

## Step 3: Candidate Selection Process

- A. Prioritize resumes.** A deadline must be determined to begin work with the resumes received to that point. All resumes received after that date should be set aside for future reference, if needed. Each committee member should be given a copy of all resumes received. The committee members should begin to pray about resumes, comparing them to the pastor profile. Prior to the predetermined time for the committee to meet and discuss the resumes, members should compare resumes to the profile as the Holy Spirit leads them.
- B. How to compare resume to profile:**  
As you study the information in the resume look for characteristics that match the profile the search committee has developed. Study the profile and look for evidences in his resume of attributes found in:
- Church portion
  - Community portion
  - Leadership portion
- C. Contacting the priority candidates.** When the committee meets to compare their results from the resumes, some names will appear on everyone's priority list. Contact these priority candidates to determine if they are interested in being considered by your church. Include information on your church, such as: church statistical data, community demographics, how God is at work in your church and community, and church mission statement. This information should help create a desire in a prospective candidate to serve your church.. Some priority candidates will likely eliminate themselves when contacted by the committee at this stage. Also, the committee is responsible to inform any other persons who have submitted resumes that they are no longer under consideration. (**NOTE: This refers to resumes submitted directly by the candidate to the church, not to those sent from IBSA Church Health Development or the Director of Missions.**) Do not give a reason for your decision; it is enough to say, "God is not directing us to you as a candidate at this time."
- D. Interviewing the candidate by telephone.** The purpose of this interview is to become acquainted with the candidate and to determine whether he is God's man for your church. Today it is permissible for a resume to have a statement that reads "References available upon request". Therefore, it is recommended that the search committee conduct a telephone interview to determine if there is sufficient interest to warrant contacting references. Make an appointment to call the candidate using a high quality speakerphone. Have a list of prepared questions to ask the candidate based on your profile and resume comparisons. Generally avoid questions, requiring a "yes" or "no" answer.

Conduct a historical interview: This method of interviewing gives you a picture of how the candidate has performed in the past and is the best indicator of future behavior. Ask the candidate about a circumstance such as "Tell me how you organized the outreach campaign? What actions did you take? What were the results?" Follow the outline below to develop questions to conduct a historical interview with both the references and candidate.

1. Ask about a Circumstance.  
Ex: "During the last six months, who have you witnessed to?"
2. Ask about the action taken.  
Ex: "How did you develop a relationship with this person?"
3. Ask about results achieved.  
Ex "What is his relationship to the church today?"

Sample questions for the phone interview are on page 24.

At the time of the telephone interview, video or audio tapes of the candidate's sermons can be requested. Also as a part of the telephone interview, secure a list of references (if not included with his resume) along with secondary references and permission to contact them.

#### **E. Preparing to contact the minister's references**

Begin by preparing a list of questions to ask references based on the profile the committee has developed. You will ask each reference the same questions to determine a base line of information that can be compared in the committee. You are now ready to begin contacting the references.

Conduct a historical interview: This method of interviewing gives you a picture of how the candidate has performed in the past and is the best indicator of future behavior. Ask the candidate about a circumstance such as "Tell me how you organized the outreach campaign? What actions did you take? What were the results?" Follow the outline below to develop questions to conduct a historical interview with both the references and candidate.

1. Ask about a circumstance.  
Ex: "During the time of \_\_\_\_\_'s pastorate at FBC did he have any interpersonal conflicts?"
2. Ask about the action taken.  
Ex: "What actions did he take to resolve it/them?"
3. Ask about results achieved.  
Ex "What is the relationship like today?"

After the primary reference checks are complete, the committee may decide to not pursue the candidate at this time. The search committee can use the information gleaned from the primary references to prepare and shape questions to be asked during a second telephone interview of the candidate, if desired.

Some candidates may want to be contacted with the names of secondary references. This is a legitimate request. He certainly does not want his current church to know he is considering a move at this time. If the search committee wants to obtain additional references from the secondary references, then this information should be shared with the candidate, as well. Remember, openness and honesty will serve you well as you seek to build a relationship with the candidate.

The candidate's current and previous Director of Missions should be contacted. State convention personnel may also be helpful in supplying information about the candidate. Business and community references should also be checked; however, please avoid contacting businesses in the candidate's current community.

How should you use the information collected from the references?

