

PASTORAL SEARCH RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR PRELIMINARY PLANNING

PLANNING IN THE INTERIM

CHURCH CONSULTANTS

PHASE ONE - DEFINING

ESTABLISHING A PASTORAL SEARCH TASK TEAM (PSTT)

- 1 Ensure that the PSTT understands and committed to the church's mission, vision and values (where they exist) or stated general direction. Avoid conflicts of interest among members of the PSTT. When calling a new Lead Pastor conflicts of interest would be such things as including members of the current pastoral team, the outgoing Lead Pastor or members of his family on the PSTT.
- 2 Carefully select the PSTT. People chosen for this group should have a concern for the whole church, and be strong enough to not yield to pressure groups. Their judgement should be respected by the whole congregation. Preferably at least some members should have experience employing people. They should be able to keep confidences, to work as team members and be available for the 'long haul' of pastoral search if needed. They need to be willing to re-examine what they've always thought about their church's ministry, or how they've always done things.
- 3 The church may consider a Church Health Consultation before calling a new pastor. It will help establish whether present programs might need redirecting and help to get a good 'fit' for pastor, congregation and community. The appraisal should examine both the whole congregation and community. Involving the whole congregation will help members to personalise the mission of their church.
- 4 Avoid the trap of making a choice of the next pastor based on the reaction to the last one. There should be a conscious building on past ministry as well as pruning some aspects.
- 5 When seeking consensus, be careful to 'hear' everyone to be sure commitment really does exist.
- 6 Make sure that the prospective pastor and the calling group have clear and realistic expectations of each other ie check the 'shopping list' of both church and pastor.
- 7 The PSTT needs to clearly understand their role - what their duties are, what their authority is, whether it is the body to draw up terms and conditions.
- 8 Don't be afraid to call on the experts outside the local church. Within the denomination there are people who have developed expertise in the process. ie. Director of Ministries and the Church Consultants.
- 9 Many churches have able people among their leadership who could act as moderator. However, an independent moderator can most often steer a church through the process better than someone 'in house'.
- 10 Approach the task in an organised and professional manner.

- 11 If the church is using the services of an interim pastor, clarify with the church and the interim pastor the parameters of the interim's role. It may be best if the role of the interim pastor is kept completely separate from the pastoral search committee. An 'intentional interim' may be more actively involved in a facilitating / moderating role.
- 12 Clarify the lines of communication with prospective pastors - by whom and through whom? In the early stages it may be helpful to communicate through the Moderator.
- 13 The PSTT need to do their own homework on prospective pastors and not rely merely on hearsay. Be prepared to look beyond the known pool of possible pastors – interstate and overseas.
- 14 The PSTT can provide a very helpful church and community profile for prospective pastors. The PSTT needs to be honest about congregational problems, firstly within the PSTT and secondly with a prospective pastor. Use the interim pastor to address needs and issues within the life of the church.
- 15 The PSTT need to be well prepared for interviews, as do prospective pastors. The moderator can be helpful to both parties in this preparation.
- 16 If a pastor from interstate or overseas is being considered, be sure to enlist the help of the Director of Ministries to get necessary information. The same applies with pastors from other denominations.

Be realistic about removal and transfer costs for interstate and overseas moves so that church finance is not over strained. Some assistance may be available for long distance removal costs. (BCWA Business Manager).

- 17 Don't hasten the process to suit a time frame if moving more slowly and carefully is going to achieve a happier, if later, result. If there is disappointment don't panic as this can sometimes lead to calling a pastor on the rebound.
- 18 If the PSTT members visit another church, in order to protect the pastor being observed position in that church, be discreet.
- 19 Look at the full range of gifts and talents when considering a pastor.
- 20 Keep the interim pastor, other staff and the congregation informed of progress without divulging confidences including names. This may be done through the moderator or leader.
- 21 Always consider the spouse and children in the call process. In almost all interviews with prospective pastors it is recommended that the spouse be invited to attend the interview and the church pay their transport costs as well as the pastors if from overseas or interstate.
- 22 Be sure the church and prospective pastor know whether the call is for an indefinite or limited time, and what the interval and method of review will be.
- 23 Be sure that terms and conditions are clear and all in writing in the form of a contract. Government legislation in recent days has highlighted the importance of this.
- 24 Where a church is seeking a new team Lead/Senior Pastor, it may be advisable to alert associate pastors to the fact that a new team Lead/Senior pastor may change the climate of the pastoral team and it could be advisable to consider their own future ministry at the same time as the church is in transition.

Defining Criteria See Church Profile

Broad Terms and Conditions/Sample

Reimbursement of telephone rental and Church calls, postage, stationery, equipment and other out of pocket expenses

The following notes are to assist an understanding of the package recommendations and to aid in their practical application.

