

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A PROPOSED MANUAL TO GUIDE THE PASTORAL CANDIDATE IN
INVESTIGATING AND EVALUATING A PROSPECTIVE CHURCH

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

John David Lones

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This project is dedicated to the pastors and churches of the Southern Baptist Convention and all others who long for the church to fulfill her mission of making disciples of all nations.

Work on this project was halted several times due to the pressure of circumstance beyond my control. If not for the faithful encouragement of my wife, Beverly, it would never have been completed. It is with inexpressible gratitude that I include her, along with our children in this dedication.

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RESEARCH PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

GRADE

MENTOR, Dr. Donald Q. Hicks
Assistant Professor Pastoral Leadership

READER, Dr. David Wheeler
Professor of Evangelism and Student Ministries

ABSTRACT

THE PASTOR SEARCH PROCESS: A PROPOSED MANUAL FOR THE OBJECTIVE INVESTIGATION AND EVALUATION OF A CHURCH BY THE PASTORAL CANDIDATE

J. David Lones

Liberty Baptist Seminary, 2011

Mentor: Dr. Donald Q. Hicks

It is commonly acknowledged by both clergy and laity that a problem exists in the Southern Baptist Convention concerning both the length of pastoral tenure and the number of forced terminations of ministerial staff. Solutions have been proposed but little measurable change has been forthcoming. Much has been written about conflict resolution, communication between staff and lay leadership and realistic expectations. However well-intended these efforts may be, the statistics seem to indicate little or nothing has changed.

This project intends to evaluate the pastor-search process from the perspective of the pastoral candidate. Churches make efforts to evaluate and investigate candidates for ministerial staff positions, but the candidate is forced to rely on personal relationships, Associational Directors of Missions—one of whose major concerns is filling the pulpits of associational churches—state convention personnel and data to investigate a prospective church. In this study, pastors engage in self-evaluation from a variety of perspectives and tools in the form of a manual are supplied to enable a pastoral candidate to objectively determine whether a particular church will mesh with his unique personality, gifts and leadership style with the result of achieving a better match between pastor and church at the outset and, ultimately, longer tenure and fewer terminations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Several studies have revealed how consistent church growth and stability are found most often among congregations led by the same pastor for ten or more years.¹ Despite this evidence, it is commonly acknowledged that, on average, pastoral tenure in evangelical churches is less than four years.² The underlying hypothesis of this project is the brief tenure of the majority of pastors in evangelical churches is the direct result of the lack of information many pastoral candidates consult when considering moving to a new place of service. The dearth of reliable and objective information results in a poor match between the pastor's understanding and application of his³ God-given ministry and the congregation he is expected to lead. This research will be used to demonstrate how the mismatch is the result of the pastoral candidate having inadequate or insufficient knowledge and understanding of his personality strengths and weaknesses, spiritual gifting and leadership abilities. Inadequate knowledge of how to access and/or interpret available data from the church he seeks to lead adds to the problem. This data goes beyond the frequently cited unstated expectations, the historical self-understanding, and stated vision of the congregation; it is instead raw in form and must be carefully analyzed and understood. However,

¹ The Barna Group, *Barna Research Bulletin*, "A Profile of Protestant Pastors in Anticipation of Pastor Appreciation Month," September, 2001, accessed 10/15/2014, <http://barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/59-a-profile-of-protestant-pastors-in-anticipation-of-pastor-appreciation-month>).

² Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 37.

³ The Southern Baptist Convention adopted a statement of support for restricting the office of pastor to men. In cooperation with that statement masculine pronouns are used throughout this document. For a full explanation of the denominational stance, see Charles Kelly, Jr. Richard Land, R. Albert Mohler, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway, 2008), 85-92.

once completed, the data will provide the candidate with a more complete portrait of the church under consideration instead of the usual beginner's sketch. According to a recent study, the most frequently cited reasons for pastoral termination and, it may be reasonably assumed, for pastors seeking to relocate, are related to the issues mentioned above. What is not readily apparent is that these issues—expectations, personality conflicts, etc.⁴— are themselves symptoms of a deeply rooted pathology or, they are products of the church's personality or, its DNA or "Code."⁵ This project assumes the reason pastoral candidates do not consult a broader scope of accurate information is little objective information about the church under consideration may be available to the candidate or he doesn't know how to access or how to interpret what is made available to him. Therefore, he makes a major life and ministry decision based on what may be gleaned from interaction with the search committee, possibly an associational Director of Missions or similar denominational representative and a previous pastor. While these sources do provide answers to questions asked by the candidate, none will be without bias since the search committee and the Missions Director both have a vested interest in filling the vacant pulpit of the church. The former pastor's contribution will be skewed by his experience with the congregation, whether positive or negative.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to enable the pastoral candidate to more accurately estimate his potential to effectively lead the church he is currently investigating. The means by which this purpose is accomplished is two-pronged. First, the candidate is given directions to access and

⁴ Donald Hicks, "A Study of the Conflicts within Churches that Lead to the Termination of Pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention, Accompanied by a Proposal of Preventative and Interventional Solutions" (D. Min. diss., Liberty University, 2010) , 70-80.

⁵ Kevin G. Ford, *Transforming Church: Bringing Out the Good to Get to the Great* (Carol Stream, IL: Salt River imprint of Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 55-71.

interpret raw data supplied by the church. The second prong suggests a broad variety of individuals and businesses to consult regarding the reputation of the church based on their interaction with church. The intention is that the candidate will be in a better position to determine whether or not he is equipped to lead the church in question. Matching the congregation and the pastor will foster an environment that increases pastoral tenure, congregational stability and a greater, more visible community impact.

The project presents two major challenges to the pastoral candidate. First, he must know himself and second, he must know, as well as he can, the church he is considering. Each of these pursuits are broken down into component parts based on research that takes into consideration the work done by others as presented in scholarly publications as well as that presented for popular consumption. In addition, conclusions drawn from interviews with pastors and denominational church placement personnel are included. The results of the research will be condensed into a user-friendly manual for the pastoral candidate to use as a guide to gather reliable information about a prospective church which, in turn, should enable him to make an informed decision as to whether or not he should continue as a viable candidate in the search process.

A disclaimer is needed at this point. The decision to leave a particular ministry setting for another is a personal one that cannot be quantified fully since each pastor as well as each church is unique. In addition, relocation is a spiritual decision and it is assumed both pastor and congregation will rely on the text of the Bible and the Holy Spirit for guidance as they pray for God's leadership throughout this critical process. No part of the project is intended to supplant or override the spiritual dimension of the decision-making process. At best, the material presented is based on the observations and opinions of those who make such studies their life's work. It is

important to note how matters of personality and temperament may be stated as empirical data, but the evaluation and application of that data continues to be more subjective than objective.

Statement of the Problem

There are more than 46,000 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) affiliated churches in the United States.⁶ It is difficult to determine the number of churches seeking a pastor at any given time, but scanning the available data reveals an almost alarming percentage of churches with a pastoral vacancy.⁷ The average American church has a worshiping congregation of around seventy-five weekly participants.⁸ These churches are led by men who claim to be called by God to do the work of a pastor. Most of these individuals are men who have convinced a congregation they possess the gifts, calling and spiritual maturity to lead the church in ministry. The evidence suggests that although this scenario may be the ideal, it is far from an accurate depiction of reality.

According to Stetzer and Dodson, nearly four thousand churches close or go out of business in the United States each year. In addition, seventy to eighty percent of churches are either plateaued or declining.⁹ A key factor in any church is leadership. Quoting George Barna, Stetzer and Dodson, discussing the decline of the evangelical church in America conclude, “Nothing is

⁶Baptist Press, “Southern Baptist Statistical Summary—2005, accessed March 4, 2015, <http://www.bpnews.net/pdf/2009SBCStatsSummary.pdf>.

⁷ This statement is based on the average number of churches reporting a pulpit vacancy on state and associational websites, along with the statements of DOM’s and at least two CMR’s who stated that 10% to 15% of the churches in their area of responsibility were in the search process at any given time.

⁸Hartford Institute for Religion Research, “Fast Facts About American Religion”, accessed 3/11/2015, http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html#sizecong.

⁹ Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 19.

more important than leadership.”¹⁰ Further, the authors cite as an important conclusion to their study that those congregations they label ‘comeback churches’ “undergo a spiritual experience that redirected and reenergized (*sic*) their lives, beginning with their leader.”¹¹ With the national average of pastoral tenure hovering around 3.6 years,¹² most churches will never experience spiritual renewal because of the lack of consistent leadership. Whether through forced termination or denominational ladder-climbing, pastors staying in the same church for longer periods of time are rare.

Since pastoral tenure appears to be vital to church growth and church health, it would seem churches and pastors would express greater concern to promote pastoral stability. But such is not the case. The Barna Group concludes, “The #1 reason pastors leave the ministry is church people are not willing to go the same direction and goal of the pastor. Pastors believe God wants them to go in one direction but the people are not willing to follow or change.”¹³ This statement may be summarized in one word: conflict. Pastors tend to leave congregations due to some form of disagreement with the congregation over matters of vision and goals. Of the top ten causes of forced terminations in 2007, two of the top three support Barna’s conclusion.¹⁴ To illustrate the prevalence of conflict between pastors and congregations, a 2007 summary report on forced terminations in the SBC reveals 729 pastors were forced to leave the church they were called to serve. Of that total, 581 were due to conflict that included matters relating to the pastor’s person-

¹⁰ George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997), 18; quoted in Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹² Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 57.

¹³ Pastoral Care, Inc. “Statistics,” accessed June 7, 2014, <http://pastoralcareinc.com/WhyPastoralCare/Statistics.php>.

¹⁴ Hicks, 139.

ality or leadership style.¹⁵ This study aims to provide a pastoral candidate with the tools to determine the likelihood of discord developing in his ministry in a particular church due his unique leadership style and spiritual gifts or how such discord may be avoided before agreeing to accept a congregation's invitation to become their next pastor.

While most denominations provide manuals and/or training for church search committees, little similar assistance is available to pastoral candidates. The resources traditionally consulted often are only marginally objective. How a pastoral candidate investigates a prospective church and how he evaluates the available data to determine whether or not his understanding of God's call, his personality and gifts, and his understanding of the church and its mission meshes with this particular congregation is central to this project.

Special Terminology and Abbreviations

Research projects tend to rely on heavy use of terminology that is either unique to the field of study or terms with a specialized meaning within the parameters of the research project. This project is not an exception to the general rule. That being said, some assumptions are made regarding generally used terms like "evangelical" or "evangelicalism," but where there may be confusion, the following is a list of terms used in the sense indicated. Included are the abbreviations found in the following pages along with the full titles they represent.

ACP – Annual Church Profile, a voluntary reporting by local churches of raw data regarding membership, attendance, and similar vital statistics..

Call to ministry/ special calling – experience or awareness of God's singling out an individual for service through a specific vocation or in a particular arena of ministry.

CMR – The director of Church/Minister Relations is a state convention-level position responsible for assisting churches and pastoral staff in matters relating to ministry.

¹⁵ Ibid., 138.

DOM, Director of Missions or Missions Director – administrative and ministerial leader of a local organization of SBC churches cooperating to maximize their influence and effectiveness. The DOM assists churches in the pastoral search process by providing training for search committees, collecting resumes and recommending candidates for consideration.

DNA or Code – The individual operating characteristics of a local church. This code operates in the background and may be detected in the consistency of actions and decisions made by the congregation over time.

Gift mix – the combination of spiritual gifts exercised by spiritual leaders in the conduct of their ministry.

Leadership style – a function of personality and spiritual gifts describing how a leader fulfills his responsibilities especially as it involves his interactions with others.

North American Mission Board (NAMB) – The agency of the Southern Baptist Convention charged with the responsibility to evangelize the residents of North America. In this role NAMB maintains a close relationship with the existing SBC churches in the United States and Canada.

Pastoral candidate – one having been contacted or otherwise informed that he is under consideration by a church to fill the role of pastor.

Pastoral tenure – the length of the time of service an individual remains as pastor in a local church.

Pastoral termination, forced termination – the outright dismissal, resignation occurring as a result of threatened dismissal or in lieu of dismissal of a pastor. The term may

also include resignation resulting from pressure growing from an awareness of growing opposition to his leadership in the church.¹⁶

Salvation experience – the decision to become a follower of Jesus Christ as Lord. In the vernacular it is referred to as ‘being saved.’

SBC – the Southern Baptist Convention

Spiritual gifts – special abilities imparted by the Holy Spirit of God to every follower of Christ that enable the believer to minister effectively in the church.

Basis for Topic Choice

Pastors complain. They complain about the churches they are serving. Most complaints grow out of conflict with those in the church who articulate the real vision of the congregation as opposed to what the pastor believes it should be. Usually, this divergence between visions is discovered only after the pastor arrives on the scene. After a few months on the job, commonly referred to as ‘the honeymoon,’ the pastor attempts to lead the church in a new ministry, program or outreach effort, only to discover that there is deep-seated resistance to change of any type. The more he tries, the more overt the resistance becomes. Rather than risk damage to the church or emotional or financial damage to his family, the pastor resigns because ‘God called him to another church.’

This scenario has led to a weak, disillusioned and dying church. The solution proposed by this project bypasses the church and the process by which the church recruits pastoral leaders and focuses instead on the pastoral candidate. The concern is how well he knows himself and what his personality reveals about his leadership style. The matter of his spiritual gifts in relation to *this* church under consideration is examined. Experience has taught that information supplied by search committees may not be completely reliable and is easily misinterpreted by the candidate.

¹⁶ Hicks, 8,9.

This project attempts to improve the reliability of the information and the accuracy of its interpretation by supplementing it with objective data and a broader base of subjective opinions based on experience with the congregation.

If the church is to experience renewal on a broad basis, then, to use the expression of Jim Collins in *Good to Great*, “the right people must be on the bus.”¹⁷ Type A personalities who are gifted prophetic preachers and goal-oriented leaders probably should not be in churches where maintaining tradition, honoring past lay leaders, and devotional preaching are valued. However, such churches seem drawn to those leaders who are destined to create the greatest disruption in the shortest period of time, to the detriment of both pastor and congregation.

The motive behind this study is the desire to assist pastors in determining God’s will for them as they consider responding to the expressed interest of another church. It is the desire to help place the right people ‘on the bus’ so the church in America may begin to experience the renewal so many write and speak about. It is the desire to spare as many as possible the pain of termination, the trauma of financial uncertainty and the guilt of failure that has produced the alarming level of anger and bitterness evident in many pastors, as well as the shattered dreams of hopeful congregations that called the man they were convinced was God’s answer to their prayers, only to learn, too late, that they were wrong, yet again.

Statement of Limitations

Even though the word “evangelical” is employed in several instances, the focus of this study is the churches and pastors of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Source materials from other denominations are employed, but the intended application is within the context of the SBC, however, this limitation also has limitations. Most of the material presented in this study

¹⁷ Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Other's Don't*, (New York, NY: Harper Business imprint of HarperCollins Publishing, 2001), 41.

will find the broadest application in existing churches at least two years old. Mission churches, church plants, cell groups and other types of church groups and their leaders will find little use for the study or its conclusions. The reason for this limitation is the lack of experience and tradition in recruiting and calling new pastoral leadership among these groups. The absence of traditional expectations and protocols tends to lend itself to a more open selection process unencumbered by the need to ‘sell’ the congregation as a good opportunity for advancement for the candidate.

Although staff members other than the senior pastor may find this material helpful, it is designed primarily for senior pastors or single-staff pastors. It is intended as a guide or as a source to consult when considering a move. It is not intended, as previously stated, to supplant the place of prayer, counsel and, of course, the Scriptures in making such an important decision.

Even though the study employs the use of spiritual gifts assessments and personality inventories, it in no way attempts to present a comprehensive analysis of these tools, but will discuss them only as they relate to the matter at hand. In addition, the study assumes most pastors, particularly those in the SBC, subscribe to the belief that God calls men to the work of the pastorate. No apologetic for this view is offered and no discussion of a contrary view is presented as anything other than passing mention.