1. Based on the information collected, does the pastoral candidate seem to have fit your pastor profile?
2. How do the candidate's strengths compare to the negotiable and non-negotiable attributes in your profile?

## Reference Summary Checklist:

### Who to contact?

1. All primary references — Conduct telephone interviews before contacting.
2. Secondary references (if needed)
3. Director of Missions
4. Other denominational workers, other pastors
5. Funeral director(s)
6. Members of former churches (not where currently serving)

### What to ask? A list of sample questions is on page 25.

1. Develop standardized (same for every candidate) questions based on profile
2. May include questions on the following:
  - Doctrines/beliefs
  - Denominational involvement/position
  - Moral/ethical
  - People /relational skills
  - Leadership style/skills
  - Family life
  - Work habits

- F. **Narrowing the list of candidates.** At some point the list of candidates must be narrowed to one person. Only consider one candidate at a time. The worksheet on page 30 can help the committee to weigh each candidate objectively. Obtain a commitment from the candidate that he is only considering your church at this time. **Neither the church nor the candidate should be dealing with more than one possibility at a time.**

At this time, contact all other candidates who were on your “short list” and tell them, “God is not directing us to you as a candidate at this time.”

- G. **Interviewing the candidate in person** If the committee senses that it is God’s will to continue, set up a time in a neutral location (not in either party’s church field) for the next meeting. A neutral site may be a neighboring church, an associational office, or another place of your choosing. The distance between the church and the candidate will determine the best approach to interviewing the candidate. The face-to-face meeting is very important, as it is during this time that the search committee and the candidate begin to develop a deeper relationship. The committee and candidate begin to see what it would be like to work with each other. The committee should develop the list of interview questions based on the community/church/leadership profile. A suggested outline for historical interview questions is below.

1. Ask about a circumstance.  
Ex: “During the time of your pastorate at FBC did you have an interpersonal conflict?”
2. Ask about the action taken.  
Ex: “What actions did you take to resolve it?”
3. Ask about results achieved.  
Ex “What is the relationship like today?”

Sample questions are listed on pages 26-27. The goal of these open-ended questions is to give the committee perspective into what it would be like to work with the candidate. The ultimate goal is for the committee to determine, “Is this God’s man for our church?” A tool is available

on page 28 to help your committee to evaluate the interview. This tool is only an example; your committee should customize it to meet your needs. Conduct as many interviews as needed to help the committee objectively seek God's leadership in determining if the candidate matches your church's profile. Will his style of ministry match the needs of your congregation?

Once the committee determines that the candidate fits your profile, you move into the negotiation stage (see page 31).

H. **Scheduling the appointment to hear the prospective pastor.** During the face-t-face interview the committee and candidate should determine the best time and place for the committee to hear the candidate preach. **Do not make a surprise visit to the pastor at his church.** Interview the pastor before hearing him preach! You may ask, "Can we conduct the interview during the same visit that we hear the candidate?" While this is not the preferred approach, sometimes cost, distance and calendar demand that we consolidate events. If you do choose to combine the face-to-face interview with hearing the candidate preach, conduct the interview first. Preaching is a powerful emotional event and the committee's decision could be influenced by the candidate's message. By interviewing first, the committee can more objectively seek God's leadership and the candidate's giftedness for your church. Ask yourselves if the candidate's gifts and talents match the needs of your congregation's profile? There is a "Search Committee Sermon Evaluation Form" on page 29 that will provide help when hearing the candidate speak.

## Sample Telephone Interview Questions

It seems that one of the most difficult tasks of a search committee is to build good interview questions based on your profile. These questions are offered as suggestions only. It is best to ask these questions directly. Questions that open a window to the thoughts, values and feelings of the candidate are most valuable.