1. The Basis of the Stipend Package

The recommended stipend package is regarded as the remuneration required to allow pastors and their families to maintain a living standard similar to that enjoyed by the average Australian family. The actual recommended levels for each part of the package are based on appropriate community benchmarks.

2. The Decision is Made by Pastor and Church

It is recommended that our churches pay their pastors at, or based on, the recommended levels. However, it should be emphasised that churches and pastors are free to agree to stipend packages that differ from the recommended levels.

3. Part Time Ministry

The recommended stipend package is intended to apply to pastors working full time - a five day week. Churches engaging a pastor part time should adjust the package on a pro-rata basis eg. a three day appointment will carry three fifths of the full package.

4. Stipend

Most churches pay pastors either fortnightly or monthly. Monthly pay is becoming more common in the community and saves time. It does however require careful budgeting by both pastor and church.

5. Leave Loading

There is no leave loading recommended.

6. Long Service Leave Contributions

These are established by the BCWA and are based on the remuneration package paid to the pastor. If the church varies the recommended rates it should contact the BCWA Administrator in order to have the contribution account calculated.

7. The Payment of Benefits

It is recommended that the benefits part of the stipend package is paid by the church into a separate church "ministry expense" bank account whenever the stipend is paid to the pastor. Ministry related expenses incurred by the pastor can then be paid by the church from this ministry expense account in a manner which simplifies record keeping and control and without giving rise to a tax liability to either pastor or church. Payment of benefits as allowances or as reimbursements is possible but can give rise to a tax liability. If in doubt pastors are encouraged to seek advice from the BCWA.

It is further recommended that the benefits part of the stipend package not exceed 50% of the total package or 40% when a manse is provided by the church.

8. Car Benefit

It is suggested that an estimate of ministry travel be made by the pastor at the start of each year and that if travel above 12,000 is anticipated an additional reimbursement sum be agreed accordingly based on 68 cents per km* above 12,000 km per annum. A further adjustment to the final month's payment can then be made if necessary when actual ministry travel is known at or near the end of the year.

* This rate takes account of the extra fuel, tyres and service costs arising from the longer distance travelled and also makes some allowance for the extra wear and tear on the car.

9. Superannuation

Under current superannuation guarantee legislation, churches are obliged to make a contribution of not less than 10% of remuneration to an approved superannuation fund on behalf of all employees. The church is legally bound to contribute 10% of the Pastors total stipend package to a complying superannuation fund of the pastor's choice. Pastors are encouraged to consider additional superannuation contributions by salary sacrifice. Pastors should seek independent financial advice regarding choice of superannuation fund and the level of personal contributions.

PHASE 3

INTERVIEWING A PROSPECTIVE PASTOR

ADVICE FOR THE PASTORAL SEARCH TEAM

General Principles:

Give greater weight to the pastor's demonstrated abilities, rather than to how he/she comes across in the interview. Such areas as skill set, spiritual maturity and relational networking potential.

Be aware of the tendency to make premature decisions based on the first few minutes of the interview. Consciously try to suspend making decisions about the applicant until the end.

Develop an organised plan of how the PSTT members will ask the questions so that they discuss all essential topics in depth. The early questions could emphasise the pastor's strengths and successes and after some rapport has been built up, it is easier to deal with the more difficult questions.

The pastor's spouse should be invited to be present if possible. Be sensitive to both. It is not easy to talk in depth to a group of relative strangers.

Possible Questions

- 1 Tell us about your childhood. What are some memories of your parents and peers which significantly shaped your attitudes toward God, toward work, toward the values which you hold today?
- 2 How and when did you become a Christian? When did you first feel God's call on your life? How and why did you decide to enter the ministry? What vocational background do you have?
- 3 Can you identify some of the people who had a significant influence on your life? What impact has each of them had on your thinking and methods of ministry? *Local church, theological / bible college, authors, preachers etc.*
- 4 Describe the ministries you have had to date. Talk about some of the successes you have had and some of the difficulties. What have you learned of your strengths and weaknesses through them?
- 5 How would you describe your style of leadership? Ask for examples of leadership in specific situations.
- 6 What do you believe are the signs of healthy relationships between a pastor, the church leadership, the congregation and the denomination? Do you believe accreditation with the Baptist Union is important?

