

## Introduction: Before the First Step

The step-by step process is designed to help a search committee understand its job, which is the process of identifying the needs of the church and the pastor most likely to meet those needs. However, the practical process suggested in this manual will be useful in assisting a church in the search for professional staff, such as music minister, youth minister, educational minister, etc. Remember that searching for a pastor is a spiritual process. The church and the search committee must remember to pray over the candidates.

**When the pastor announces his resignation**, it is recommended that the chairman of deacons invite the Director of Missions or the IBSA Church Health Development Director to come and speak to the church. He can help the church adjust to being without a pastor by clarifying the following:

- A. What to expect spiritually and emotionally in the days ahead. See list on page 8.
- B. Review the church's by-laws and constitution to determine guidelines such as:
  - Who is responsible to invite the pulpit supply and call an interim pastor?
  - How is the church instructed by the constitution to select the search committee?
  - Who serves on the committee?
  - What size should the committee be?
- C. While many churches may have a person in the congregation who is able to serve as interim pastor, those responsible for calling an interim pastor need to review the pros and cons of calling a church member to serve in this role.
- D. The committee responsible for recommending the interim pastor will interview the prospective interim to determine his qualifications for the position (according to the church's by-laws and constitution.)
- E. The committee responsible for recommending the interim pastor, in consultation with the Budget/Finance Committee and the prospective interim pastor, will want to negotiate a Covenant of Agreement (page 9) with the interim pastor. The covenant should include compensation details, expenses, expected duties, and any other conditions of his employment.
- F. The committee will bring to the church a recommendation (including the signed covenant) for calling the interim pastor. It is strongly suggested that the Pastor/Staff Search Committee (hereafter referred to as the search committee) not consider the interim pastor as a candidate for pastor. In the event the search committee decides to consider the interim pastor as a candidate, he should resign immediately. His resume would be considered first, but will be evaluated based on the profile developed by the search committee.
- G. The search committee will find that the Director of Missions or IBSA Church Health Development Director may be helpful in securing an interim pastor. See page 56-57 for a list of available interims and pulpit supply preachers.



## Steps to Congregational Change

When a pastor or staff member leaves the church for any reason, the congregation goes through a process of change. One Biblical example of this emotional process is found in Luke 24:36-49. The stages of change are not clear. Neither individuals nor congregations move cleanly from one stage to the next. The congregation requires pastoral care from deacons, key leaders and the interim pastor during this time.

- The first stage of change is that of **FEAR**.

The congregation that has lost a pastor or staff member first experiences FEAR (Luke 24:37). This fear is paralyzing to the church. There will be a reluctance to make decisions and move ahead with necessary plans, but this process is normal in a time of change. As church leaders, you can expect to this to be a very emotional time.

- The second stage of change is that of **DOUBT**.

(Luke 23:38) Doubt is common during change. The congregation doubts they will ever find another pastor as good as Brother Joe. Some members of the congregation can become skeptical and resentful. They may blame others in the congregation for the pastor leaving. These behaviors are a result of the change the congregation is passing through. Some members will become angry with the pastor, some members might blame other members for the loss, and some will be critical of how the situation was conducted.

- The third stage of change is **DISCOMFORT**.

During this stage, persons will become anxious. Some members of the congregation will attempt to give leadership when they may not have been active in the church before. There will be general questions in the church, such as: “What is God’s will?” “Why did God take our pastor away?” Notice Jesus’ words to the disciples: “Why are you troubled?” During this time the congregation will be immobilized, as were the disciples.

- The fourth stage of change is **DANGER ZONE**

The congregation has two choices. First, they can reconsider their mission/purpose, seeking to find God’s will afresh. Second, the congregation can continue to be immobilized, repeating the first three stages of change. Soon some church members may begin to doubt if a pastor would ever want to serve their church. In the Luke passage, the time of decision is marked by the narrator’s words in verse 41, “And while they did not believe it because of joy and amazement....”