1. Tell us about your conversion experience. (Let him tell you his story. Listen for genuineness and warmth of his experience with Jesus.)
2. Tell us about your "call" to the ministry. (Ask if he has ever considered not being a pastor. Listen for his excitement about being in the ministry and his commitment to remaining in the ministry.)
3. Do you have a personal mission statement that guides your decisions and purposes?
4. How have you equipped yourself to be most useable to God? (Formal education, practical training and personal study, etc.)
5. What do you believe God has called you to do?
6. What is your philosophy of ministry?
7. What are your personal goals?
8. What are your professional goals?
9. What experience have you had in church work?
10. What sizes of church have you worked in, either as a member or a leader?
11. What has been your experience working with deacons and/or church councils?
12. What has been your most difficult experience working with a deacon?
13. What do you consider to be a well-balanced church program?
14. What do you feel is the role of preaching in the total scope of your ministry?
15. What do you believe about the Bible?
16. Please describe the last evangelistic conversation that you have had.
17. How have you led your churches in the past in organized visitation?
18. What do you feel is an appropriate visitation plan for people in the hospital, in the nursing homes and shut-ins at home?
19. How does you view the role of the pastor in the church?
20. What do you think God's intent is for the church today?
21. How are you seeking to make the gospel relevant to today's society?
22. What do you sense to be the greatest need of people in the pews?





## Sample Questions for References

1. How long have you known this person?
2. How do you know him? What is the nature of your relationship?
3. Have you ever been in his church?
4. What was the occasion?
5. Did you participate in the service?
6. What were your observations and reactions?
7. When was the last time you were there?
8. What did you observe about his relationship with church leaders?
9. What is his leadership style?
10. Are you aware of any turnovers with volunteers or problems within the church leadership?
11. What are the areas of emphasis in his ministry?
12. Please analyze his preaching style.
13. What are his study habits?
14. Are you familiar with his pastoral care role?
15. In what area is his pastoral care most effective?
16. What are his greatest obvious strengths?
17. What do you know about his financial responsibility?
18. How does he handle criticism? . . . conflict? . . . confrontation?
19. Does he have a good sense of humor?
20. Can he take a joke on himself or teasing?
21. How would you rate his administrative skills?
22. In what way does he demonstrate a genuine commitment to missions?
23. What do you know about relationships within his immediate family?
24. Is his wife directly involved in his ministry? In what ways?
25. If your church were seeking a pastor and you were on the search committee, would he be your first choice? Why or why not?
26. Do you consider him to be strongly committed to the *Baptist Faith and Message* of the Southern Baptist Convention?

**Other factors and comments:** Please furnish detailed comments on any special characteristics and/or skills which you consider to be exceptionally strong or weak points. Also elaborate further on any of the areas of evaluation given on other page.

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**Please also include the names and addresses of two other persons who could be qualified to evaluate this person.**

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Personal Interview Questions

1. Tell us about yourself. What interests you in this position (Pastor, Minister of Education, Minister of Youth, Minister of Music)?
2. What do you feel is your greatest strength? Weakness?
3. Tell us about your call to the ministry.
4. What is your leadership style?
5. What is your personal Mission Statement?
6. What do you plan to be doing in 5 years?
7. Tell us three characteristics about yourself.
8. What motivates you?
9. Give us an example of a time when you went beyond what was expected of you.
10. Tell us about a situation that got you really upset. What did you do? What was the result?
11. What were your duties on your last job?
12. What type of supervision did you have?
13. What did you like best about your previous church?
14. Tell us about how your skills will transfer to our church/ministry.
15. What will your church members/leaders tell me about you?
16. What do (did) you like most about your current church position?
17. What do (did) you like least about your current church position?
18. What was the biggest frustration in your last church?
19. What were you passionate about at your last church?
20. What is the most difficult task you have had to complete?
21. Tell us about a problem you encountered with one of your church members. What was the specific problem? How did you handle it?
22. Tell us about a particular problem you weren't able to solve. What happened?
23. Describe a time when your routine was upset by an emergency or unforeseen circumstances. What did you do about it?
24. Tell us about a situation when you anticipated a problem with a church member or co-worker. How did you handle it?
25. Can you describe a recent problem that you solved in a new or creative way?
26. What do you know about our church?
27. What appeals most to you about this church?
28. Why do you want to minister in our church?
29. If you were hiring someone for this ministry, what qualities would you look for?
30. What strengths do you bring to this position?