- 7 How have your faith and theology changed since you first considered entering the ministry?
- 8 What goals do you strive to achieve through your preaching? What process do you usually go through to prepare a sermon? Do you regularly do programs or courses to improve (enrich) your preaching?
- 9 What emphasis do you place on pastoral counselling? Describe your training and experience in this area. Do you work closely with spiritual and mental health professional counselling services? Give examples of programs including dates.
- 10 What is your philosophy and practice regarding hospital and home pastoral visits?
- 11 What methods do you prefer to use to teach and appeal to people about their giving? What is your own method of contributing to church ministry ie. what do you model?
- 12 What special ministries do you sense God has gifted you for?
- 13 What issues do you see as being the most important ones facing Christians, particularly Baptists today? Raise the issue of the Growing Healthy Churches program and distinctives currently supported by the Baptist Union.
- 14 Do you have any specific emphasis in doctrine or style of ministry, including attitudes towards:
 - a Evangelism and outreach
 - b Community orientated ministries
 - c The role of the pastor as leader of the team / of other staff
 - d Women in leadership roles /participation in worship leading etc
 - e Biblical inspiration and related matters
 - f Contemporary music/songs
 - g Ecumenical movement
 - h Alcohol consumption, especially in relation to leadership
 - i Divorce and remarriage
 - j Working as part of a pastoral team, as leader and member
 - k Leadership style
 - l Communication in the church
 - m The charismatic movement
 - n Homosexuality
- 15 How do you maintain your spiritual, emotional and physical health? How do you like to spend your free time?
- 16 How do you allocate time to spend with your family?
- 17 What are your plans for personal and professional growth?
- 18 What do you consider to be the primary work of the church?

- 19 What tough experiences have you been through in life and how did you handle them?
- 20 What do you consider are your weaknesses?

Optional questions you might ask of a Pastor's spouse:

- 1 In what ways would you like to be involved in ministry, if any?
- 2 What is your attitude to your spouse's vocation?
- 3 Tell us about your children. Do they have any particular needs which should be considered in relation to a possible call to this church?
- 4 What are your concerns about a possible move?
- 5 Are there any things about our church or community which cause you apprehension if you were called to come here?

GUDIELINES FOR THE PASTOR

Questions a Pastor might ask a church/pastoral search committee:

There are three types of questions which it is useful to raise.

1 Questions of census such as:

- Do church members live locally?
- Have there been any major demographic shifts in the area in the last ten years?
- How has the church addressed these?
- What are the talents, skills and interests that the congregation brings to the church?

(Ask for a copy of the church directory)

2 Questions about issues such as:

- Is the church inward or outward looking? Why do you say that?
- Have changes in worship/practice disrupted the congregation?
- Is there/was there, any contention over the previous pastor?
- Have there been any theological or other divisions within the congregation?
- Has a building program alienated anyone?
- Are there any issues which affect the local community which could impinge on the church?

3 Questions on structures:

- Seek to discover the formal and informal networks within the congregation.
- How are relationships with neighbouring churches?
- Ecumenical relationships? (especially in the country areas)
- Relationships with the other churches of the denomination and support of denominational ministries?
- Pastors' fraternals?

Let the church ask their questions first. Then there may only need to be some follow-up questions asked. The primary purpose is to learn from the church its attitudes and expectations. It can be far

more helpful to understand their likes and dislikes and than, say, the financial condition of the church in the last ten years.

Some further questions a pastor might ask:

These questions are suggestions to ensure that an interview covers essential areas of information. There needs to be selection and prioritising of questions and a readiness to drop questions that have been answered in some other context.

- 1 What gifts for ministry is the church looking for in a new pastor? Why are you of particular interest to you?
- 2 What does the leadership perceive to be the vision/mission and special strengths in ministry in the church at the present time? What ministries are being exercised effectively? Are goals being achieved?
- 3 What is the potential for outreach within the local community? When was the last evangelistic outreach or enlargement program? Was it successful? What special needs are there which need addressing?
- 4 What is the most significant event in the life of this congregation since you have been a member?
- 5 Apart from the upheaval of looking for a new pastor, what has been the most upsetting event in the life of this church? Are there any issues/conflicts from the past which remain unresolved? What still needs to be done? Are there any specific expectations of the new pastor sort out past issues within the church?
- 6 In your opinion, what areas of concern need to be addressed by this church? What special needs are there in the church which the new pastor would have to address?
- 7 What kinds of things did your previous pastor do particularly well?
- 8 What were the circumstances surrounding your previous pastor's departure?
- 9 In what ways do the leadership and the pastor work together? Is there team work at the leadership level and if so, how does it work and what are the expectations?
- 10 What specific expectations does the church have of the pastor and of his/her spouse? How would the church react to the pastor's spouse working full-time or part-time?
- 11 Is the church involved in religious instruction in schools and is the pastor expected to be involved?
- 12 What organisations in the church are the most effective in their ministries?
- 13 Apart from calling a new pastor, what is the highest church priority for the next 12 months? Does the church have any growth goals for the next 2 years? 5 years? What is the vision of the church for its ministry in the future? ie where is the local church headed?
- 14 What do you consider to be the church's two greatest strengths and its two greatest problems or weaknesses?
- 15 How open is the church to change and innovation in order to fulfil its ministry effectively?