- The fifth stage of change is **UNDERSTANDING**

This is the time when the congregation senses the joy of a new mission/purpose. It came to the disciples after Jesus reviewed His instructions in scripture and the interpretation of it. Then they began to achieve a new understanding of God’s plan for their life. The discovery in Luke 24:45 is witnessed in that statement “he opened their minds”. How does God need to open your mind to the plans He has for your church? It is during this stage that an interim pastor and key leaders can help a church begin to find a new understanding of God’s will for the church and the larger community. IBSA’s Church Health Development Director will welcome the opportunity to work with your interim pastor and leadership team to develop a strategy plan for renewal.

- The six stage of change is **DISCOVERY**.

During this stage the disciples understood and finally grasped the fact that they were witnesses. Never again do we see this band of believers on the defensive. Rather, they are on the attack, taking the Gospel to all points in the known world. The church that walks through the grief and change process will be stronger, having a sharper focus on God’s call. The clarification of the church’s future direction will guide the church in selecting the pastor and staff that God has for them.

Remember change is inevitable; to grow we must adapt to the change process. It is a mistake to bring a new pastor on the field before the congregation as a whole has had the opportunity to travel through the six stages of change.

**Covenant of Agreement with Interim Pastor**

Covenant between \_\_\_\_\_, Interim Pastor and  
the \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church calls Rev. \_\_\_\_\_  
to serve as Interim Pastor. He is to begin to serve this congregation on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

**Limitations:** The Interim Pastor will not be considered as a candidate for the position of pastor. In the event that he or others consider the Interim Pastor a candidate, this covenant shall be considered null and void and the position of Interim Pastor shall be considered vacant. Further, this agreement shall be considered completed when the call has been extended to and accepted by the new pastor.

**Goals:** During the interim period between pastors, our church recognizes the need for pastoral leadership to maintain the congregation's health and ministry. (*Goals for the interim period are to be determined in consultation with church leadership and interim pastor.*) List goals to be achieved here:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Responsibilities of Interim Pastor:** (*To be determined in consultation with church leadership and interim pastor*) List below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Compensation**

For services rendered by the interim pastor under this agreement, the \_\_\_\_\_  
Baptist Church will pay:

Salary .....	\$ _____
Housing allowance .....	\$ _____
Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention .....	\$ _____
Monthly expense (per mile) .....	\$ _____
Other expenses .....	\$ _____
Total .....	\$ _____

**Termination of Covenant**

The interim pastor agrees to do all in his power to make the transition of the new pastor to the field as effortless as possible. In the event unforeseen circumstances occur, either party will have the right to cancel this covenant with a \_\_\_\_\_ -week notice.

Interim Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman of the Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**How does a search committee calculate pay for an interim pastor?**

The average layperson in the church works 40 hours a week, or 10 4-hour quadrants of time.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning		X	X	X	X	X	
Afternoon		X	X	X	X	X	
Night							

The average pastor works 52-56 hours a week representing 13-14 quadrants of time.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Afternoon	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Night	X		X	X			

The search committee should ask themselves what responsibilities they want the interim pastor to fulfill. Make a list and place an “X” in the appropriate quadrant when the interim would complete that task. For example: We want our interim pastor to preach Sunday AM and PM and Wednesday PM. Place an “X” in those blocks.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning	X						
Afternoon							
Night	X			X			

The interim will need to prepare his messages; allow 8 hours (2 4-hour quadrants) preparation time during the week for this work.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning	X						
Afternoon						X	
Night	X		X	X			

What other responsibilities will the interim have: hospital visits, deacon and church committee meetings, etc. Place an “X” on these quadrants.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning	X						
Afternoon	X					X	
Night	X		X	X			

Now count the number of quadrants. Divide the number of quadrants you expect the interim pastor to work by the number of quadrants you would expect a full time pastor to work (in the above example 6/14, or 43%) to determine the percentage of full time compensation (including salary and housing) to be paid to the interim. (Continuing with the above example, if the proposed annual full time compensation is \$35,000, the interim pastor would be paid \$15,050.)

With this information in place, the church can begin to negotiate expectations and develop a covenant for the interim pastor.