Although use will be made of the many tools available to search committees, this study focuses on the search process from the perspective of the candidate, not the committee. The information presented, while it may prove informative and helpful, will be of little use in training or equipping pastor search committees for their assigned tasks.

Traditional research methodology is employed but this project is not intended to be read as scholarly research. Instead it is compendium of tools gathered into one source to enable pas-

tors to understand themselves better and to investigate, with a higher degree of accuracy, a prospective congregation in order to determine whether or not his gifts and personality fit or match with that of the church.

Theoretical Basis

In the book of Acts, on at least one occasion, the Apostle Paul appointed elders, or pastors, in the churches he established (cf. Acts 14:23). On another occasion he directed a protégé, Titus, to do the same (cf. Titus 1:5). In those Pauline works known as the Pastoral Epistles, the apostle outlines qualifications for pastors which seem to indicate pastors everywhere are to share the same moral and spiritual qualifications (see 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9).

Given the prevalence of conflict as the cause for forced terminations of pastors, it stands to reason, and research indicates, that one of the major contributors to conflict is the mismatch of personalities and leadership styles of the pastor and the expectations of the church members. A reliable investigative schematic and an effective evaluation method should permit a prospective pastor to project with some reliability, his chances of success in leading a particular congregation. The tools designed in this project should enable him to achieve a better knowledge of his uniqueness as a person and a leader. In addition, he will be able to see beyond the 'newness' offered by the interested congregation to the underlying issues that make it necessary for the church in question to seek a new pastor.

Methodology

Data to support the contention that current pastors in the SBC are dissatisfied with their ministry situation and are continuing to search for a more ideal setting will be gathered from pastors by means of anonymous surveys, personal interviews, and reliance on data-gathering organizations like the Barna Group or Lifeway Research as they publish studies indicating pastoral ten-

ure is not improving. In addition, pastors will be asked to respond to surveys that reveal the degree to which spiritual gifting, leadership styles and personality traits figure into the decision-making process regarding a new ministry opportunity. These data will reveal whether or not the primary contention underlying this project is valid.

Review of Related Literature

Personality, leadership style, spiritual heritage and gifting are broad and relatively popular topics which have been addressed in numerous books, articles and studies. For the purpose of the study, the term ‘related literature’ is limited to those works specifically relating familiar and popular topics to the ministry setting of pastors in evangelical churches. Understandably, this self-imposed limitation severely restricts what may be considered related literature. But, even under such restrictions, several examples stand out. Chief among them is an article published in the decidedly non-evangelical *Anglican Theological Review* entitled “Leadership from the Inside Out.” The author, James P. Bartz, contends that the church has adopted a “one size fits all” approach to educating, training and placing persons in ministry which, he maintains, is an unscriptural approach that denies the uniqueness of the individual and rendering the work of ministry a difficult if not impossible task.¹⁸

The difficulty or impossibility grows out of the determined approach to formation for ministry that is accomplished almost entirely from within the institution of the church and its seminaries. With a fixed curriculum and predetermined expectations, aspiring ministers are formed from the outside in where the personalities, philosophy of ministry, leadership styles and even preaching styles of current megachurch leaders are held up for imitation and replication by the leaders of the next generation. Bartz concludes, “After gaining perspective on our God-given

¹⁸ James P. Bartz, “Leadership from the Inside Out.” *Anglican Theological Review* 91(Winter 2009): 83-84.

identity, we begin to examine our current context to find the starting place for our piece of extending the kingdom of heaven today.”¹⁹

A second contributor to the process of self-understanding is Robert Clinton in his book *The Making of a Leader* in which he offers the reader an overview of how God has worked in the lives of both biblical characters and church leaders to form or shape them for the work to which He calls them. One of the segments of this overview, which Clinton calls the “life maturing phase,” is where the leader realizes that he “ministers out of what he is.”²⁰ Although the reader can become entangled in a rather complex maze of terminology, the value of the leader’s heritage, personality and gift mix for understanding how he can best interact with his ministry environment are obvious.

Henry and Richard Blackaby address the full spectrum of the leadership challenge in their book, *Spiritual Leadership*. For the scope of this study, they offer a critique of the growing tendency of churches to buy into the myth of an overarching leadership personality with the observation, “Often pastor search committees look for a striking and charismatic personality ... they value charisma over consecration ... personality without purpose and charm without competence, [these] are recipes for ruin.”²¹ A pastoral candidate needs to determine whether or not he is being courted because of his commitment to Christ, his vision, proven leadership and gifting or because of his personality.²²

¹⁹ Ibid., 92.

²⁰ J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 32.

²¹ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People On To God’s Agenda*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2001), 93.

²² Ibid.

A study conducted at Capella University in 2009 by Dorothy O. Potter provides several insights into the make-up of a successful leader. Among the conclusions of the study are how successful leaders are able to respond to “the situation of the moment,”²³ that expecting “larger than life” or “heroic” personality types to solve an organization’s problems is irresponsible.²⁴ But, most relevant to this study, Potter concludes, “The most successful leaders have a profound understanding of themselves.”²⁵

Another study founded on a completely different assumption by Mueller and McDuff in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* concluded that job satisfaction is a major contributor to the overall level of happiness one experiences in life. “Specifically,” they state, “clergy job dissatisfaction often leads to job quitting,” which in their terminology, means pastors ultimately leaving the ministry.²⁶

Robert Dale in *Ministers as Leaders*²⁷ offers insights into the effectiveness of various leadership styles and how those styles impact the church. He goes beyond observable effects of leadership to examine the roots of leadership style and how leadership style relates to different personalities of what he calls “follower styles.”²⁸ He provides a chart summarizing his conclu-

²³ Dorothy O. Potter, “The Traits /Characteristics, Attitudes, and Effective Work Environments of Servant Leaders: A Delphi Study” (Ph.D. diss., Capella University, 2009), 1.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

²⁵ Ibid, 21.

²⁶ Charles W. Mueller and Elaine McDuff, “Clergy-Congregation Mismatches and Clergy Job Satisfaction,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43 (Spring 2004) : 270.

²⁷ Robert Dale, *Ministers as Leaders* (Broadman Press: Nashville, TN, 1984).

²⁸ Ibid., 55-68.

sions that enables the pastor to link his leadership style with his personality type and discover strengths and weaknesses as well as likely outcomes of his leadership.²⁹

In a Doctor of Ministry thesis, Donald Q. Hicks presents a staggering overview of the problems associated with the forced termination of pastors in the SBC and what steps need to be taken to assist both pastors and churches in preventing or at least minimizing and managing conflict between congregation and pastor. Hicks maintains that the prevalence of forced terminations have adversely affected the effectiveness of churches by diminishing their witness to the community and their ability to minister to the needs of the church.³⁰ This source as much as any other provided primary motivation to launch this project.

Guy Greenfield, a former professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a pastor who experienced the pain of a forced termination, presents a painful study of the multifaceted suffering a pastor experiences after being forced out in his book, *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks*. He relates how he left his seminary position to become pastor of a church that had a consistent history of troubled pastorates. Seven men and left under unfavorable circumstances. Greenfield was number eight. His focus in the book is healing, but along the way he cites disturbing statistics and relates painful experiences in order to assist in formulating a remedy for the problem in the church and healing for those who have been wounded in the process.³¹

²⁹ See page 45 of this project for a full reproduction of Dale's chart.

³⁰ Hicks, 11.

³¹ Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 13-19. A more objective account of similar experiences may be found in C.W. Brister, *Caring for the Caregivers: How to Help Ministers and Missionaries* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 151-171.

Franklin Segler, in an issue dedicated to ministerial authority, addresses the matter of “Theological Foundations for Ministry.” His discussion includes references the need for self-understanding among those who would lead the church. He also quotes various authorities who cite spiritual gifts and leadership style as critical components of biblical understanding of authoritative leadership in the church.³²

In the same issue of this particular journal, George Gaston addresses the factors that shape leaders. Among these are family and religious heritage. Concerning the influence of family, Gaston writes, “One of the strongest forces at work in structuring the minister’s approach to leadership is the personal dynamic of family heritage.”³³

On the matter of personality types, leadership styles and other matters regarding basic self-understanding, numerous authoritative works and studies have been published over the years. It is the practice of most seminaries to encourage, if not require, students to complete a personality inventory. Two of the more popular are the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the ‘DISC’ Model of Human Behavior where the letters DISC replace the personality scheme reputedly proposed by Hypocrites who used Choleric, Sanguine, Phlegmatic and Melancholy to describe four basic personality types. These terms were updated in 1928 by William Moulton Marston.³⁴ The terms were changed so that Choleric became Dominance, Sanguine became Influence, Phlegmatic became Steadiness and Melancholy became Compliance or, when

³² Franklin M. Segler, “Theological Foundations for Ministry,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 29 (Spring 1987): 5-18.

³³ George Gaston, “A Model for Leadership: Servant Stewardship Ministry,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 29 (Spring 1987), 36.

³⁴ Mels Carbonell, *Extreme Personality Makeover* (Blue Ridge, GA: Uniquely You Resources, 2005), 27-28.

abbreviated, DISC.³⁵ Some institutions may rely on the much more comprehensive Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) or other highly respected tools, but apparently few do so.³⁶ While critiques of these tools are available and care must be taken to avoid over-reliance on the findings of any one of these or other, similar tools, the results are, broadly speaking, regarded as reliable. However, a note of caution regarding exclusive reliance on the MBTI is sounded in an editorial published in *Theology Today* where it is referred to as a “modern mythology”³⁷ in the title and compared to “fortune cookies for the human potential movement.”³⁸

The results of personality discovery efforts, coupled with similar tools designed to assist in the discovery of spiritual gifts and still more assessment tools for determining leadership styles fit into the overall portrait of the pastor as a person. Self-knowledge in these areas is critical to pastoral ministry, especially so when considering a change in ministry assignments. However, self-knowledge is only half of the total equation. It is the contention of this study that churches, like pastors, are possessed of a unique personality that determines the congregation’s relationships with its leaders. Discovering or uncovering the personality of the church is the goal of the second part of the equation and is the responsibility of the pastoral candidate.

Unlike matters of individual personality, congregational personality has generated little popular literature and not much more among scholarly researchers. While nearly every major denomination has produced multiple tools to assist a congregation in hiring a pastor, few, if any have produced similar tools designed to assist the pastoral candidate in investigating and evaluat-

³⁵ DISC Reports.Com. “DISC FAQ.: What is DISC?” Accessed August 31, 2013, <http://www.disc-reports.com/ed-center/faq/>.

³⁶ These are among the most commonly used tools and are intended only as a representative sample and not an exhaustive listing.

³⁷ Thomas G. Long, “Myers-Briggs and Other Modern Astrologies.” *Theology Today* 49 (October 1992): 291.

³⁸ Ibid., 294.

ing the church under consideration. There are a few tools available, but no tool could be located to provide a pastoral candidate a framework within which he can objectively explore a congregation's history, community reputation, financial integrity, or interdenominational relationships.

In any research regarding the Christian church, it is an error to consider the work of scholars or current needs apart from the testimony of Scripture. Both testaments of the Bible place the welfare of the people of God squarely on the shoulders of leaders. God makes it clear to the priests and prophets of Israel that He holds them accountable for the deplorable condition of the Israelites in Ezekiel 34:2-10:

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?"³ "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat *sheep* without feeding the flock."⁴ "Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them."⁵ "They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered."⁶ "My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek *for them*.'" "⁷ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: "⁸ "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but *rather* the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock; "⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: "¹⁰ "Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them.'" "³⁹

The prophet minces no words in describing how those charged with the spiritual welfare of God's people failed to fulfill their purpose and focused on themselves instead. The result is the scattering of the people and their subsequent destruction. God doesn't condemn His people,

³⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1977).

but those shepherds who used His people to advance their own agendas. This passage, along with the following one, highlights the critical role shepherds or pastors fill in God's Kingdom economy.

John 21:15-17 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

In this last recorded conversation between Jesus and Simon Peter, Jesus makes it clear that the chief duty of the apostle toward the church is to nourish or "feed" those Jesus regards as His sheep. Whatever else a pastor may do, he must feed the flock. Feeding is the ultimate expression of pastoral ministry. Caring for the flock is *the* job description of a shepherd. It is the shepherd's responsibility to be fully acquainted with the needs or the peculiarities of the flock he oversees.

Proverbs 27:23 "Know well the condition of your flocks, *And* pay attention to your herds;" is drawn from the wisdom literature and is intended as advice to those whose income is based in an agrarian economy, there are applications to those whose life is spent among those figuratively referred to as 'sheep' in the New Testament. A pastor or shepherd cannot care for the needs of his flock if he is absent or if the wolves among his sheep attack him with such ferocity that he feels the need to flee for his own well-being and is therefore rendered unable to know the needs or care for those with whose well-being he is charged.

These and numerous similar passages underlie the motive for this project and serve to highlight the critical nature of the matter of getting the right shepherd connected with the flock he is uniquely equipped to minister to in Christ's name.

Thesis Construction

The thesis is presented according to the following outline. This introductory chapter to the study comprises chapter one which includes the rationale and motivation for the project. The methodology employed in researching the topic and surveys of the literature most relevant to the topic are also included.

Chapter two covers Part One of the study which features the need for self-knowledge and self-understanding of the pastoral candidate. This discussion includes the salvation experience of the candidate, maturation experience, family spiritual legacy and similar topics. These issues are followed by the matter of ministerial calling as the answer to the question, "Why did the candidate choose to pursue vocational ministry?" The process of determining a valid call and biblical examples of special calling are evaluated. Passing attention is given to the theory that special calling is a non-biblical aberration, but will not be given exhaustive coverage. Part One concludes with consideration of personality types, spiritual gifts, and leadership styles. These chapters answer the questions, "Who is the candidate?" and "How will he likely set about achieving his ministerial goals?"

Part Two of the study focuses on the church in question. Chapter three presents an overview of the methods currently in use by pastoral candidates in their investigation of a congregation. Attention is given to the general tone of the training manuals used by search committees and the types of information that considered sufficient to provide a candidate with an accurate portrait of the congregation they represent. In addition, interview and survey results from state

CMR's and local DOM's are included along with the information they rely on when recommending a candidate to a particular church. Also included is a brief discussion of the value church health assessments and surveys are to the pastoral candidate. Chapter three also presents a number of non-traditional sources a candidate should consult as well as the rationale for their inclusion. The sources are sub-divided into two categories as objective and subjective. Objective sources are represented by raw data in terms of statistics reported by the church each year. Subjective sources are personal, anecdotal references and opinions solicited from a variety of individuals. How this material may be properly evaluated and matters concerning making a decision to relocate conclude this chapter.

Part Three presents the manual which serves to guide pastors in the rigors of investigating and evaluating a church that has expressed interest in him as their next pastor. The manual, which comprises all of chapter four, is written in a popular format but does not include space for recording the information gleaned from the process it outlines. Chapter five concludes the study with an overview of lessons learned and the personal observations and applications of the author.

Summary

This project will address the matter of brief pastoral tenure and stagnant church growth from the perspective of the pastoral candidate. The purpose is to provide a prospective pastor with tools he may use to investigate and evaluate a church that is considering him as their next pastor. The tools permit him to evaluate the church in light of his uniqueness as a person and as a leader. The goal is to assemble the tools into a manual to guide the prospective pastor through the search process and into effective and stable pastoral ministry.