- 16 Have you any plans to expand staff or buildings?
- 17 How financially stable is the church? (Request a copy of the financial statements if you don't already have them)
- 18 What is the church's missionary policy and program?
- 19 Is there any specific emphasis or stance in doctrine or style of ministry which a new pastor would need to be aware of, including attitudes towards:
 - a Church Health and Growth
 - b The use of external (Union or other) consultants to assist the church
 - c Women in leadership of ministries and in the leadership team
 - d Biblical inspiration and related matters
 - e Contemporary worship
 - f Divorce and remarriage
 - g Alcohol Consumption - especially in relation to leadership
 - h Ecumenical movement
 - i The charismatic movement
 - j Overseas mission. (Global Interaction and Baptist World Aid Australia)
 - k Homosexuality
- 20 What provision does the church make for:
 - a In-service training for the pastor through conferences and other similar events?
 - b Further education of a more comprehensive kind such as course work at the Vose Seminary or elsewhere?
 - c Ministry beyond the church in other places which may even include overseas travel?

Matters to be Addressed

At some stage in the interview process, probably towards the end, it will be necessary to address the following matters. The moderator will be able to assist you with these questions

- a Stipend. (Is it adjusted automatically according to Baptist Churches Western Australia recommendations?)
- b Matters related to Long Service Leave, Superannuation, ongoing training costs, Pastors Retreat costs.
- c Arrangements of a special kind, if this is a part-time pastorate.

Team Ministry Matters

If you are being interviewed with a view to being called as the Senior or Lead Pastor of a team already in place in the church, the following will need to be explored:

- 1 What are the ministry descriptions or ministry roles of the present staff? Ask for copies of them.

- 2 Within the leadership structure, who will the staff be accountable to, the Lead/Senior Pastor, governance team or other? (They should be accountable to the Senior/Lead pastor.) Does the church operate according to the Ministry led Accountable Leadership Model?
- 3 What tenure do existing staff have?
- 4 How will the governance team respond if, in establishing new directions under your leadership, it becomes clear that one or more positions either need to be redefined (with the same personnel) or significantly changed (with different personnel)?
- 5 Will the governance team accept responsibility for working with the Lead/Senior Pastor to bring such change about if deemed necessary, including helping existing staff find ministry opportunities elsewhere?
- 6 Will the governance team alert existing staff to the possibility of such changes as part of the call arrangements?
- 7 If more than one staff member preaches, will the team Lead/Senior Pastor have responsibility to determine pulpit arrangements?

If you were being interviewed for an associate role, the above questions can be easily adapted giving careful attention to:

- 1 Ministry responsibilities and how these relate to other team roles. (A written statement is essential.)
- 2 Lines of accountability need to be clearly established.
- 3 Relationships with the team Lead/Senior pastor need to be clarified.

Part Time Appointments

If a pastor is being interviewed with a view to a part time appointment the PSTT and the prospective pastor should give careful consideration to the following:

- 1 Expectations of ministry responsibilities and the time to be spent in ministry related activities.
- 2 Pastors and governance teams need to be careful that bi-vocational pastors do not over extend themselves through more than agreed to involvement in church activities. There needs to be a realistic balance between paid and voluntary time.
- 3 Clarity as to stipend, allowances, housing, holidays, workers compensation, insurance etc.
- 4 Any special financial arrangements until secular employment is secured (eg up to 6 months for full-time support while the pastor finds other employment) or a special arrangement of one year as close to full time as possible to allow the church to build momentum quickly. This would be reviewed after 12 months.
5. Accountability of the pastor needs to be clearly defined, including how to record time worked for the church.

HOW DO I KNOW WHETHER TO ACCEPT A CALL?

Before beginning the process, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the non-negotiable?
- What are the things I would be willing to wait for?
- What are mere preferences?
- What are my particular strengths, weaknesses?
- What family needs will shape my decision?
- Will my spouse expect or need to work?

Sometimes, though, a sense of God's call overpowers so that there is a compulsion to follow. In that case these questions are not to determine the call but to understand how to enter it.

PHASE 4

DRAFT LETTER OF CALL

In discerning God's leading it is important that all relevant information relating to the calling Church is made available in preliminary discussions and when extending a Letter of Call to a Pastor. The care you extend in the Letter of Call will be used by the Spirit of God in guiding the prospective Pastor.

It is important that the feel of your local Church comes through so that the prospective Pastor is helped to discern God's leading from how you describe your local community, and the needs and hopes of your Church. For this reason a draft letter is not being provided as each Church can express itself far better than an outsider.

Nevertheless a structure for the Letter of Call is provided as this covers the range of matters that should be considered for inclusion. Also on some specific matters of an administrative or practical nature draft wording of a particular clause is made available for you to discuss and amend as appropriate to your circumstances. Please consider carefully the structure to ensure that helpful and relevant information is provided. Where appropriate, explanatory notes are provided.

The Church Consultants are available to provide additional comment or suggestions if requested.