## **Questions To Consider Asking A Prospective Pastor**

By Dr. Bill Weedman

(Questions not covered on pages 25 and 27)

1. How do you feel the pastor should relate to other staff members in the church?
2. How do you feel about receiving an annual performance review by a responsible committee in the church?
3. What is your normal approach to promoting/leading change in the life of the church?
4. How would you describe your organizational skills?
5. How would you describe your promotional skills?
6. How would you describe your preaching style?
7. How would you describe your delegation skills?
8. How would you like to be remembered at the end of your life on earth?
9. How would you describe your achievement of balance in your life?
10. What is your commitment to personal and professional growth in your life?
11. How would you describe your physical health? The health of your family?
12. How would you describe your emotional health? Your spiritual health?
13. How would you describe your community and denominational participation?
14. What has been your role in denominational controversy/politics?
15. What are some of your pet peeves in church life?
16. What kind of personality in others bothers you the most?
17. If we do a credit check on you, what will we discover?
18. What do you believe are the roles of women in the church?
19. Do you practice and promote speaking in tongues?
20. How do you feel about the SBC? the “Baptist Faith and Message”? the Cooperative Program?
21. How would you describe your view of the sovereignty of God?
22. What is your view of divine election to salvation?
23. What is your comfort zone in church worship?
24. How will you relate to staff members whom you inherit in the church?

**Evaluation of Interview**

**EVALUATION OF \_\_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_\_**

**(Please evaluate by indicating the rating which applies to each area. Be as objective as possible in this evaluation.)**

**Check Applicable Rating**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Factors to Consider</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Ministering Ability</b>	<b>Human relationships. Does this person relate well to others, especially on a one-to-one basis?</b>					
<b>Self-expression</b>	<b>Sermon organization, content and delivery</b>					
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Ability to organize, obtain cooperation of others, and direct their efforts effectively. Spiritual leadership.</b>					
<b>Administrative Ability</b>	<b>Knowledge of and ability to carry out administrative procedures: planning, delegating, evaluating etc.</b>					
<b>Judgment</b>	<b>Ability to act rationally and with dispatch within the leadership of the Holy Spirit.</b>					
<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Ability and willingness to begin work when and where it is needed.</b>					
<b>Flexibility</b>	<b>Ability to adapt to various situations.</b>					
<b>Personal Bearing</b>	<b>Physical appearance, appropriate attire.</b>					
<b>Marriage Relationship</b>	<b>Relationship with spouse, continued growth and stability of marriage</b>					
<b>Relationship with Children</b>	<b>Parenthood: love and discipline of children.</b>					
<b>Credit and Finance Management</b>	<b>Ability to manage personal finances and indebtedness.</b>					
<b>Health</b>	<b>Any personal or family health problem that might affect performance.</b>					

**SEARCH COMMITTEE SERMON EVALUATION FORM**

Name of Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Visit \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Family \_\_\_\_\_

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Use the following numbers to rate the pastor in these areas:

1. Poor                    2. Below Average                    3. Average                    4. Good                    5. Outstanding

\_\_\_\_\_ Appearance

\_\_\_\_\_ Pulpit Demeanor

\_\_\_\_\_ Delivery

\_\_\_\_\_ Character

\_\_\_\_\_ Imagination

\_\_\_\_\_ Enthusiasm

\_\_\_\_\_ Evangelistic Zeal

\_\_\_\_\_ Audience Appeal

\_\_\_\_\_ Theological Depth

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**COMMENTS**

## Sample Worksheet

Complete one Minister's Profile Worksheet (below) for each candidate. After completion of reference checks and phone interview, list each attribute from the profile prepared by the search committee and prioritize each on a scale of 1 to 10. Then score each attribute of the candidate on a scale of 1 to 10. Take the profile attribute's priority number and multiply it by the candidate's score and write the product in the far right column. The formula will give the committee a mathematical score for comparison.

<i>Church profile</i>			
Education	10	10	100
Leadership	9	8	72
Communication	8	7	56
Vision Caster	7	5	35
<i>Community profile</i>			
Community	9	9	81
Involvement	8	7	56
<i>Leadership profile</i>			
Doctrine	10	9	90
Pastoral Care	9	9	81
Communicator	8	7	56
<b>Total</b>			<b>627</b>
Negotiable:			
Risk Factor:			
Decision:			

### MINISTER PROFILE WORKSHEET

Candidate Name	Negotiable	Non-Negotiable	Importance Rate 1-10	Candidate Rate 1-10	Total
Attributes					
<i>Church profile</i>					
Interview					
Leadership					
Communication					
<i>Community profile</i>					
Involvement					
<i>Leadership profile</i>					
Doctrine					
Education					
Personal mission statement					
<b>Total</b>					

Risk factor (any factor that might be disconcerting for a congregation):

Compare Candidates:

Decision: