv, and a minimum of two years of graduate work.

Degrees in Church Music

Master of Church Music (MCM) or **Master of Music** (MM) and **Master of Sacred Music** (MSM)
Requirement: A college degree and a minimum of two years of seminary music training.

Doctor of Sacred Music (SMD), **Doctor of Church Music** (DCM), **Doctor of Musical Arts** (DMA)
Requirement: A college degree, an MSM or MCM and a minimum of two years of graduate work.

Seminaries may have differences in terminology in degrees and some seminaries have dropped the ThM and ThD degrees from their curriculum. All six Southern Baptist seminaries are fully accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. The validity of the degree is unquestionable.

Honorary Degrees

Most Honorary Degrees are conferred to recognize outstanding service, rather than academic achievement. The most familiar of these is the **Doctor of Divinity** (DD). The worth of the degree varies according to the integrity and excellence of the institution conferring the degree. It is possible for these to be purchased or obtained through "degree mills" or by "influence peddling."

CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS

Many pastors and staff members respond to God's call at a time in life when age, family responsibility, financial considerations and other factors make it unreasonably difficult to secure a basic college degree prerequisite to seminary study. These individuals may enroll in seminary courses designed especially for them. Often, they bring to their ministry a background in business, industry or military life, which may help compensate for the lack of a college degree.

The Seminary Extension Department of the Southern Baptist Convention offers three levels of theological education. The Basic Curriculum Series is for pastors who prefer easy-to-read courses below the college level. The College Level Curriculum Series is for ministers and lay persons interested in study on a higher academic level. The Continuing Education Series is for seminary graduates.

Several associations in Oklahoma now have the Ministry Training Institute, which is a cooperative effort with Oklahoma Baptist University and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma to provide college level courses taught in the association through the

School of Christian Service at OBU. Four certificate and diploma programs are available.

APPENDIX C: Mail Out Reference Questionnaire

The next two pages contain a reproducible questionnaire to be mailed to those from whom you would seek information about a potential candidate.

Remember that most people offered as references by an individual will be those who will present the candidate in the best light. You may wish to contact other references not listed on the resume.

Remember also that while a mail-out reference questionnaire may be the most efficient way to gather a large amount of information quickly, it may not be the most effective way to gather the kind of information that the committee would most like to have.

Reproduce the questionnaire on the next two pages and send it with a cover letter and a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Please be aware that mass mailed questionnaires do receive much attention. Those of us who receive these with much frequency will tend to look at the amount of time that it takes to seriously complete such a survey and will often write a one paragraph endorsement and an invitation to call by phone for further information. Should your committee choose to use this tool there are perhaps some suggestions that would be of value.

Don't use a written questionnaire as a pre-screening tool. Having questionnaires from committees that are not really serious is a quick way to guarantee that no questionnaires get serious attention from people asked to give references.

If you choose to use this tool for final references, call the individual and ask if they would mind completing the questionnaire and assure them that (1) the candidate is in final consideration, and (2) that the information shared will remain confidential to the committee.

Given the issues of privacy in our society, many individuals will not feel comfortable in sharing personal or problem issues in a written format. If you choose to use this questionnaire, your committee should consider asking the candidate to write a letter of permission to be included with the questionnaire.

Look (or listen) carefully for what is not being said or information said between the lines. Most people will not intentionally try to give a bad reference, but will try to communicate their reservations indirectly.

At your earliest convenience please complete and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope

Reference Questionnaire

Candidate _____ has been brought to our attention in our search for a pastor. As we seek the individual God would have for us, we would like your responses to as many of the questions indicated below that your knowledge of and acquaintance with the above candidate allows. (Please use additional sheets as necessary).

Please evaluate by circling the most appropriate response based on your observation and knowledge

	Seldom or Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always
Communication Skills - chooses proper means to communicate his ideas and thoughts	1	2	3	4
Conflict - functions effectively under pressure	1	2	3	4
Consideration - is patient, understanding, considerate and courteous	1	2	3	4
Creativity - shows a willingness to try new approaches or methods	1	2	3	4
Delegation - assigns tasks to persons capable of carrying them out	1	2	3	4
Emotional Control - maintains control of emotions when things are not going right.	1	2	3	4
Enthusiasm - shows interest and enthusiasm toward work	1	2	3	4
Knowledge - demonstrates a thorough knowledge and understanding of church functions and administration	1	2	3	4
Leadership - creates a feeling of unity and enthusiasm among those in contact with him	1	2	3	4
Perseverance - demonstrates initiative and persistence in accomplishing goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4
Understanding - is conscious of the problems that face a church	1	2	3	4
Have you (or could you) recommend the candidate for this position? _____	1	2	3	4

Why?