PART ONE

CHAPTER TWO: THE PASTORAL CANDIDATE

1. SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE CANDIDATE: Formative Factors

Self-knowledge begins with the pastor understanding and appreciating his spiritual heritage. Recalling his salvation experience and his experience of a call to Christian vocation provides a commendable first step toward self-understanding. While each individual's spiritual heritage is unique, all may be grouped under two distinct headings: Christian and non-Christian. A Christian heritage usually encourages a childhood commitment to Christ followed by the pursuit of spiritual maturity through the education ministry of a local church. In this environment the choice of a Christian vocation is usually applauded by family and church. A non-Christian heritage may very well oppose pursuit of spiritual goals. Choosing ministry as a vocational objective may produce a response that ranges from angry, hostile opposition to passive indifference, but rarely includes enthusiastic support. How a minister's family responds to what he understands as God's calling for his life will have an impact on his attitude toward his vocation and his expectations of it.

Spiritual Heritage

The Bible repeatedly demonstrates the importance of spiritual heritage, but two examples will suffice to illustrate the point. The first is the Apostle Paul. In his New Testament writ-

ings, Paul alludes to his background on several occasions, one of the more complete references is found in Philippians 3:4-6,

although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

The apostle understood the importance of his religious heritage in terms of how it related to his Christian faith and how it impacted his ministry to both Jews and Gentiles. Remembering his spiritual heritage may have motivated him to remind his protégé, Timothy, not to forget his.

Timothy is the second example of the importance of spiritual or religious heritage. 2 Timothy 1:5 records the apostle's words, "For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well" (italics included). Here, the young Ephesian pastor is reminded that his faith, while not inherited, was learned from both his mother and grandmother. Likely Paul wanted to emphasize to Timothy how genuine faith stands the tests of time and trial as illustrated by two generations of forebears. By recalling the lives of his mother and grandmother, the young pastor may understand better how faith is lived out on a daily basis.

Such is the advantage of those who have a godly heritage. J. Oswald Sanders in his study entitled *Paul the Leader*, notes, "In the providence of God, the preparation of a leader begins before his birth."⁴⁰ A Christian home provides an excellent incubator for future leaders. In a Christian home faith is part of the fabric of life. Parental actions and decisions become object lessons that shape the faith of children. Henry and Richard Blackaby conclude, "The influence of a lead-

⁴⁰ J. Oswald Sanders, *Paul the Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1984), 13.

er's childhood home cannot be underrated as a major factor in leadership development."⁴¹ They further say, "there's no escaping the influence of the childhood home in the shaping of a leader."⁴² Robert Clinton cites home and family as the vehicle through which God shapes individuals by means of "Sovereign Foundations."⁴³ The wise pastor will take time to reflect on how his home life and family were used by God to shape his personality, his concept of God, and his attitudes and expectations of others.

All families are not godly or Christian in their orientation. This must be taken into account as well. To use Clinton's terminology, God's Sovereign Foundations extends to all families, not just Christian ones. He maintains that this operation is God's sovereign activity and is under the control or influence of no one else. Since the process begins before birth, and since the importance of events and experiences are difficult to determine at the time, Clinton suggests the leader spend time asking God to reveal the lessons or significance of this phase of his life so its importance may be better appreciated.⁴⁴ Time invested in pursuing understanding of the influence of family pays richly if, as one writer comments, "[Family influence] molds the minister's whole approach to life. Foolishly, too often we tend to minimize the unspoken strength of these factors."⁴⁵

Salvation Experience

Included in the evaluation of the early years of life is awareness of an experience of salvation and, just as importantly, of a call to ministry. According to one who works with numerous

⁴¹ Blackaby, 34.

⁴² Ibid., 37.

⁴³ Clinton, 44.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ George Gaston, 35-43.

pastors, the latter is omitted from the testimony of younger pastors. Perhaps the significance of a call to special service has been minimized in recent decades resulting in some choosing ministry as a vocation on the basis of need or personal preference rather than following God's call. This omission or the lack of any memory of receiving God's call to service is compared by one ministry leader to having no memory of becoming engaged to be married or the birth of a child.⁴⁶ The analogy serves to highlight the significance of these two crucial events in the heart of a pastor. Once again, the Apostle Paul serves as a biblical example for contemporary preachers. On at least two different occasions in the Book of Acts, and each one a crisis point, the apostle recalls and relates his salvation experience on the Damascus road (cf. Acts 22, 26) as the rationale for his missionary activity and persecution by the Jews. Apart from a clear recollection of both an experience of placing faith in Christ for salvation and of receiving a call to ministry, a leader is seriously handicapped. It would seem the handicap is exacerbated by trials and times of self-doubt.

Major biblical characters are not alone in being possessed of clarity regarding the events that led to their salvation experience. The autobiographies of some widely known and respected influential men of recent centuries reveal a similar familiarity with the details of their conversion experience. Billy Graham, in his autobiography, *Just As I Am*, requires seventeen pages to relate his experience of coming to faith in Christ including who was preaching, where it occurred, how he felt and what he did.⁴⁷ Similarly, Jerry Falwell, in *Falwell: An Autobiography*, shares his salvation experience in twenty-six pages and, like Graham, he relates numerous details including where, when, how it occurred, and the name of the deacon who counseled with him. Of that ex-

⁴⁶ Conversation with Dr. Donald Q. Hicks.

⁴⁷ Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*. (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1997), 21-38.

perience Falwell says, “And though I didn’t really understand it, I look back now upon that night nearly forty-five years ago and realize it was an ending and a beginning.”⁴⁸ Again, Jonathan Edwards, in his biography of David Brainard as extracted from Brainard’s diaries, details the prolonged process of conviction leading to conversion requiring twenty-three pages to do so.⁴⁹ The point of these three examples and the number of pages required to tell their stories is that the conversion experience serves as the foundation for all that followed. These men, Graham, Falwell and Brainard, always remembered their experience and did so in remarkable detail because it was essential to their self-understanding as a man and as a preacher.

Contemporary preachers will do well to invest time reflecting on their salvation experience as foundational to their understanding of God’s working in their lives. While it may be true that every detail such as that preserved by Brainard in his diary may not be necessary, the general circumstances are worth remembering. Sharing personal reflections on receiving Christ and how that experience serves as the dividing line marking the individual’s “B.C. and A.D.” timeline, builds confidence in spiritual leaders as qualified to lead others to make similar decisions.

2. SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE CANDIDATE: Call to Ministry

What is said in regard to the salvation experience may also be said about the call to pastoral ministry. There are those who discredit the validity of the concept of a special calling.⁵⁰ However, many influential leaders throughout Christian history have based their lives on the belief that God specifically called them to preach and to do so as a pastor in a local church setting. Re-

⁴⁸ Jerry Falwell, *Falwell: An Autobiography* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty House, 1997), 99-125.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Edwards and David Brainard, *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1949), 9-32.

⁵⁰ For a presentation of arguments against the concept of special calling, see Paul V. Harrison, “Pastoral Turnover and the Call to Preach,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 44, number 1 (March, 2001), 87-105. A contrary perspective is offered in Edward Deratany, *When God Calls You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, no date supplied), 40-49.

membering how one came to faith in Christ matters. Recalling how God called him to pastoral ministry serves to strengthen the pastor's resolve to pursue educational goals, guide in the vocational decision-making process, and weather hardships. Leighton Ford offers a beginning definition of special calling when he writes, "Great leaders have received a strong affirmation of their personhood, in a way which frees them not only to lead a cause but also to serve others."⁵¹ If in fact God does speak in a call experience, it is worth remembering. God's calling in the biblical text is always a pivotal event in the life of the one called. Whether it is Abram in Genesis 12, Moses in Exodus 3 or Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9, the call experience alters not only the course of the man's life, but his self-understanding and identity in the world. Such an experience is inconsistent with the testimony of that percentage of current evangelical pastors who claim little or no recollection of a specific calling. These ministers rely on what may be benevolently referred to as holy ambition to serve God and His church.

In stark contrast to ambition, holy or otherwise, stand the testimonies of such notable men as D.L. Moody and Adrian Rogers. These men testify to God's special and specific calling with the same attention to detail as Graham, Falwell and Brainard in the account of their salvation experience. There is no mention of ambition. Instead, each individual relates how God made them aware of His desire to have him serve as His spokesman to the church. The testimony of Adrian Rogers illustrates the point well:

I am not exactly sure how the seed-thought that God might want me to preach got into my heart. But I found it there. "Lord do you want me to Preach?" I would ask Him. As a high-school football player I was not afraid of much that moved on the gridiron, but the thought of being a public speaker was disturbing. More candidly, it scared me to death.

Yet this little seed of thought would not go away. For weeks I would pray like this, "Lord I think You want me to preach." Then for days I would pray, "Lord, if

⁵¹ Leighton Ford. *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values & Empowering Change* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 38.

You don't want me to preach, You had better let me know." Finally it was "Lord, You are calling me and I know it."⁵²

In some cases such spiritual prodding was vigorously resisted, but God continued to call until each man surrendered. In an article entitled, *The Call to Ministry*, Edward Hayes comments:

A special call of God to ministry may be understood as divine intervention in the life and work of an individual, pointing in some specific direction consistent with His will. This special call is marked by an overpowering sense of God's leading and authority. Those called in this way testify to their reluctance to accept the call, and they often speak of their feelings of unworthiness. Yet those who attest to a special call often display boldness and confidence in God's power in their lives.⁵³

Of the importance of his experience of God's call to ministry, one writer states, "No office or position can be equated with the call. No credential, degree, or test should be confused with it. No professional jargon or psychobabble can tame it. No training or experience or ecclesiastical success can replace it. Only the call suffices. Everything else is footnote and commentary."⁵⁴ In an environment where ministry is considered a career option, God's man must distinguish between what he is called to do and what career choices lie before him. The difference between calling and career is, "the call originates with God and is guided by God's grace. Careers are shaped by market forces: supply and demand, competition, financial rewards, and quantitative success."⁵⁵

⁵² Adrian Rogers, *The Power of His Presence* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), 36; quoted in Johnny Derrick Yelton, *THE EVANGELISTIC EMPHASIS IN THE PASTORAL PREACHING OF ADRIAN P. ROGERS* (Ph.D. diss. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 23.

⁵³ Edward L. Hayes, "The Call to Ministry," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157 (January-March 2000) : 93.

⁵⁴ Ben Patterson, "The Call to Ministry," in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration: Practical Insight from a Cross Section of Ministry Leaders*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994), 21.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

It is interesting to note that God's calling came to a number of men as a process rather than an event. The account of D.L. Moody's experience begins with his desire to serve as a teacher even if it meant recruiting students off of the streets. It was nearly four years later, after having been heavily involved in Christian service that Moody finally left business for the life of a preacher.⁵⁶ Billy Graham relates how the moment of his surrender to God's call came at the end of a two year process that included attending a Christian college as well as involvement in a variety of ministry-related activities.⁵⁷ Falwell presents the most dramatic experience of a call to ministry. Only a few months following his conversion in March, 1952, in a Wednesday evening service he says, "There was no vision. No blinding light. No miracle. No mysterious presence. ... I surrendered my life to serve the Lord full time."⁵⁸

While the experiences of these three men do not set a pattern to be followed by God in calling men to ministry, they do demonstrate the memorable nature of the call experience. Some include more details than others, but all are remembered as vividly in the mind of the man as his salvation experience. In each case, the memories are being related decades after the experience. Detailed recall would seem to indicate that a call to ministry is not a small, insignificant aspect of the overall decision to serve as a pastor, but is foundational to the decision. It is his experience of God's call that enables him to explain why he pursues pastoral ministry as a career. In the examples cited, the process of arriving at the conclusion that God had indeed called them to this work removed it from the realm of a decision made as the result of an emotional or isolated, situation or setting-fueled experience. The decision came at the end of a process that covered years in

⁵⁶ James S. Bell, Jr., Ed. *The D.L. Moody Collection: The Highlights of His Writings, Sermons, Anecdotes and Life Story* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997), 23-35.

⁵⁷ Graham, 39-53.

⁵⁸ Falwell, 148-149.

some cases, and was supported by a body of observable demonstrations of both desire and aptitude.

Contemporary SBC pastors report their involvement in ministry is the direct result of an experience they interpret as a call from God to do so. Of those who claim such calling, over 97% clearly recall the experience, but one in ten has experienced times of doubt about the authenticity of their calling. In contrast to the biographical accounts summarized previously, one-quarter of pastors surveyed report their experience of God's calling began in a conference or worship setting. Some also claim their initial experience was a non-specific calling to serve God in some capacity, but not specifically as a pastor.

A small percentage of those surveyed indicated their involvement in pastoral ministry is the result of a career choice made apart from any type of call experience. They chose ministry out of a desire to serve God and His church and regard pastoral ministry as unique among helping professions. These pastors feel no other profession would provide them the satisfaction they receive from ministry. Two-thirds of those who chose ministry as a career report they are satisfied with the choice they made; none claimed to be very satisfied and five percent of respondents are less than certain ministry is a worthwhile life-long pursuit.⁵⁹

3. SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE CANDIDATE: Personality and Spiritual Gifts

There is no "ministerial" personality type. God calls and uses all types of men who provide a true cross-section of human personalities. Personality may be defined as "a person's unique behavioral and cognitive patterns; or, a person's unique consistent pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting."⁶⁰ The role of personality in the life of the pastor should not be minimized,

⁵⁹For the full text of the survey questions, see Appendix G.

⁶⁰Alley Dog Psychology Glossary, "Personality," accessed June 21, 2013 <http://www.alleydog.com/glossary/definition.php?term=Personality#ixzz2Wsp6CZYk>.

most of all by the pastor himself. Joseph Stowell describes what he calls “the heart agenda” of a church regarding their pastor in three questions: “Who are you? What will you do with us? Can we trust you?”⁶¹ The first question must be answered by the pastor for himself before he can answer it for those he seeks to serve and lead. The heart agenda of a pastor is expressed in who the pastor is as a person, how he thinks and behaves. How he reacts to the personalities of others and acts under pressure stems from his uniqueness as a person.

The pastor must know himself. He must be possessed of the facts regarding his personality and how those facts impact his decision-making, his relationships and his leadership style. When the pastor understands the uniqueness of his personality and how he manifests or ‘fleshes out’ the gifts God has given to him as he serves the church, he can better understand who he is both as a person and as a pastor before God and before the church.

The matter of personality is central to how men called by God carry out their divine assignment. Citing some of the ‘giants’ of Old Testament history, James Bartz claims that the thing that unites those God called to special service is how each leader responded to God out of his own identity. He goes on to say that in each case, “the leaders were themselves.”⁶² It is this ability to be “themselves” that many pastors find most daunting. The crucible of church ministry tends to force men to fit the mold of those more successful, more dynamic, more popular than he. Yet, it is when trying to live according to unrealistic expectations or to imitate someone else, that failure is most likely. Again Bartz makes the insightful observation that any theology of leadership found in the scriptures emphasizes both the leader’s understanding of his own uniqueness or

⁶¹ Joseph M. Stowell. *Shepherding the Church into the 21st Century: Effective Spiritual Leadership in a Changing Culture* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1994), 95.

⁶² Bartz, 85.

God-given identity as a person and authentic behavior that grows out of that understanding.⁶³

Stephen Covey makes a similar point when he says, “To try to change outward attitudes and behaviors does very little good in the long run if we fail to examine the basic paradigms from which those attitudes and behaviors flow.”

A pastor must learn to live comfortably with his own nature. Potter’s research focusing on leadership traits and work environments found that “the most successful leaders have a profound understanding of themselves, ...”⁶⁴ Additionally, she says, “leaders need a deep understanding of themselves. They must know their strengths and shortcomings,” which includes allowing for their own bias, motivations and goals for personal gain.⁶⁵

Another step toward self-understanding is determining or discovering natural motivations. Heifetz and Linsky refer to the natural exercise of leadership as “aliveness.”⁶⁶ Aliveness is easily lost in the give and take of leadership where a variety of defense mechanisms come into play as a means of insulation against the dangers leaders face. When aliveness is lost it is replaced with attitudes of cynicism, arrogance and callousness, none of which are complimentary to pastoral ministry.⁶⁷

As a protection against losing aliveness, a pastor should take the time to uncover his natural motivations or personality. Relying on the previously cited definition, a wise pastor understands why he acts, thinks and feels as he does, instead of just knowing he does act, think and

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Potter. 21.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 25. For more on the matter of a leader’s honesty regarding weakness or limitations see Larry Crabb, *Inside Out*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988), 89-110; Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump: Building Partnerships Between Existing and Emerging Church Leaders*, (Downer’s Grove, IL: IVP Books 2009), 64-83.