Our Search Committee Chairman

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone
(_____) _____

Your
Name _____

Position in your
church _____
Your Phone Number (_____
_____) _____
Do we have your permission to call you if our
committee desires? _____ Yes _____
No _____

OTHER REFERENCES YOU RECOMMEND WE CHECK

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone
(_____) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone
(_____) _____

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

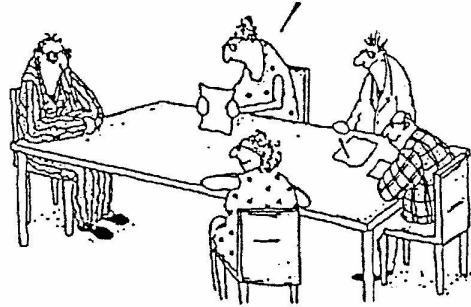
It seems that one of the hardest tasks of a Search Committee is to "think up" good interview questions. These are offered as suggested questions only.

There are questions which are going to be of particular interest to the committee because of the nature of the church. It is best to ask these questions directly. Don't ask philosophical questions if you are interested in specific information. Don't ask a candidate's opinion about the role of women in the church, if you really want to know how he would react to a woman leading the music in worship.

The most challenging kind of questions are those without specific answers. Questions which open a window to the thoughts, values and feelings of the candidate.

- . Always begin by asking the man about his conversion experience. Let him tell his story. Listen for genuineness and warmth of experience with Jesus.
- . Always ask the man to share his "call" to the ministry. Ask if he has ever considered not being a pastor. Listen for his excitement about being in ministry and his commitment to remain in the ministry.
- . Ask how the man has equipped himself to be most useable to God. (Formal education, practical training and personal study)
- . Ask the man what he believes God has called him to do.
- . Ask the man what his philosophy of ministry is.
- . Ask the man what his personal goals are.
- . Ask the man what his professional goals are.
- . Ask what experience the man has had in church work.
- . Ask what sizes of churches the man has worked in either as a member or a leader.
- . Ask what the man's experience has been working with deacons and/or church councils.
- . Ask what the most difficult experience has been in working with a deacon.
- . Ask what the man considers a well-balanced program is in a church.
- . Ask what the man feels the role of preaching is in the total scope of his ministry.
- . Ask what the man believes about the Bible.
- . Ask the man to describe the style of his preaching.
- . Ask the man to describe his sermon preparation process.
- . Ask the man if he uses an outline in preparation and preaching.
- . Ask the man to describe his personal pastoral and evangelistic visitation.
- . Ask the man how he has led his churches in the past in organized visitation.
- . Ask the man to describe the last evangelistic conversation that he has had.
- . Ask the man what he feels is an appropriate visitation plan for people in the hospital... in the nursing home... shut-ins at home.

IF YOUR CHURCH WAS A '68 MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE WITH AN EIGHT CYLINDER 351 ENGINE AND DUAL OVERHEAD CAMS, WHAT GRADE OF MOTOR OIL WOULD YOU USE AND HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU CHANGE THE PLUGS?



The Glenview Church search committee had a knack for coming up with really annoying interview questions.

- . Ask the man how he views the role of the pastor in the church.
- . Ask the man what he thinks God's intent is for the church today.
- . Ask the man how he is seeking to make the gospel relevant to today's society.
- . Ask the man what he senses to be the greatest need of people in the pews.

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

The following questions are drawn from George Barna's book *The Power of Vision* (Regal Books, 1992). These questions do not form an exhaustive list but are designed to explore a candidate's vision for ministry. Not every candidate must be asked every question, but the list is a good sample of questions designed to explore a candidate's heart and vision for ministry.

. The Candidate's Emotions

1. What turns you on in life? During what situations do you feel most alive or exuberant? What makes life worth living?
2. Who are the three most important people in your life? Why?
3. What is your personality type? How does that impact your ministry?

. The Candidate's Abilities

1. What are your spiritual gifts?
2. What goals have you set and reached during the past five years?
3. In what ways did God make you different from others? What unique or special talents do you possess?

. The Candidate's Perspectives

1. How would you define a "successful" church?
2. How would you define a "successful" pastor? What would it take for you to be successful?
3. How would you define a godly Christian leader? How well do you fit that description?

. The Candidate's Heart

1. What makes you cry? Why?
2. If you could accomplish only one task in life, what would it be? (Be honest on this one!)
3. Which passages of the Bible speak most loudly and consistently to you?
4. What activities do you get totally absorbed in? What activities are you unlikely to grow out of as you mature?



Χριστιανισμός

Dr. Tom Owens
Director of Missions

ΑΤΙΟΝ

Serving the Southern Baptist churches of Creek, Pawnee and Payne Counties

1244 E. Main
Cushing, Oklahoma 74023
(918)225-2300

October 28, 2010

Dear Pastor Search Committee,

The task of finding God's man for leadership in your church is a demanding responsibility. Unfortunately implications in the current legal environment make the task even more demanding and more difficult. You are expected to do background checking in an atmosphere which makes such inquiries more and more difficult.

I have located a service I think every church should seriously consider. Bti is an Employee Screening Service that is set up to do thorough background checks on potential employees and in visiting with them, they regularly provide this service for churches, and state Baptist conventions across the country.

They perform the following services:

- Criminal Records Search (includes every county where the individual has lived in last 7 years)
- Verification of Name and Social Security Number
- List of Prior Addresses
- List of Prior Employers
- Driving Records
- Education Verification (degrees above high school)
- Credit History

This is not something that should be done indiscriminately, but it is an excellent step before considering bringing a man before the church in view of service as pastor/staff member. A complete report is generated and should be kept in the man's employment records.

The package cost for this service of \$60. This is quite reasonable for having such a thorough investigation done and is a minimal cost to protect church from any surprises. The candidate is asked to fill out a single page application/release. Usually people with something to hide refuse to sign such a release. We can help you with submitting the request and aid you in getting the background report.

The cost of doing an Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation is now \$25 and finding a source for a credit history report can be as high as \$35 if you can locate someone who can do this (most local banks have begun declining this because of privacy issues). In perspective, this is an outstanding service at an excellent cost to the local church.

If you would like information or assistance, please contact the Associational Office.

Sincerely In Christ Jesus,

Tom Owens

Authorization to Release Records

I, _____, hereby authorize _____ Baptist Church of _____ (hereafter referred to as *the church*) or any duly appointed person acting on its behalf, to call and/or inquire into my background with prior churches, employers, references or any other person or entity that may have material information on me. This authority extends without limitation to obtaining any information from schools, residential management agents, current or prior employers, criminal justice agencies, financial institutions, or individuals, relating to my activities. This information may include, but is not limited to, academic, residential, achievement, performance, attendance, personal history, disciplinary, arrest, and conviction records.

I hereby specifically authorize and direct anyone who receives a verbal or written request for information from *the church* to give any information (including opinions) that they may have to *the church* as to my character and fitness for service. You are authorized to answer any of *the church's* questions and to release any requested documentation, forms or information to *the church* whether the information is oral or in writing.

I hereby fully and completely release any individual, church, company, agency or other person with whom *the church* conducts an inquiry, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for any damages of whatever kind or nature that I, my heirs, or family may allege happened to me at any time on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization.

I waive the right to inspect any and all information, regardless of the form the information is in, provided about me to *the church* by any person. I also waive any right I might have to inspect *the church's* notes and files compiled as a result of any background check.

I have carefully read this Authorization to Release Records and sign it as my own free act with the intent that it be relied upon by any person or entity that receives it from *the church*. A photocopy of this Authorization to Release Records shall be effective as an original. This Authorization to Release Records is not limited as to time.

Signature

Date

CONFIDENTIAL PRE-EMPLOYMENT REPORT OF:

JOHN J. DOE
692 N. MAIN STREET
ANYTOWN, OK 73047

Social Security Number:555-55-5555

Driver's License Number: OK 555555555

MOTOR VEHICLE RECORD

OK Expires:01/31/99 Status: Valid

No accidents or violations

CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS CHECK

No Convictions WAY CROSS County, GA

No Convictions BEJAR County, TX

No Convictions OKLAHOMA County, OK

The following name (variation) were found but not searched for criminal records. Please contact BTi if an additional search is required.

DOE, J. J. - Source: Credi

PERSONAL CREDIT HISTORY

Social Security Number Verified

Year Issued: 50 State Issued: GA

	24 MONTH HISTORY	HISTORICAL DELINQUENCIES
Tradelines	Current	ONE LATE PAYMENT

Balance 2,000

Monthly Pymts 500

Past Due 0

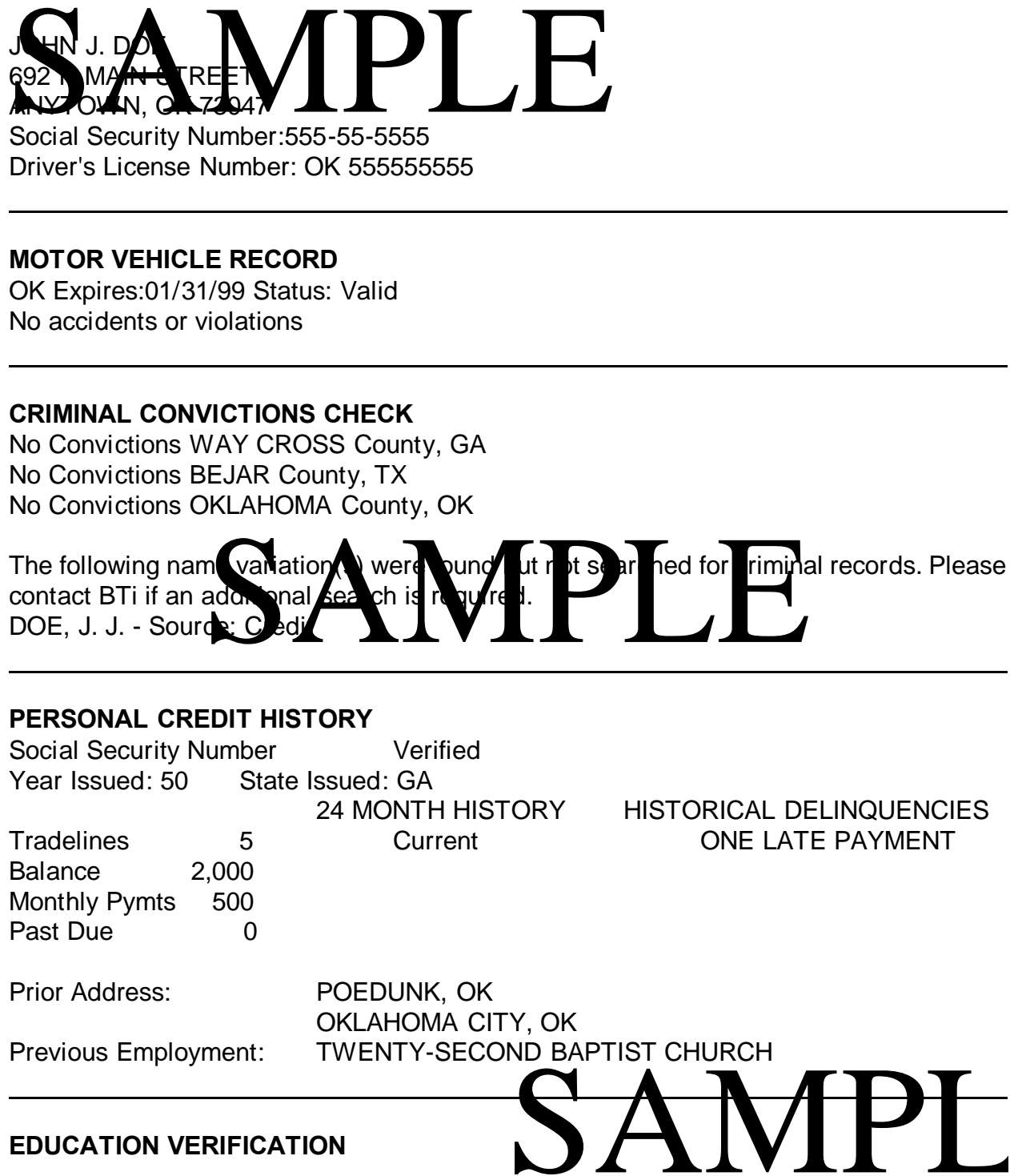
Prior Address: POEDUNK, OK
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

Previous Employment: TWENTY-SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH

EDUCATION VERIFICATION

GEORGIA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY, WAY CROSS, GA

Source: SARA, TRANSCRIPT CLERK (555)575-2023



Dates:08/00/72 to 05/03/76 Graduated; Degree: BACHELOR OF ART IN
PASTORAL MINISTRY; Major: PASTORAL MINISTRY; Minor: ENGLISH

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