⁶⁶ Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky. *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 223.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 227.

feel. He needs to ask himself what it is he expects to receive from his work in ministry. The point is made that failure to honestly answer this question has led at least some to abandon ministry as a vocation.⁶⁸ Expectations tend to have an informative and shaping influence on motives.

“Knowledge of motives, and hence of expectations, provides a good deal of insight into behavior in work situations.”⁶⁹ Since few will argue that human beings do not demonstrate a deeply rooted tendency toward selfishness, few should refuse to accept that all humans are narcissistic to some degree, if we accept narcissism as “a strong psychological interest in oneself.”⁷⁰ Granting this premise means pastors are also given to and driven by some degree of self-interest which means pastors expect a great deal of themselves and others which can and often does lead to unrealistic goals and, ultimately, to dissatisfaction with a particular church or ministry in general.⁷¹

Personality is but one area where the pastor should strive for clarity of understanding. Fortunately, this area of human psychology has been the focus of much attention which can only be addressed in abbreviated form in this project. As a result of the attention it has received over the years, some general statements may be made regarding human personality.

1. Personality is a morally neutral aspect of human behavior. There is no such thing as a good or bad personality.
2. Personality is not one dimensional. It is a complex mixture of strengths and weaknesses that combine with countless factors of heredity and environment to produce a unique blend in each individual.

⁶⁸ Hessel J. Zondag. “Narcissism and Motivation for the Pastorate,” *Journal of Empirical Theology* 19 (2006) : 232

⁶⁹ Ibid., 228.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 230.

⁷¹ Ibid., 231.

3. Personality is not fixed in its expression and application, neither is it subject to wholesale replacement or change.

4. Personality frames the way an individual responds to his environment.⁷²

The personality of a pastor is at least as important as his theological perspective or his academic achievements, yet it is an area that is easily overlooked in the pastor search process as only one third of pastors claim to have responded to interview questions that address personality, spiritual gifts and leadership style.⁷³ A majority of pastors believe their personality is an asset in the conduct of pastoral ministry and over eighty percent of those surveyed express at least a good understanding of how their personality works in conjunction with the spiritual gifts they possess.

The existence of spiritual gifts, their type, number and function in the contemporary church is not included in the scope of this project. Among Southern Baptists, belief in and exercise of spiritual gifts is the norm. The role of these gifts in the church is generally accepted to be the impartation of abilities that enable Christian believers to serve the greater good of the Body of Christ. A working definition of spiritual gifts is, “divine abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God’s design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ.”⁷⁴ A pastor is expected to possess to some degree gifts that enable him to teach or preach, lead, and care for the congregation.

⁷² These statements are distilled from a variety of sources. For more information on the nature of personality and its shaping of human behavior, see Icek Ajzen, *Attitudes, Personality and Behavior*, second edition. (Berkshire, England: Open University Press, 2005).

⁷³ Lifeway, the publishing arm of the SBC, has available a strength analysis survey that is used in conjunction with the search process as outlined in *Pastor Search Committee Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2002, revised 2007).

⁷⁴ Bruce Bugbee, *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ*, revised and expanded (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995, revised 2005), 38.

Personality exerts a profound influence on the application of spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift does not negate the personality strengths or weaknesses of the individual. Instead, the presence of a spiritual gift usually enhances strengths. J. Oswald Sanders paraphrases Samuel Chadwick's description of the function of spiritual gifts, "he did not receive a new brain, but a new mentality; not a new tongue, but new speaking effectiveness; not a new language, but a new Bible. Chadwick's natural abilities were given a new vitality, a new energy."⁷⁵

The application of spiritual gifts in pastoral ministry is essential to both the pastor and the church. A pastor operating out of his personality strengths in concert with his spiritual gifts is much less likely to experience burnout. Greg Ogden says, "Our call is the sphere in which our gifts best function ... When our gifts operate in our sphere of call, God's people intuitively recognize the innate authority of our lives and give us room to operate."⁷⁶ However, when the work of ministry is carried out in areas where gifting doesn't exist, it is exhausting. It is the use of primary spiritual gifts that energizes the minister for even greater ministry resulting in greater spiritual impact.⁷⁷

The primary expectation of a pastor is that he is able to preach and teach. The Apostle Paul says those who aspire to pastoral ministry are to be "able to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2). To Titus, the apostle writes, "[a pastor] must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." (Titus 1:9). In addition to teaching, most churches expect their pastor to function as leader, adminis-

⁷⁵ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1967, second revision 1994), 82-83.

⁷⁶ Greg Ogden, "Professional Development and Career Tracks." James D. Berkley, Gen. Ed. *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration: Practical Insight from a Cross Section of Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994), 22.

⁷⁷ Bill Hybels, "Responsibility to Self." Berkley, 61-69.

trator and counselor. According to the Barna Group an overwhelming majority of Protestant churches have fewer than one hundred in attendance each week and of these, eight out of ten have a full-time pastor who must fill all of these roles, appropriately gifted for them or not.⁷⁸ A church may be of the type that responds to the ministry of a shepherd more than a visionary prophet. However, the shepherd who spends his time and energy caring for the sheep while rarely providing guidance for the church's ministry or only occasionally mobilizing the congregation through planning or organization will likely find progress minimal at best.⁷⁹

As important as spiritual gifts appear to be in the church, specific gifts or the concept of a gift mix makes no appearance in at least one search committee manual. Among pastors surveyed regarding their understanding of the role of spiritual gifts or their possession of specific gifts, the majority feel they have a firm grip on the matter. They are also comfortable with their level of competence regarding biblical teaching about spiritual gifts and of the gifts they possess. One Barna research bulletin indicates that two-thirds of senior pastors in America claim to possess the spiritual gifts of teaching or preaching, but other gifts like leadership or encouragement are evidenced in only twelve and eight percent respectively.⁸⁰ Among pastors surveyed, eight percent felt themselves lacking in the ability to teach and preach, but over one-third sense some degree of inadequacy in the areas of leadership and vision-casting.⁸¹

A Google search of the term "spiritual gifts assessments" yielded over 97,000 results with the first page of sites presenting the viewer with a variety of tools designed to reveal the spiritual

⁷⁸ *Barna Research Bulletin*, accessed July 1, 2013.

⁷⁹ Chua Wee Hian, *The Making of a Leader* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1987), 117-118.

⁸⁰ *Barna Research Bulletin*, September, 2001.

⁸¹ See Appendix G.

gifts possessed by the one utilizing that particular tool.⁸² The presence of such variety suggests the popularity and profitability of the methodology. A similar search of a popular on-line bookstore produced over 48,000 listings in response to the search term “spiritual gifts” limited to the book titles only and when the search criteria is changed to “spiritual gifts assessment,” 277 items are located.⁸³ While correlation does not equal causation, these findings suggest many rely on tools and books to ‘discover’ their spiritual gifts.

The flaw in this popular methodology is the concept of what one author refers to as “the commodification of grace.”⁸⁴ “Commodification” is defined as “the transfer of control of something from its original domain, such as nature or the Trinity, to human control.”⁸⁵ Here the author argues that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are regarded as products to be discovered and utilized by the recipient and not by God. A summary critique of spiritual gifts assessments is presented from the perspective of psychometric evaluation in the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. The author concludes that spiritual gifts assessments may be useful tools, but only as they are used in conjunction with other efforts such as input from friends and associates coupled with experimentation in various areas of ministry.⁸⁶ This approach is cited by Rick Warren as the means by which he discovered a gift for teaching. He comments, “It was only *after* I began accepting op-

⁸² Search conducted on 5/16/2014.

⁸³ Search conducted on www.amazon.com, May 16, 2014.

⁸⁴ L. N. Perkinson, *The Routinization Of The Charismata, The Commodification Of Grace: The Negative Effects Of Spiritual Gift Assessment Instruments On Community*. (University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, 2006), 92.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Horvath, Michael, "Spiritual Gifts Inventories: A Psychometric Perspective." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 32, no. 2 (Summer, 2013): 124-33.

portunities to speak that I saw the results, received confirmation from others and realized, ‘God has gifted me to do this!’” (emphasis included).⁸⁷

The application of this information to pastors is to discover the gifts God has bestowed, not by means of standardized testing, but of both ability and affirmation of that ability by the church. An esoteric experience of a call makes a good story, but it does not make up for the lack of any ability to teach, speak well, or correctly interpret, understand and apply the words of the Bible to the circumstances faced by the contemporary church. Warren says of church confirmation, “Spiritual gifts and natural abilities are always confirmed by others.”⁸⁸ Robert Clinton agrees when he says, “Gifts normally emerge in the context of small groups or when a leader has a ministry assignment.”⁸⁹ The context of the group or the assignment provides necessary feedback which serves to confirm or deny the presence of giftedness. This affirmation encourages the development of the gifts or continued efforts to discover areas of giftedness. Affirmation or confirmation of spiritual gifts “points out ... the strengths we see in others and encourages them to build on them.”⁹⁰

It is generally assumed that those who seek the office of pastor have been called by God to do so and possess the gifts needed to fulfill the duties of a pastor. The apparent willingness of the church to accept at face value the confession of nearly everyone who claims to have been called by God without first insisting that evidence in the form of ability and gifting be presented has likely contributed to the high rate of turnover that is currently the norm in evangelical

⁸⁷ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What On Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 250-251.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, p. 92.

⁹⁰ Leighton Ford, 41.

churches. This tendency may also share in the culpability for the numbers of men who have left pastoral ministry for secular vocations. Charles Spurgeon devised a list of qualifications for those who aspired to pastoral ministry. While some of them are highly subjective and some are offensive, “voice, chest, etc.,” he made it clear that inability to teach, preach and lead disqualified the candidate regardless of the nature of his call experience.⁹¹ The burden of proof lies with the man, not the congregation. It is this perspective that prompts the minister to explore and understand the role of personality in the pursuit of fulfilling his calling.

4. THE SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE CANDIDATE: Leadership Style

As has been stated, pastors leave or are forced to leave a church due to conflict. The majority of conflicts between pastor and congregation may ultimately be traced to the pastor’s leadership style. If the assumption is made that most lay leaders sincerely desire to lead the church according to biblical principles in the pursuit of biblical goals, and if that assumption is extended to pastors, then it may be concluded that the goals set by the pastor are not the cause of the conflict. The cause is found in the methods he employs to reach the goals. It is this methodology which is the catalyst driving the conflict. Methodology, or leadership style, is one part of the larger discussion of pastoral or spiritual leadership in the church.

Henry and Richard Blackaby define spiritual leadership as “moving people on to God’s agenda.”⁹² Ford defines it as “to receive power from God and to use it under God’s rule to serve people in God’s way.”⁹³ Clinton adds yet another dimension to the concept of leadership by defining it as “a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a

⁹¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students: Complete & Unabridged* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1954), 30-31.

⁹² Blackaby, 20.

⁹³ Leighton Ford, 76.

specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group.⁹⁴ For the purposes of this project pastoral leadership in the church is defined as moving God's people to achieve God's goals.

However it is defined, leadership includes changing the status quo. Churches expect pastors to lead. They realize change will accompany the new pastor. It's not the matter of change or, usually, the substance of change, but how change is effected by the pastor that produces the majority of conflict in the church. Robert Dale says, "'How' is often at least as crucial as 'what' in leadership."⁹⁵ How a pastor pursues the goals he articulates for his congregation defines his leadership style. Leadership style is a product of the life experience of the leader. Dale cites parents, mentors, church experience as a child and the region where the leader grew up as powerful influences on the development of leadership style.

The matter of family heritage lies beyond the control of the leader, but there are other factors that are equally influential that the leader does control. Among these factors is theology or what the leader believes or embraces as truth, and how that truth informs his understanding leadership in the church.⁹⁶ It is the responsibility of the leader to discover his style of leadership and to determine whether or not his style fits the congregation under consideration. Ministry philosophy, goals and ways of relating to others tend to modify with age. These changes impact leadership style and should be kept current. Results from personality inventories or reliance on decades old assessments of friends and colleagues would likely prove misguided.

Leadership style is a product of the personality and spiritual giftedness of the individual. A working understanding of temperament and how it is expressed through the application of

⁹⁴ Clinton, 14.

⁹⁵ Robert Dale, 7.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 28-51.

spiritual gifts is essential to discovering leadership style. Mels Carbonell observes, “People tend to lead according to their personalities, rather than adapt to the styles of others.”⁹⁷ It is generally conceded that temperament provides a framework for understanding behavior rather than determining behavior, therefore it is reasonable to agree with Dale when he says human beings are free to choose or adapt leadership style to fit or to better serve the needs of those they attempt to lead.⁹⁸ Carbonell makes a similar statement, “The most effective leader is the blended Servant Leader ... [they] learn how to adapt and become ‘all things to all men.’”⁹⁹

As in addressing personality and spiritual gifts, pastors demonstrate a desire to excel by taking steps to understand and maximize the potential of their unique leadership style. Dale introduces two basic types of leaders based on the research of James MacGregor Burns. They are the transactional and the transformational leader. Dale summarizes the difference between these two. The transactional leader is the custodian who maintains while the transformational leader is a motivator who builds.¹⁰⁰

Transformational leaders generally typify four broad categories of leadership styles: catalyst, commander, encourager and hermit. These categories summarize a number of indicators including temperament. Dale further provides a one-word summary of the overall operational perspective of each style:

The Catalyst = We

⁹⁷ Mels Carbonell, This quote was taken from a personalized summary of spiritual gifts and personality traits including an overview of leader styles according to personality type provided by the ministry of *Uniquely You*, which may be investigated at www.UniquelyYou.com. Others who agree with Carbonell include Robert Dale, Aubrey Malphurs and Robert Clinton.

⁹⁸ Dale, 68.

⁹⁹ Carbonell.

¹⁰⁰ Dale, 11-12. For Burns work see James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974). See also Judith Corbett Carter, “Transformational Leadership and Pastoral Leader Effectiveness,” *Pastoral Psychology*, vol. 58, 261-271, 2009.

The Commander = Me

The Encourager = Thee

The Hermit = Why me?¹⁰¹

An overview of style and personality combinations includes the advantages and disadvantages as well as the likely major outcome of each in a church setting (see Table 1 on page 44).¹⁰²

There is no definitive ‘ministerial’ leadership style all pastors should strive to attain. Peter Drucker, in an article entitled “Your Leadership is Unique” published in *Christianity Today* states emphatically that “‘leadership personality,’ ‘leadership style’ and ‘leadership traits’ do not exist.”¹⁰³ Drucker’s point is effective leaders do not focus on matters like style. Leaders focus on getting the job done, but in the setting of a local church, whether or not the job gets done may be determined by how the pastor attempts to do the job. Therefore, it is a matter of importance for the pastoral candidate to objectively and honestly determine whether or not his leadership style is likely to mesh with the challenges presented in a prospective church. As one writer states, “Preparation for ministry involves honest self-understanding.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Dale, 25.

¹⁰² Ibid., 26.

¹⁰³ Peter Drucker. “Your Leadership is Unique” *Christianity Today*, www.christianitytoday.com, accessed 7/1/2013.

¹⁰⁴ Franklin M. Segler, “Theological Foundation for Ministry” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, Ministerial Authority, Spring 1987, vol. 29, number 2, 5-18.

Leader Style Options	Personality Mix	Basic Role	Primary Behaviors	Energy Focus	Major Outcome	Advantages and Disadvantages
CATALYST	Active-Positive	Participative	Leads Democratically Integrates persons and goals Activates, trains, organizes, and delegates	Results	Long-term stability	+Long range effectiveness +Flexible relationally and situationally -Demands a wide range of leader skills -Requires time & member talent
COMMANDER	Active-Negative	Directive	Leads autocratically Puts goals before persons Directs, guides, demands, and presses	Production	Quick Response	+Efficient for short term +Gets things done fast -Creates pressure and conflict -Becomes rigid
ENCOURAGER	Passive-Positive	Nondirective	Leads permissively Places persons before goals Nurtures, empathizes, mediates, and soothes	Morale	Fellowship development	+Binds people together +Creates relaxed atmosphere -Organization untended -Tangible production wanes
HERMIT	Passive-Negative	Submissive	Leads passively Focuses on neither persons or goals Withdraws, postpones, and retreats	Safety	Inertia	+Buys time for organizational decision making +Allows leader some time out of the fray -Nothing happens -Leaves leader vulnerable

Table 1: Congregational Leader-Style Overview

PART TWO—THE CHURCH UNDER CONSIDERATION

CHAPTER THREE: INVESTIGATING A PROSPECTIVE CHURCH

1. TRADITIONAL SOURCES

Traditionally, pastoral candidates have relied on a limited number of sources to investigate a prospective church. Most of these sources are tilted toward the subjective end of the spectrum rather than the objective end. It is rather common practice for a candidate to contact the local DOM to inquire about a church in his association. He may contact the former pastor and, if available, he may also approach friends or acquaintances who serve in close enough proximity to the church in question to have access to some first-hand knowledge of the church.

In contacting the DOM, the candidate should know that part of this individual's job description is to assist churches in acquiring a pastor as the need arises. One of the indicators of a 'good' DOM is that most or all of the churches of his association have a pastor. A quick survey of the official job descriptions most Southern Baptist Associations have adopted for their DOM's reveals wide variety in the Director's role in assisting member churches in the pastoral search process. One example makes clear that the DOM is expected to "assist churches in finding pastors as needed for supply, interim, and pastoral work."¹⁰⁵ Churches regularly regard the associational office as a source for resumes of potential candidates. It is not unusual for the DOM to make an explicit recommendation to a search committee. When asked what criteria was em-

¹⁰⁵ Chester Baptist Association, "*Constitution*," accessed February 3, 2015, <http://www.chesterbaptist.net/constitution.aspx>. While official job descriptions may be vague on this expectation, conversations with those currently serving as a DOM reveal much more specific expectations from most member churches usually by providing search committee training and a rather steady stream of resumes to searching churches or specific candidate referrals.

ployed to determine whether or not a candidate would be suitable for a particular church, the response was weighted toward personal knowledge of either the candidate, the candidate's pastor, home church or a similar relationship. Having such vested interest in the churches of his association securing pastoral leadership in a timely matter, the DOM may not be the most objective resource available.¹⁰⁶

The Director of Missions, especially in a large and/or very active associations, has little time to invest in learning all that may be known about each of the member congregations. This especially true if the DOM is himself a newcomer to the area. Attempts to secure specific numbers on average tenure proved elusive, but anecdotal and observational conclusions are that DOM's appear to be somewhat more stable than pastors. Directors of Missions are influenced by a variety of factors that may influence their objectivity in discussing the merits of a particular congregation with a pastoral candidate.

Surveys of DOM's revealed a discrepancy between national averages and local experience in the area of church conflict and forced terminations of pastors.¹⁰⁷ Most likely the discrepancy represents a difference in definitions rather than attempted deception. Since many of the instances labeled 'forced termination' do not include outright dismissal, it is easy to understand the difference. When asked what kinds of information were typically provided to interested candidates, respondents overwhelmingly indicated questions are answered in general terminology. This means conflict may be referred to as 'some trouble' or 'a few problems.'¹⁰⁸ Specific infor-

¹⁰⁶ This is not an indictment of DOM's as those who present false information for self-serving purposes, but it is a statement of how those whose livelihood is derived from the churches they are asked to evaluate find themselves in a dilemma especially when the church in question has a troubled history.

¹⁰⁷ Refer to Appendix F for the specific questions asked.

¹⁰⁸ Personal experience corroborates this and indicates that length of service in that position or the geographic area tends to exacerbate the tendency.

mation is provided in answer to specific questions. Where warranted by congregational history a majority of DOM's consider it their obligation to warn a pastoral candidate about a chronically troubled church.

Fifty-three percent of pastors, while still in the search process, did not contact the previous pastor of the church they now serve. While there are likely a variety of reasons for not doing so, those who did make contact consider the information gained at least somewhat valuable with over 30% indicating it was very valuable in their decision to continue the process. A note of caution warrants insertion as many factors can color the answers a previous pastor provides. Prospective pastors should attempt to determine the circumstances under which the previous pastor left and take those circumstances into consideration as he attempts to gain a realistic understanding of the church.¹⁰⁹ When asked, over 70% of pastors regretted not spending more time pursuing matters of unity and the expectations the church had of its pastor.¹¹⁰

Most state conventions no longer employ a staff member to oversee Church-Minister Relations or a CMR Director. The position has been eliminated or combined with the responsibilities of another staff position. The role of the CMR is rather self-explanatory. Challenging or difficult matters that should not or could not be resolved at the local or associational level could be presented to the CMR office for assistance. One state convention describes in one sentence the objective of their ministry: "Church Minister Relations assists churches and staff in creating an environment of unity and joy."¹¹¹ Accomplishing the stated objective was pursued through a va-

¹⁰⁹ Conversations with a variety of current pastors reveal the subjectivity of information gained from previous pastors. Several reported a tendency to overstate matters like spiritual health, prospects for growth and overall unity of the churches in question.

¹¹⁰ Survey questions are available in Appendix G.

¹¹¹The Georgia Baptist Convention, "*Church-Minister Relations*," accessed February 3, 2015, <http://gabaptist.org/church-minister-relations>.

riety of avenues including retreats, counseling, conflict mediation, etc. However, the office has little to offer a pastoral candidate searching for information regarding a specific church.

The obvious source of information for any pastoral candidate is the Pastor Search Committee. Numerous materials are available for committees to consult or adopt as the authoritative guide for the search process. One of the popular guides used by SBC churches provides detailed guidance on how to obtain information from the candidate including sensitive data on personal finance, marital health, physical and emotional wellbeing, but very little to no guidance on how to provide the candidate with information about the church.¹¹²

Pastors tend to assume they are receiving reliable and factual information from search committees. Survey respondents indicate that at least one-quarter of current pastors have reason to believe information vital to their decision-making process was either inaccurate or less than honest. Over forty percent of pastors reported in their most recent experience the search committee did not voluntarily share information about the church that could have been interpreted to be derogatory. When asked, pastors indicated very few had requested additional information and among those who did, nearly twenty-five percent either did not receive the information requested or did so in a less than timely manner.

Information about the church may be gained by consulting the data submitted in the Annual Church Profile or ACP. The ACP “is an annual statistical report churches voluntarily submit to the Southern Baptist Convention. The reported numbers provide an annual snapshot of the impact Southern Baptists are making through their local churches in penetrating their communities

¹¹² *Pastor Search Committee Handbook* (Nashville, Tennessee: Lifeway Press, 2002). This resource is cited as a representative example of the many such manuals available to churches.

with the Gospel.”¹¹³ Denominational leaders regard the ACP as a report on the health of the individual congregations of the SBC. New pastors are encouraged to examine the responses as a means of gaining an understanding of the emphases of a particular church as well as an objective record of what the church has accomplished in the past.¹¹⁴

The sources considered so far should be regarded as subjective sources. In each case the church has a vested interest in how the data presented effects the image of the church, or the information gained is based on personal opinion, or the information is opinion filtered by the positive or negative experience the one sharing had with the congregation. The pastoral candidate benefits from consulting these and similar sources, but to gain an accurate, more complete understanding of the congregation he must consult more objective data sources.

2. NON-TRADITIONAL SOURCES

Objective Sources

The pastoral candidate must not be shy about asking questions. “One of the best tools that a pastor can use to find out about a church before he accepts the call is to ask questions.”¹¹⁵ He should begin the questioning process with the search committee. The previously referenced search committee handbook provides a list of seventy-eight questions the candidate is expected to answer, plus an additional eighteen questions for his wife.¹¹⁶ He is expected to provide financial and credit reports, health statements, criminal reports, and personal references. Because the

¹¹³ Roger Oldham, “The Annual Church Profile: Vital and Reliable,” *SBCLife: Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 23 no. 3 (June 2014) accessed February 3, 2015, <http://www.sbclife.net/Articles/2014/06/sla13>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. A compilation of a congregation’s ACP reports is available from state convention offices, local associational annual reports called “minutes” and from a website administered by Lifeway, the publishing arm of the SBC, <http://sbds.lifeway.com>. It should be noted that both a user I.D. and a password are required to access the information stored there. For currently serving pastors or staff, the required data may be obtained from either Lifeway or the state convention offices.

¹¹⁵ *Pastor Search Committee Handbook*, 103.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., Appendix 20.

candidate is expected to provide such detailed information, it is not too much to expect the church to respond in kind. The candidate should pursue answers to a list of questions designed to provide him with a broad overview of the church in question.¹¹⁷ Of particular importance are those questions that address matters of unity, conflict and expectations.¹¹⁸ If the church has experienced conflict with the last pastor or if there seems to be a history of conflict, more questions are in order.¹¹⁹ Referencing the handbook again, the committee is directed to compile a “portfolio” on church and community. The candidate should not be shy in asking the committee to share this information with him.¹²⁰

In addition to questioning the search committee, permission should be secured to obtain credit reports as well as permission to interview routine vendors—office supplies and equipment, building and maintenance services, recent contractors, etc.—to learn how the church handles business matters, as well as how the church presents a Christian witness in business relationships. If not provided, financial statements including indebtedness, if any, real estate holdings other than the church property, endowments and investments, etc. should be included.

One group of church consultants claims “hundreds of churches in every denomination” have used their materials to discover the personality or DNA of their particular congregation.¹²¹ Chuck Lawless, a professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and President of The Lawless Group, makes a similar statement regarding a church health assessment survey he as-

¹¹⁷ Hicks, Appendix H, 153.

¹¹⁸ See Douglas G. Scott in Berkley, *Leadership Handbook*, 119.

¹¹⁹ Hicks, 126.

¹²⁰ Pastor Search Committee Handbook, 31 and Appendix 16.

¹²¹ For more information on the process of discovering congregational DNA, see Transforming Church at <http://transformingchurch.net/product/tcinsight/>.

sisted in developing along with Thom Rainer who currently serves as the president of Lifeway Christian Resources.¹²² Leadership Transformations, Inc., markets the Church Health Assessment Tool, or CHAT,¹²³ that has been used by more than 400 churches in the online version and previously in a paper version, by thousands of churches.¹²⁴ It seems an increasing number of churches are turning to health assessments and/or the services of church health consultants. This being the case, the results of the surveys and the reports from consultants provide a pastoral candidate with a wealth of data to sift through and gain information regarding a church's present condition as well as some understanding of the congregation's hopes for the future. Each assessment is different and uses a different grading scheme, so some effort is required to determine what the numbers and terminology mean.

Another source of information available to both churches and pastors is the demographic data based on U.S. Census Bureau reports. This data may be obtained from the North American Mission Board.¹²⁵ The information provides an overview of the church's location in terms of gender, age, education level and a variety of related census data. A prospective pastor may use this type of information to determine whether or not the congregation under investigation reflects the culture of the neighborhood and the effectiveness of the church's witness to its neighbors by comparing the neighborhood data to the composition of the church.

¹²² Thom Rainer, "Twelve Findings from Church Health Surveys," accessed March 9, 2015, <http://thomrainer.com/2014/09/02/12-findings-church-health-surveys/>.

¹²³ The Church Health Assessment Tool may be previewed at <http://www.healthychurch.net/index.php>.

¹²⁴ This data was provided by office staff in a telephone conversation (719-785-3600) on 3/9/2015.

¹²⁵ This report may be obtained by contacting the North American Mission Board at <http://www.namb.net/> or at <http://www.thearda.com/congregations.asp>.

Subjective Sources

“All you had to do was ask me and I could’ve told you about my experience with that church! If you want to know, I can tell you about all of them because I do business with all of them.”¹²⁶ Beyond the scope of traditional or routine sources of information regarding local congregations lies a rather vast, non-traditional, yet subjective area where a prospective pastor may uncover information regarding the congregation in question. Since all such information is subjective, discovering general trends or patterns should be the goal in surveying these sources.

Included among these sources are local businesses most likely to conduct business with the church on a somewhat regular basis such as the Christian bookstore, supermarket, hospital and nursing home chaplains, and funeral directors. Former non-ministerial employees of the church—administrative assistants, custodians, grounds keepers—could also provide valuable information about the church. Depending on the type of church and its location, residential neighbors, directors of community centers and school personnel may be included in the search. Former members of the church, former ministry staff members who have either relocated or retired, local pastors of the same denomination and of different denominations, especially those located in close proximity to the church could be interviewed.¹²⁷

None of these activities should be pursued without informing the church in advance. If necessary, the candidate should provide ample notice to the search committee should members sense the need to inform the church in general or a smaller leadership group such as deacons of the candidates activities. The candidate should communicate clearly his intention is not to uncover scandal, but to determine whether or not he is a good fit for the church based on the infor-

¹²⁶ An unsolicited comment directed to the author by the owner of a local Christian bookstore as part of a private conversation.

¹²⁷ In casual conversation with pastors of various denominations this practice has been mentioned and each time it is enthusiastically welcomed and deemed a valuable assistance to both churches and pastors.

mation he obtains. He should also advise the church of his findings, especially if there are areas where the church's reputation as the Body of Christ is being harmed or the congregation's witness blunted.

3. EVALUATING THE DATA

The critical component of the search process from the candidate's perspective is evaluating the data gathered from all sources. What the data reveal about the church and the community contributes to the candidate's determination of whether or not he is a good match for the church and the church for him and his family. It is essential the candidate keep in mind he is looking for trends, not events or episodes. Trends cover a prolonged period of time. Ed Stetzer makes the observation that a trend is not a year.¹²⁸ A trend is also not the last few years of a popular pastor's tenure or those of one who was pressured to leave or terminated. Individuals are the product of a lifetime of adapting, training, and experience, so also are churches. The sources consulted, especially those of a detached and subjective nature, while important, should not override what is clearly long-term trends.

In asking questions of the search committee the importance of trends should be emphasized. The candidate should ask for historical responses and for objective support for the answers. A decline in attendance in recent years may indicate a downward trend, but only if no other explanation exists such as the deaths of several octogenarians in a church located in an area of aging, declining population. A decline in attendance coupled with few or no baptisms and no new members coming into the church over a period of years does indicate a problem. Focusing too narrowly on one issue or area of church life is an error to avoid.

¹²⁸ Ed Stetzer, "Analysis of SBC Statistics," *The Exchange*, June 10, 2011, accessed 2/4/2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2011/june/analysis-of-sbc-statistics.html?paging=off>.

There is more to a church than numbers. Two lessons on leadership attributed to Robert E. Lee are “know the ground” and “do your own reconnaissance.”¹²⁹ Commenting on the latter, H.W Crocker III says, “One true mark of a leader is the courage to pursue information to its logical conclusion and to have the cool-headed, clear-eyed good judgment not to mistake sheep for soldiers.”¹³⁰ It is up to the candidate to reconnoiter the location and culture of the church in question. He must not accept dismissive or glib responses regarding the church and its immediate setting. Here he must learn for himself all he can of the ‘lay of the land.’ But the pastoral candidate doesn’t stop with the culture outside the church. He must accurately and objectively assess the culture within the church and determine whether or not he can assimilate. “Leaders must be a good cultural fit for the organization in order to enjoy a long tenure of effective service.”¹³¹

Gaining Perspective

In order to make an accurate assessment, the pastoral candidate must gain an accurate perspective on the personality of the church in question. He needs to “get on the balcony”¹³² in order to visualize the entire congregation, including the pastor, in one sweeping scene. He does this by mining the information gained from the traditional sources. Rather than simply hear recommendations or warnings from the DOM, the former pastor or the CMR, he needs to consider how the data from each source answers the questions,

What kind of church is this?”

How does this information describe this church?

Why was the previous pastor a success or failure?

¹²⁹ H.W. Crocker III, *Robert E. Lee on Leadership: Executive Lessons in Character, Courage and Vision* (Roseville, California: Forum of Prima Publishing, 2000), 38.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Finzel, 148.

¹³² Heifetz and Linsky, 51-74.

What drives this church?

The data from the ACP should be seen as more than a numerical summary of the previous years' growth or lack thereof. It is the statement of the congregation's self-understanding. If no report was filed, it may indicate an independent spirit instead of lack of attention to denominational details. It may indicate rebellious resentment toward what is perceived as denominational intrusions. It may indicate an attempt to disguise the truth about the church's decline. It is up to the pastoral candidate to make an accurate determination. Partial reports of only the largest or most obvious statistics may indicate a narrow focus on a few rather than a multi-faceted ministry attempting to reach out across a broad front. These data should be interpreted in concert with the answers to questions asked by the candidate. His questions should not only address empirical data, but also what Ford calls "right-brained" questions that address the intuitive "symbols that draw people together."¹³³ He suggests the candidate ask questions regarding memories, heroes, pivotal events, etc. as answers to these questions shed as much light on the personality of the church as do growth rates, budgets or doctrinal statements.¹³⁴ The prospective pastor pursues these sources of information as his first act of leadership since, as Max DePree says, "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality."¹³⁵

Another source to incorporate at this point is the information revealed by church health assessments and community demographic studies. The use of these tools has gained popularity in recent years and many congregations have conducted some type of assessment, many with the assistance of a church consultant. The candidate may ask questions like:

¹³³ Kevin Ford, 59-60.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989), 11.

What was the result of the study?

How did the church respond to the results reported by the study?

How long ago was the study conducted?

What has changed since then?

Results of church health assessments are generally reported to the church in detailed form including recommended actions. The candidate should not hesitate to ask for a copy of the report. One type of assessment presents the church with bar graphs of the church's score in the different categories tested and an average score indicating the overall health of the congregation. The accompanying report evaluates the church's responses to key questions and offers an explanation as to what those responses mean about the congregation.¹³⁶ Unfettered access to such detailed information aids the prospective pastor in his efforts to determine whether or not he should continue in the search process. It is essential that the pastoral candidate understand as much as possible about the church's culture¹³⁷ as well as who the key lay leaders and influencers are if he is to know how to navigate, especially in the early years of his tenure.¹³⁸

As beneficial as empirical data may be, they present only part of the panoramic view the candidate needs to survey from the balcony. Comparing the demographic profile of the church with that of the community reveals the degree to which the church is assimilating new members from the immediate context into the membership. A church disconnected from its geographical context is unhealthy.¹³⁹ A predominantly middle or upper-middle income, Caucasian congregation of college educated, white collar professionals located in a neighborhood dominated by low

¹³⁶The Lawless Group, *The Church Health Survey* (The Lawless Group, LLC, 2007).

¹³⁷ Finzel, 152.

¹³⁸ DePree, 93-100.

¹³⁹ Kevin Ford, 9.

income, racially mixed, blue collar or welfare-funded families is in denial if the church claims to be meaningfully engaged with the community. Demographic data is objective in nature and is morally neutral, but it tells a story about a church's sense of mission and calling within its cultural context.

Evaluation should also take into consideration the highly subjective information gained from conversations with local businesses and others who are in a position to share information based on limited experience with the congregation in question. While the information gained is subjective and it is limited, it is also local and likely recent and should be examined as to how it corroborates or refutes the church's statements of self-understanding.

The Candidate as Seen from the Balcony

After the church has passed scrutiny as to its identity and personality, the candidate needs to turn the spotlight inward and evaluate who he is as seen through the lens of the congregation he is considering. How he fits into the scene he is taking in from his perspective on the balcony indicates the likelihood of success or failure. If the church is healthy, it has a clear understanding of who it is, what it does and why it does it. The question the candidate must answer is does he support and strengthen the existing identity or not? Do his ministry values and objectives mesh with the church's self-understanding? Can he act to enhance and enrich the work the church is already carrying out? If he sees himself rearranging, reworking, overhauling the basic identity of the church accepting the call of the church will likely prove to be a mistake.

The congregation will expect him to lead them as they continue their pilgrimage. Will his personality, leadership style, spiritual gifts and understanding of his calling permit him to lead effectively? Is he a good match? There is no questionnaire and no survey to complete that will provide a definitive answer. No book, no class, no body of information can be consulted as a

ministerial crystal ball to reveal the future of innumerable “what if’s.” The serious candidate will pursue every avenue of information available. He will invest hours of painstaking searching through mounds of data in his efforts to discover the true nature of the church that has sensed something in him that makes him appear to be an attractive candidate to become their next spiritual leader. The greatest danger he faces at this point is falling into the trap of unchecked narcissism.

Unchecked narcissism leads a pastor to believe he can achieve the impossible or the improbable. He expects too much of himself and thinks too highly of his abilities. Any number of factors may contribute to the rise of the influence of this latent human trait¹⁴⁰ among them is ambition. Pastors sense pressure to succeed. This perceived need coupled with the more goal-oriented personality types and leadership styles may easily compel a pastoral candidate to attempt to prove he has what it takes to become the next megachurch pastor and the church in question is seen as providing the opportunity to fulfill his self-appointed destiny. Having defined reality regarding the church, he now needs to define reality regarding himself and his abilities. From his place on the balcony the candidate needs to envision how the variety of individuals and groups surrounding him as well as the geographical and cultural context support his vision for success.

The Decision

Making the decision to leave one church to lead another should not be easy. Choosing to move has life-long ramifications for both churches as well as for the pastor’s family and their friends. No matter how thorough his investigation or how accurate his evaluation has been, if an offer is made, the pastor must choose how to respond. The decision making process, discussions

¹⁴⁰ Zondag, 230.

and investigation into matters pertaining to God's will lie beyond the limitations of this study, but suffice it to say that if the candidate has proven to be a good steward of the information available to him, he can make a decision with a high degree of confidence that the surprises awaiting him in his new assignment will be few and very likely of a minor nature.

PART 3

A MANUAL TO GUIDE THE PASTORAL CANDIDATE IN INVESTIGATING AND EVALUATING A PROSPECTIVE CHURCH

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to produce a manual designed to guide a pastor through the process of self-discovery as an individual and to provide the tools so he may investigate and evaluate a prospective church. The goal of his investigation is to estimate the likelihood that he and the church could develop a healthy relationship and an effective partnership in ministry. The manual is divided into three sections:

Section One guides the pastor through the process of self-discovery including personality, spiritual gifts, and leadership style. The three areas are evaluated in terms of how these influences shape the pastor for ministry in order that he may investigate ministry opportunities in light of his ability to provide leadership compatible with the needs and personality of a church expressing interest in him as a pastoral candidate.

Section Two provides the pastor with information he may employ in his attempts to gather information about a particular congregation. Traditional sources of information are included, but emphasis is placed on non-traditional sources that may be accessed in order to form a more accurate understanding of the congregation in terms of its self-understanding, reputation in the community it seeks to serve, and ministry identity.

Section Three provides a list of resources the pastor may consider consulting if he is presented with the opportunity to make a decision to remain in his current ministry setting or to relocate and become the new pastor of another congregation.

The detailed instructions or advice provided in the manual should be understood as an indicator of the complexity of the task facing the pastor who chooses to seek a new position for pastoral ministry. Completing the task will take time and will require a great deal of effort. The matter of leading a church in effective ministry should not be easy and the decision to assume shepherding responsibilities for a congregation should not be based on anything less than God's calling that is indicated, at least in part, by the abilities He has invested in specific men.

2. THE MANUAL

Section One: The Process of Self-Discovery

Part I—Your Current Setting

1. Whether or not you have been contacted by a church, you are considering the possibility of leaving your current place of service.¹⁴¹ Write a brief paragraph explaining why this is so.
2. Pastoral tenure is a critical component in healthy, growing churches. How long have you served your current church? What is the average length of your pastoral tenure? List each church you've served, how long you served there and the reason(s) you left.
3. List the top five factors influencing your interest in relocating.
4. Are any of the factors you listed conflict related? If you answered "yes," how many?

¹⁴¹ This manual is compiled with those in mind who are currently serving in a vocational ministry setting. If you are considering a church as an initial place of service some of the material presented will not apply, this is stated to inform you, not deter you in pursuing helpful information. Note: the reference numbers will restart with the actual manual.

5. Are you currently serving in your first pastorate? If this is not your first place of service, how many of the conflict related factors have been issues in previous churches you've served?
6. Briefly describe your current outlook on life and ministry or state of mind. How are the five factors you listed in #3 contributing to this current state? In a best case scenario, how do you expect a new ministry setting to improve your outlook on life? Look at the list you compiled in question #2. Did you expect any of these moves to produce lasting improvement in your outlook? Describe how that occurred.

Part 2—Identifying You

1. Reflect on your childhood and family experience. Using only one or two words, answer the following questions.

Do you have siblings? If so, where do you fit in?

Describe your relationship with your parents and siblings.

2. Describe your family's spiritual or religious character.
3. Were you involved in a church as a child? If yes, describe your experience.
4. How old were you when you became a Christian? Read the following passages in Acts and briefly note the outline of Paul's testimony.

22:1-15

26:9-2

Using Paul's outline, on a separate sheet of paper, write out your own experience of what your life was like before Christ, how you received Christ, and life since you received Christ. As a guide, read your testimony. You should be able to do so in four minutes or less.

5. How did your family react to your decision to become a Christian? Do you consider your family's influence on your life after you became a Christian to be positive or negative? Explain your answer in one brief sentence.

Part 3—You and Your Ministry

1. How old were you when you decided to pursue pastoral ministry as your life's work?
 2. Most of those in vocational ministry believe God called them into ministry. Do you agree? If so, on a separate page, describe your call experience. If you chose ministry apart from an awareness of a divine calling, describe the factors that led you to choose ministry as a vocation.
 3. Are you familiar with major personality types and how personality exerts influence in your life?
 4. There is no "ministerial personality" described in the Bible or dominant in church history, but your personality is important. Have you participated in a personality inventory in the last five years? If not, you are encouraged to take advantage of one of the services available online.¹⁴²
 5. List the top three strengths and weaknesses of your personality.
 6. Can you cite recent examples of how your personality strengths have proven to be an asset to your ministry? Explain your answer.
- Can you cite examples of how your personality weaknesses have negatively impacted your ministry? Explain.

¹⁴² Among the many inventories available Uniquely You offers a personality inventory along with a spiritual gifts assessment with the results available as a printable download for a modest fee. You may choose to access more than one inventory and compare the results, the point is that you are up-to-date on the matter or *your* personality.

7. How did you discover your spiritual gifts? How was your discovery affirmed by the church?

Read 1 Timothy 3:2. In your current ministry context, do you believe those you serve would affirm you as a spiritually gifted teacher? Why or why not?

8. List your top three spiritual gifts. What percentage of your ministerial responsibilities requires the expression of these gifts?

9. Explain how your personality works in concert with your spiritual gifts. How do others respond to your leadership when your personality strengths and your spiritual gifts work together?

Part 4—You, the Leader

1. A majority of American pastors lack confidence in their leadership ability. How confident are you in your God-given ability to lead the church?

2. Has your leadership ability or methodology ever been questioned by church members? Has this occurred more than once or twice? Has it occurred in more than one church?

3. Leadership style is a function of personality and spiritual gifts.

a. There are only two types of leaders, transactional and transformational. Transactors are custodians who maintain and transformers are mobilizers, inspirers and exhorters.

Which one more closely describes your ministry?

b. In your leadership, which word and pronoun in the following list most accurately describes your style of leading?

Catalyst-We

Commander-Me

Encourager-Thee

Hermit-Why me?

Consulting the chart on the next page will assist you in answering this question. Your personality type or “mix” as active/passive or positive/negative should coincide with the type revealed by the inventory you completed as part of Section 3. For example, if you completed the DISC Personality Inventory (the inventory used by Uniquely You), a D type personality most closely resembles an active negative personality mix on the chart, an I type active/positive, a S type the passive/negative and the C type the passive/positive. Honesty regarding your leadership style is of unparalleled importance! Most pastors want to be a catalytic leader, but the church also needs hermits. As a leader it is more important for you to be yourself and use the gifts God has entrusted to you than it is that you try to adapt someone else’s style to your personality.

Part 5—Putting it Together

Completing this first section of the manual means you know the following:

You know why a new ministry setting appeals to you.

You know how you expect a new ministry setting to improve your outlook on life.

You appreciate how God used your family to prepare you for ministry.

You are able to share your salvation experience in less than four minutes.

You can articulate your call to ministry or explain why you chose ministry as a vocation or profession.

You have a better appreciation for the strengths and weaknesses of your personality, for your spiritual gifts and how they work together.

You understand how personality and spiritual gifts cooperate to form your leadership style.

You have a better idea of what type leader you are and how you are most likely to function in that capacity.

Now you are ready to turn your attention to the church that has expressed interest in you or that you are considering expressing interest in as a pastoral candidate. Because of your self-examination, you are better equipped to determine whether or not you are a good match for the church in question.

Congregational Leader-Style Overview

Leader Style Options	Personality Mix	Basic Role	Primary Behaviors	Energy Focus	Major Outcome	Advantages and Disadvantages
CATALYST	Active-Positive	Participative	Leads Democratically Integrates persons and goals Activates, trains, organizes, and delegates	Results	Long-term stability	+Long range effectiveness +Flexible relationally and situationally -Demands a wide range of leader skills -Requires time & member talent
COMMANDER	Active-Negative	Directive	Leads autocratically Puts goals before persons Directs, guides, demands, and presses	Production	Quick Response	+Efficient for short term +Gets things done fast -Creates pressure and conflict -Becomes rigid
ENCOURAGER	Passive-Positive	Nondirective	Leads permissively Places persons before goals Nurtures, empathizes, mediates, and soothes	Morale	Fellowship development	+Binds people together +Creates relaxed atmosphere -Organization untended -Tangible production wanes
HERMIT	Passive-Negative	Submissive	Leads passively Focuses on neither persons or goals Withdraws, postpones, and retreats	Safety	Inertia	+Buys time for organizational decision making +Allows leader some time out of the fray -Nothing happens -Leaves leader vulnerable

Section Two: Investigating the Church

Introduction

The process of discovering the personality and ministry characteristics of a church is a much more daunting task than is the process of self-discovery. Obtaining information requires greater effort and evaluating that information demands careful attention to detail and disciplined determination. The process is challenging, but the results of careful investigation and objective evaluation will prove rewarding to both the pastoral candidate and the prospective church. The pastor owes it to all concerned to do all he can to learn as much as he can in order to make an informed decision should the opportunity arise. Concerning the process of investigation, Douglas Rumford says,

Preparation ... should include learning as much as possible about the potential congregation through talking with colleagues, seminary friends, and denominational and association representatives. We should learn about the church's theological orientation, worship style, commitment to evangelism and missions, history of pastoral leadership, relationship with the community, and financial stability, among other issues of personal interest. While we will want to learn about the area's climate, geography, housing, schools, and style of life, it is best to cover these practical issues before the interview, so our interview questions can focus on ministry matters.¹⁴³

Propriety requires you to inform the Search Committee of your intentions prior to initiating an investigation. The goal is to see the church as it is, not to uncover scandal, resurrect long-dead arguments or controversies, or to re-open old wounds. Such assurances before making inquiries will provide the committee with the means to answer questions or to calm fears that may arise in the church as a result of your investigative efforts.

¹⁴³ Douglas J. Rumford, "The Search Process," in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration: Practical Insight from a Cross Section of Ministry Leaders*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994), 120.

1. Read through the following material and choose which sources you might approach with questions regarding the church. Determine the types of information each source could likely provide and formulate short, specific questions ahead of time.
2. Before making contact with anyone outside the church, contact the Pastor Search Committee and advise them of your intentions. Offer to share your questions as a matter of courtesy and answer any questions they may have concerning your motives and/or objectives.
3. In order to stay focused on your objective and before beginning the investigation process, read *Transforming Church* by Kevin Ford or a similar work. If you choose to read Ford's book, give careful attention to his description of how churches operate according to what he calls "code."¹⁴⁴ The goal of your investigative efforts is to determine whether or not you can not only work with a congregation by leading it to achieve objectives, but to fit in with the church so your leadership cooperates with the church's identity and personality which enables the church to minister to the spiritual needs of both church members and the larger community.

Part 1—Identifying and accessing traditional sources of information

1. In many locations of the country it is customary for a pastoral candidate to contact the local Director of Missions (DOM) to inquire about a church of his association. Customary or not, you should contact him as he is able to provide a broad overview of the church in question. He will likely speak in general terms when answering questions or offering descriptions. In questioning the DOM it is wise to remember he serves the churches of the association by acting in their best interests.
 - a. Formulate a list of general information questions to ask prior to making contact with the DOM. If possible, make an appointment to interview him in person instead

¹⁴⁴ Kevin Ford, 55-90.

- of by telephone. If you do conduct your interview by telephone, keep the conversation brief. You may want to schedule a follow up interview to avoid taxing his schedule. If at all possible avoid relying on email.
- b. It may prove helpful to interview your current DOM about the types of information he is comfortable supplying to pastoral candidates before formulating your questions.
2. Another traditional source of information to consult is the former pastor. He is intimately acquainted with the personality of the church. Learning about the circumstances of the pastor's departure will help enable you to sift his responses for objective information. The search committee or DOM may be willing to advise you on this matter as well as provide contact information for the former pastor.
- a. If you are currently serving as a pastor, think through the information you feel would be beneficial to a prospective pastor as a guide to formulating questions. You may also want to discuss this with ministry colleagues for more broadly-based insight.
 - b. Before contacting the former pastor, make sure you are aware of the circumstances accompanying his departure. Some questions may be painful for him or he may find some subjects challenging to his objectivity.
 - c. Graciously decline to discuss individual members. Make every effort to keep the conversation trend-based and factual.
3. A quick survey of pastors in the same association may reveal the presence of an acquaintance who could advise you regarding the church. Usually this list of church names and pastors may be obtained from the state convention's website or that of the association. Friends or acquaintances who live in or are from the same general area as the church may also be able to

provide contact information or an introduction to someone in a position to offer reliable answers to general questions.

- a. Discussing the church with acquaintances should be restricted to the broadest of terms concerning generally held opinions.
 - b. Keep in mind you are gathering information to assist you in completing the background and general reputation of the church, not specific information and certainly not any form of innuendo drawn from hearsay.
4. The Pastor Search Committee should be willing to answer most of your questions. In preparation for the interview with the committee, obtain a copy of the *Pastor Search Committee Handbook* in order to familiarize yourself with the questions you will likely be asked. In addition, you should prepare to interview the committee by personalizing the questions listed in the appendix. The DOM will probably be able to supply you with the specific guide the committee is using.
 - a. Read the list of questions and mark those you may find most difficult to answer. Think through how you might respond to all such questions. You may want to note points you believe are most significant.
 - b. Some guide books include question for the candidate's wife. If so, have her work through those questions as well.
 - c. Ask the committee if a pastor profile was compiled in preparation to seeking a pastor. Request a copy of the profile.
 - 1.) Ask if the committee feels you might be a good match to the major characteristics listed.
 - 2.) Ask also what is the greatest mismatch.

5. The Annual Church Profile (ACP) is a record of the vital statistics the church reports to the state convention. This information is available online.¹⁴⁵ The raw data may be used to formulate questions prior to the interview.

a. In examining the data you should look for trends extending over a number of years.

1.) Attention should be given to attendance averages, giving averages, average number of baptisms as well as the average age of those being baptized.

2.) Attention should also be given to whether or not the number of baptisms impacts the average attendance.

b. Congregational demographic information may also prove useful. The church likely compiled a profile of the church. If it was not offered to you, ask for it.

1.) The average age of the church may shed light on whether or not the church is supported by a stable financial base.

2.) The church's contribution toward denominational mission offerings as well as state and local missions should be noted.

3.) The matter of church debt in proportion to the value of church property is a matter of concern.

Part 2—Identifying non-traditional sources of information

1. Among objective sources of information are the church's credit report and the church's reputation among the local businesses and vendors with whom the church contracts. The report and the testimony of the business community reveal the general integrity of the church and possibly the value of its witness among the unchurched in the community.

¹⁴⁵ ACP data may be obtained from the Southern Baptist Directory Services at <http://sbds.lifeway.com>. In order to access the information of a particular congregation a user identification and password are required. Current pastors may use that of their current church while those not currently serving a church may seek assistance from their associational office, state convention office or from the church they are investigating.

- a.) Explain to the committee why you are requesting this information. Make clear that your purpose is to gain an accurate understanding of the church in the opinion of those who may function as opinion-makers in the community. Assure them you only want to “know well the condition of the flock” (Proverbs 27:23).
 - b.) Obtain signed letters of permission from the church to present to the appropriate businesses. Ask questions that may be answered quickly and factually.
 - c.) If you do ask opinion oriented questions, do so in broad terms, e.g. “Based on your experience, what is your general impression of this church?” Again, avoid discussing individuals or families within the church.
2. Some of the more subjective sources of information include those who work alongside the church more closely than normal vendors and contractors. Among these are hospital and nursing home chaplains or staff and funeral directors. Former non-ministerial employees of the church, food bank or social service community organization leaders may provide anecdotal, yet valuable insight into the character of a church.
- a.) Everyone you seek to contact may not wish to cooperate with your investigation; this is especially true of those in this category. Be sensitive to the position these businesses occupy in relation to the church as those who will conduct their business as permanent members of the community and as those who provide a special category of service. Make sure they understand who you are and why you are seeking their assistance.
 - b.) You may encourage participation by asking what the church can do to provide better cooperation with them as they serve the community.

- c.) Former employees should be approached with the same precautions you applied in interviewing the former pastor.
3. Census-based demographic information regarding the church and its community is available from the North American Mission Board (NAMB). It must be requested by an agent of the church in question which means the pastoral candidate would have to request it from the church. There is no charge for the service.
- a.) Census data regarding age, race, income, education, etc. provides a cross-section of the social composition of a given geographic area. This data should be compared to similar categories reported on the ACP and used to answer the following questions.
- 1.) How well is the community represented in the church's membership? If the church is located in a business district, what areas of the community are represented in the current membership?
 - 2.) Is there a significant contrast between the church and community?
 - 3.) Does the current ministry programming of the church express a desire to penetrate the local community?
 - 4.) Do the church's evangelism efforts focus on the immediate neighborhood?
- b. What does the census data suggest about the population stability of the area?
- c. Have there been notable changes in the income levels of the area in recent years?¹⁴⁶
- d. During the interview you should ask if the church prepared a community profile. If it is available and if it is not based on the data from NAMB, note the differences and how they may impact the church's self-image.

¹⁴⁶ If detailed information regarding these matters is missing from the data supplied by NAMB it may be accessed at <http://search.census.gov/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&affiliate=census&query=23921> data for a specific area may be obtained by entering the church's zip code in the search line.

4. In recent years many churches have discovered the internet provides an avenue to provide ministry and information to the membership as well as the community. The church website provides a wealth of information if well maintained. A poorly designed or poorly maintained website may testify to any number of undesirable circumstances within the church. A growing number of churches have added social media¹⁴⁷ to their means of outreach and advertising. Perusing these sites provides the pastoral candidate with an on-going overview of church activities.

Investigating a church to the degree indicated requires a great deal of time and effort. Most churches are not used to such detailed investigation and some may interpret your efforts as an unnecessary prying into their affairs which may be met with resistance and possibly the rescinding of the committee's interest in you as a viable candidate. Remember your rationale for conducting the investigation. You are called by God to serve Him as a pastor. He calls you to lead and care for His church as He directs. Your investigative efforts are an attempt to reveal danger signals¹⁴⁸ or other indications that you and the church are not a good fit.

5. Evaluating the results of your investigation.

a.) Determining your 'fit.

- 1.) List the positive aspects of the church discovered in your investigation. After listing them, rank them in importance to you as a person and pastor.
- 2.) List the negative aspects of the church. Rank them in order of their ability to distract you or prevent you from being yourself as their pastor.
- 3.) Are any of the negative aspects danger signals? What makes them danger signals?

¹⁴⁷ The most popular social media cite, *Facebook*, may be found at www.facebook.com.

¹⁴⁸ Rumford, 122.

b.) If you had to base a decision based solely on the results of your interviews with the DOM and the former pastor, would you likely conclude you are a good fit for this congregation? Explain why.

1.) What were the most encouraging comments of these men?

2.) What was most discouraging?

c.) Describe the interview.

1.) How did they respond to your answers?

2.) When you asked them questions, did they provide information-based answers or opinions?

3.) Did the committee provide the documents you requested, e.g. the pastor, church and community profiles?

4.) Did you encounter resistance when requesting permission to discuss matters of church business or finance?

d.) Describe your reaction to the data recorded on the ACP.

1.) Is the church growing or in decline?

2.) What is the most encouraging information you found there? Most discouraging?

3.) Overall, do the statistics as reported on the ACP match well with the condition of the church as described by the committee?

4.) Are there any trends that might be considered danger signals or that could indicate your personality and gifts might not match with the needs of the church?

e.) Summarize the findings from the various sources you contacted regarding the church and its reputation as a business partner and ministry colleague in the commu-

nity in one paragraph. Based on what you learned from these sources alone, are you equipped for the challenge pastoring this church presents?

6. You have gathered a large amount of information. You have been interviewed and have interviewed the committee. The next step in the search process includes preaching for the congregation as the candidate the Search Committee recommends to be the next pastor of the church and the church voting to call you.

a.) Think through all of your interactions with the church, those you've consulted and the data you've gathered. Based on what you know about the church and about yourself, write a one-page rationale for why you are a good match for this congregation.

b.) Describe how the strengths of your personality, your leadership style and your spiritual gifts match the needs, vision and reputation of the church?

c.) Describe how can the strengths of the congregation supplement the areas of weakness in you.

d.) Based on the history of the church and your personal history as a pastor, what do you consider the most important factors in your partnership with this congregation contributing to a long pastorate? What have you discovered that could negatively impact the prospects for a long pastorate? In your most pessimistic estimate, which of these scenarios is more likely? Why?

You are unique as a person and a pastor. The church in question is also unique. You cannot change who you are in order to 'fit in' or to meet the expectations of a congregation. The church cannot change who they are in order to meet your expectations. The two must work together in order to present the community with an accurate represen-

tation of Christian life and ministry. Finding that you are not a good fit for a church before experiencing the trauma of relocating is cause for thanksgiving.

The work of investigation is challenging and time consuming because the stakes are so high. Conducting a thorough investigation by asking questions, interviewing the church as the church interviews you, gathering data from a variety of sources in order to make an informed decision tells the church that you are a serious leader who pays attention to details. It tells them you will likely apply the same level of concern to the details of leading and caring for the church. But, before anyone can reach that conclusion, a call from the church you must be accepted or declined and only you can make that decision.

Section Three: Making a decision

The decision to accept the call to become the next pastor of a church is highly subjective and resists codification. Every pastor has developed a decision-making process he has refined by making countless decisions in the course of leading a church. If he has asked questions and investigated the church as thoroughly as he can, the pastor has ample information to act. However, information alone is insufficient as a guide for a decision as life-altering as moving to a new place of ministry.

1. As you have so many times in the past, make sure you include your family in the decision-making process.
 - a.) Discuss all of your finding with your wife. As for her input and for her estimate of your prospects for successful ministry in the church in question. She knows you better than anyone else. The two of you should pray through the opportunity from the outset. In this process as in every area of life, keep in mind God's purpose for the two of you to work in concert (see Ephesians 5:31).

b.) Horror stories abound by ‘preacher’s kids’ relating how they were forced to move to a new school in the last months of their final semester of high school or similar circumstances.¹⁴⁹ In almost every case their pastor-father justified the move as ‘God’s will.’

These explanations have led to resentment toward parents, the church, the ministry and even God. As their father keep in mind the admonition of the scriptures in Ephesians 6: 4 and Colossians 3:21. Most churches understand these types of situations and are willing to work with the pastor and his family to resolve the conflict.

c.) Discuss the move with friends and ministry colleagues who know you well. They may shed light on carefully concealed or undiscovered ambition. Their counsel may enable you to address such matters before any decision is made. Their experience and wisdom will serve you well as you evaluate the data you have collected (Proverbs 15:22, 20:18).

d.) Make the opportunity a matter of prayer. It is God who placed you in ministry. He needs no advice about you or the church in question. How He guides is not part of this discussion, the fact that He does guide is.

Much is at stake in your decision. The church suffers from transient leadership. Forced terminations abound. Most occur as a result of conflict between pastor and church. Most of the conflict is the result of the leadership style of the pastor. Take note of those things that concern you most about the church you are considering. Write them down and pray over each one until you are assured God has answered each objection. This is your final assignment in this manual wait for God to

1. resolve your objections and concerns
2. place you and your family in agreement about moving ahead

¹⁴⁹ A recent, unsolicited account revealed how one pastor’s son was forced to move three times during the four years of high school, the last time during the final six weeks of his senior year.

3. prompt the church to answer your questions.

When these matters are resolved, you are ready to make a decision that will rarely if ever have reason to regret. You are prepared to accept a new assignment in which you can legitimately anticipate years of fulfilling and God-honoring ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

The pastoral candidate is advised to pursue a well-rounded understanding of his identity in terms of spiritual heritage and salvation experience. Psychologists emphasize the formative importance of the early years of life and the New Testament provides examples of how the home impacts the faith and spiritual development of individuals. A clear memory of the major elements of a conversion experience is not uncommon among prominent Christian leaders. Recalling the conversion experience as the dividing line between the B.C. and the A.D. eras of the pastor's life lends credibility to him as a spiritual authority and provides a supporting pillar as he encounters the rigors of ministry.

The awareness or memory of a specific call to ministry is as important to the pastor as is a clear recollection of his salvation experience. There is no paradigmatic call experience by which all others must be measured, but among those who report hearing from God, the experience is profound and life-changing. The call experience includes a sense of compulsion, a desire to serve God and/or to help others. A call to ministry overrides personal ambition and sets the course of the man's life to the degree that nothing less than vocational ministry can be satisfactory.

A ministerial personality does not exist. Each individual's personality is unique. Because it is unique, the pastor must know and understand the strengths and weaknesses of his personality. Such knowledge is critical if he is to understand his own relational tendencies and if he is to

appreciate how his personality works in concert with the spiritual gifts God has imparted to him. These gifts are discerned in the context of ministry assignments and relationships with others, not as a result of completing standardized assessments. Learning to minister to the Body of Christ from the basis of a Spirit-empowered personality enhances the probability of success now as well as over the long term.

The majority of pastors and church lay leaders want to pursue similar goals. However, most of those pastors who are forced to leave a church do so as the result of conflict driven by the pastor's choice of methodology or leadership style. Leadership style is concerned with how a pastor chooses to achieve the goals he sets for the church. If his methods are incongruent with the personality of the congregation he serves, conflict erupts. Leadership style is a product of personality and spiritual gifts. It is the pastor's responsibility to manage his leadership style in order to maximize the opportunity presented by a congregation. As with personality, there is no definitively effective leadership style, therefore the pastor must learn to objectively assess the likelihood that he can successfully lead a prospective congregation based on self-knowledge and accurate data regarding the church.

When contacted by a church, both the candidate and the church begin a process of mutual investigation and evaluation. The church investigates the candidate by checking references, interviewing the candidate, conducting background checks, etc. The pastoral candidate faces a much more daunting task in attempting to investigate the church. Traditionally the sources available to him are more subjective than objective and may be weakened by ulterior motives built into the source itself. For those in the SBC, an objective source exists in the ACP, but the data requires interpretation. Even here, there is a hidden aspect of subjectivity in the church's choice of data to report which can skew the portrait presented.

Questions are one of the best tools available to a prospective pastor. He must be bold and ask the church questions, but his investigation should not stop with the search committee. Since he has cooperated by answering a staggering array of questions about himself and his family and has provided sensitive, personal information, it is not unreasonable for him to ask the church to provide what some may think of as sensitive information regarding finances, business practices and congregational history. Valuable information may be obtained from reports delivered by church health consultants or assessment tools employed by previous pastors as a part of their ministry efforts. In addition to objective sources, non-traditional subjective resources in the form of local businesses, funeral directors and others whose business places them in close cooperation with churches may provide insights unavailable elsewhere that will assist the prospective pastor in forming a reliable opinion of the church he may be asked to lead.

Useful data is broad-based and it must be evaluated on a broad basis. Some data are more valuable than others, but all data must be evaluated together in order to form an accurate understanding of the reality of the circumstances of the congregation under consideration. Properly evaluated data provides the pastoral candidate with an elevated perspective on the various components of a church and its immediate context. Evaluation is expressed most often in the form of specific questions that are not limited to empirical answers, but also address the affective aspect of reality.

In addition to evaluating the data, the candidate must evaluate himself in light of the available church information. He alone can determine whether or not his personality, spiritual gifts and leadership style match the personality of the church. He must guard against the negative side of ambition which seeks to use the church as an opportunity to exalt him as a model of success. Should the candidate fail to address the potential influence of latent narcissism it may result

in heart-breaking disappointment for both the candidate and the church. Finally, the decision to accept a new ministry assignment, while always difficult, is made easier if the candidate has acted responsibly in his investigative efforts and will likely produce more than satisfactory results for both the pastor and the church.

MINISTRY CONCLUSIONS ¹⁵⁰

The pastor search process is challenging for all parties concerned. For too many churches, it is a familiar process that occurs every three to four years. There are as many reasons for brief pastoral tenure as there are pastors, but a large part of the problem is how the decision to accept a church's call is made. Personal experience testifies to the tendency of pastoral candidates to accept at face value the vague descriptions and predictions of a few individual who have little recent experience with a congregation rather than conducting in-depth investigations. In previous decades such searches might require scouring the archives of seminary libraries or association offices. The advent of the internet has transformed what was once a daunting task few were equipped to conduct into a few keystrokes anyone with access to the internet and basic computer skills can complete in an afternoon. The point of this project is to strengthen the ministry and witness of local churches by enabling pastors to determine beforehand the likelihood they are a good match for an interested church by accessing and evaluating the available data.

This project was undertaken as an academic pursuit, but midway through, academic concerns gave way to real world experience. A nearly twelve year pastorate was unceremoniously concluded. Those who were familiar with both the church and the pastor could not have been surprised at this turn of events as it had been brewing for years. The pastor's tenure began with neither party doing much investigation into the other beyond asking and answering superficial

¹⁵⁰ The conclusions of this study are based on the actual research, but are also informed by the personal perspective of the author based on personal experience and conversations with ministry colleagues over the course of this research. Unless otherwise indicated the use of the third person indicates personal experience.

questions. Recommendations were made based on the experiences of those who had been removed from consistent contact with either pastor or congregation for years. It became clear in the weeks following the pastor's installation service that he and the church had entered into a troubled relationship. In the end the pastor and his family were hurt. Relationships were severed and the church's testimony in the community was diminished.

John Piper tells his readers in the title of his book that pastors are not professionals.¹⁵¹ The New Testament refers to pastors as shepherds, overseers and bishops who are charged with the spiritual welfare of God's people. Pastors are men called of God to serve Him by caring for those He has called and equipped to serve in His stead. Churches are not stepping stones to fame for pastors and pastors are not magicians dispensing a cure-all tonic for the church. If pastors are more meticulous in their attempts to discover the needs and nature of a congregation, perhaps it will encourage the church to engage in the process of self-discovery and more readily accept the truth about what they discover. If pastors are honest with a church about who they are, indicating what the church may reasonably expect from them, perhaps the church will be more transparent in what the pastor may expect from them. Pastors and churches can work together to remedy the current stagnation that studies make abundantly clear is the condition of contemporary evangelicalism.

RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS

In order to improve the likelihood that pastors and churches will work to improve the search process by making it more transparent from both ends of the spectrum, the following recommendations are presented:

¹⁵¹ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002).

1. Basic to the existence of the church and of pastors is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although it is an underlying assumption in this project and does not lie strictly within the parameters of the research, it remains appropriate as a concluding comment. The gospel of Jesus Christ must be clearly proclaimed and thoroughly explained from the pulpit and by the educational ministries of the church. All those who make the claim that God has called them to pastoral or a preaching/teaching ministry must be thoroughly examined to determine whether or not they have had a salvation experience.
2. The church must insist that those who claim to have received God's call demonstrate an ability to do what they claim God has called them to do. Teaching and preaching opportunities should be provided followed by honest feedback. No longer should anyone be permitted to operate under the illusion of having been called who does not possess the necessary spiritual gifts.
3. Discovering spiritual gifts should not be treated as a commodity. They cannot be discerned by the use of a standardized test. The church must reclaim its authority to teach and its priority as the arena for Christian service. Ministries are conducted by the church to demonstrate the love of God and they provide an environment in which ministry skills may be developed and ministry callings confirmed.
4. The matter of human personality and its interaction with spiritual gifts are more effectively addressed in small groups created for the purpose or, even more effectively, in educational settings. Those claiming a call to ministry should be encouraged to learn how to be themselves and to develop their uniqueness in ministry instead of imitating currently successful Christian leaders.

5. Although it appears any schematic devised would be cumbersome on a number of levels, a ministerial apprenticeship would serve to provide ministerial students with a real-world laboratory in which they could gain experience leading the church. Working one-on-one with an experienced pastor, carrying out ministry tasks—preaching, home and hospital visitation, teaching adults, working with children, etc.—could provide keen insight into leadership strengths and weaknesses. Such an arrangement could be incorporated into seminary training much as that used by some missions agencies.¹⁵²

6. The church and those who lead it, both ministerial and lay leaders, need to enforce honesty about the true condition of the church. For too long members have been led to believe that ‘one day’ things will improve where the catalyst for such improvement is the church getting the right pastor. The facts about the health of the church need to be made communicated with the congregation regularly and emphatically. Pastoral candidates need to know that even when presented with less than glowing statements about the church they are candidating with, the statements they are receiving are at least factual statements. Associations need to adopt protection clauses for DOM’s so they may speak the truth about troubled churches without fear of reprisal from those congregations that are less than healthy. Matters of church finance and other sensitive information should be voluntarily presented to pastoral candidates early in the process. In addition, the church should provide the candidate with current demographic information of church and community as well as the access information required to research ACP data.

7. The manual which is presented in Chapter Four of this project or a tool similar to it should become part of every pastor’s library. To add weight to the sincerity of the

¹⁵² The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (IMB) employs an apprenticeship for aspiring missionaries referred to as “Journeyman.” For more information see IMB website at <http://www.imbstudents.org/Journeyman.aspx#.VRR5ZEYtHDc>.

church's intention to be transparent with pastoral candidates, the Pastor Search Committee should be prepared to supply those they consider serious candidates with a copy as a suggestion of their expectation that he will do his homework by researching the church they represent.

The focus of this project is pastors. Pastors are not supermen and neither are they flawless. Like all men, pastors are possessed of hopes and dreams. They are men of ambitions that should not be ridiculed as inappropriate for ministry. It is because pastors are painfully normal that they should not be credited with having spiritual skills not available to other men. In order to provide assistance to pastors as they strive to achieve the best expressions of their highest ambitions, this research is offered. It is not offered as the scholarly proposal of an academician. It is instead, the conclusions of a fellow pastor who has been forced by circumstances arising from faulty methodology and self-deception regarding reality to face and accept culpability in contributing to unpleasant developments. It is offered with the intention that it may provide, or at least prompt others to provide, guidance that will prove to be, to both pastors and churches, part of the cure and not a continuation of the problem.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH



Liberty University / Training Champions for Christ since 1971

Dear John,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling
(434) 592-4054

APPENDIX B

PASTOR SURVEY RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Pastor,

My name is David Lones. I am a Southern Baptist pastor currently serving in Virginia. I am in the final stage of completing the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary which is one of the schools of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. In order to complete the degree requirements I need to conduct research in a specific area relating to pastoral ministry.

My research addresses the pastor search process and how a prospective pastor may obtain accurate information about a church that has expressed an interest in him as their next pastor. The research will benefit greatly by obtaining information from pastors like yourself who have experienced the rigors of the search process.

You may participate in my research by agreeing to complete a survey that should not require more than ten minutes. If you agree to assist in the completion of this project, please read the statement of informed consent included below and, if you agree with the terms set forth there, follow the imbedded link to the survey document.

Questions may be sent to this address or, if you prefer, you may call me at 540-577-2184.

Thank you,

David Lones

APPENDIX C

SURVEY COVER LETTER

As a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, a school associated with Liberty University, I am conducting research for a thesis entitled, *The Pastor Search Process: A Proposed Manual for the Objective Investigation and Evaluation of a Church by the Pastoral Candidate*. In order to obtain a clearer understanding of how pastors decide to pursue a church contact or to accept a church call, I'm asking you to follow the link and respond to the survey at that location. In addition, I ask you to take the time to read the statement of confidentiality included below.

Thank you,

J. David Lones, pastor

Memorial Baptist Church

Pulaski, VA 24301

540-577-2184

CONSENT FORM

***A Proposed Manual for the Objective Investigation and
Evaluation of a Church by the Pastoral Candidate***

J. David Lones

Liberty University

Theological Seminary

You are invited to participate in a research study of the pastor search process from the perspective of the pastoral candidate. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a pastor in Virginia. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by J. David Lones, a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is provide a prospective pastor with tools that will assist him in making the decision to relocate should a church extend a call to him to become their next pastor. The tools include the means for the candidate to know himself and to evaluate his capabilities in

light of what the church is seeking and tools to assist him in objectively investigating and evaluating the church under consideration.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate, I ask you to follow the link and honestly answer the questions.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

Any risks involved in this study are minimal and are no more than that encountered in daily routine. No names will be attached to responses and only response totals will be reflected in the text of the study.

The benefits to participation are depending on where you are in your ministerial career, you may have need of the information the results of this study will provide. The next time you are asked to consider relocating to another church you will have access to tools designed to assist you in making that decision.

Compensation:

No compensation is provided for participants in the study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. Your email address is known only to the survey service provider, Survey Monkey. All responses received for the study will be in the form of data only with no names or any other identifier associated with the responses. Survey results will be stored for the duration of the study with no intention of further use by the researcher or anyone else. Disposition of any printed materials containing survey responses will include shredding of paper prior to disposal as a further measure to protect the privacy of all participants.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is **J. David Lones**. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at jdrones@liberty.edu or **Dr. Donald Q. Hicks** at 434-582-2576 or dqhicks@liberty.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

APPENDIX D
CHURCH MINISTER RELATIONS SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is the average tenure of senior pastors in your state?
2. What is the average number of churches in your state involved in the pastor search process at any given time?
3. What is the number of forced terminations in your state in the last year such statistics are available?
4. Is the number of forced terminations increasing or decreasing?
5. What criteria does your office employ to determine whether or not to recommend a candidate or submit a candidate's resume to a search committee?
 - a computer generated profiling system
 - personal knowledge of either candidate or church
 - recommendation of an influential denominational leader or pastor
 - a combination of these (please rank in order of consideration given to each)
 - other
6. How many years have you served as a Director of Church-Minister Relations?
7. How many years did you serve as a pastor or on church staff prior to assuming your current duties?

APPENDIX E

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1.** In an average year, how many of the churches in your association are without a pastor at any given time?
- 2.** How much do the churches rely on you or on the state convention to lend assistance in locating viable candidates?
- 3.** Do most candidates contact you asking for information about a church in your association that has contacted them?
- 4.** Do you feel you can or should provide pertinent information to those who ask? Do you feel obligated to share negative information about a church with a pastoral candidate?
- 5.** Do you feel it is part of your job as the DOM to assist churches in the various phases of the search process?
- 6.** Other than you and previous pastors, are there other local resources you would recommend a candidate question in order to learn objective information about a church?
- 7.** Are there any circumstances under which you would feel obligated to warn a candidate about continuing the search process with a church? What are they?
- 8.** Does your office offer training to pastor search committees? If so, what material do you use? How effective has the training been in helping churches to find candidates who are a 'good match' for them? What makes a good match?
- 9.** Other than the obvious—good preacher, good pastoral skills, etc.—what would you urge churches to look for in a good match pastor?
- 10.** At present, how many of your churches have pastors that you would consider a good match? What is the average pastoral tenure in your association? How long have you been in this association?

APPENDIX F
DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is the average tenure of senior pastors in your association?

1-2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

Longer than 10 years

2. What is the average number of churches in your association involved in the pastor search process at any given time?

1-3

3-5

6-10

More than 10

3. What is the number of forced terminations in your association in the last year such statistics are available?

None

One

2-5

More than 5

4. Is the number of forced terminations increasing or decreasing?

Increasing

Decreasing

5. What criteria do you employ to determine whether or not to recommend a candidate or submit a candidate's resume to a search committee?

a computer generated profiling system

personal knowledge of either candidate or church or both

recommendation of an influential denominational leader or pastor

a combination of these (please rank in order of consideration given to each)

other

6. How many years have you served as a Director of Missions?

Less than one year

1-5 years

6-10 years

Longer than 10 years

7. How many years did you serve as a pastor or on church staff prior to assuming your current duties?

None

1-5

6-10

Longer than 10 years

8. How frequently do pastoral candidates under consideration by one of your association's churches, contact you seeking information about the church in question?

Never

Rarely

Frequently

Regularly

Always

9. In general terms, what kind of information do you provide them?

Non-specific observations

Specific observations

Personal experiences

Detailed data

Specific recommendations or warnings

10. Would you consider it unethical to warn a prospective pastoral candidate about a perennially troubled church?

Yes

No

Not sure

APPENDIX G
PASTOR SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Pastor Survey Questions #1

1. Please indicate your highest level of educational achievement

High School

College

Seminary or Graduate school

Post-graduate or doctoral degree

2. How many years have you served as a pastor or senior pastor?

Less than one year

One to five years

Six to ten years

Eleven to twenty years

More than twenty years

3. Prior to becoming a pastor or senior pastor, did you serve in a church staff position?

Yes

No

4. If you answered “yes” to question #3, how many years did you serve in that capacity?

Less than 1

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

5. How many churches have you served as a pastor or senior pastor?

1

2-5

6 or more

6. Were any of the churches you served generally considered part-time or bi-vocational?

Yes

No

If so, how many are in this category?

All

1 or 2

Most

7. In your most recent experience with the pastor search process, from the first contact until either a call was extended or you were eliminated from consideration, how long was the process?

1-3 months

4-6 months

6-12 months

12 months or longer

8. Did you request information from the search committee about the church?

Yes

No

9. Did you receive all the information you requested?

Yes

No

10. Do you feel the search committee responded to your request in a timely and forthright manner?

Yes

No

If not, was an explanation offered for the delay or denial of your request?

Yes

No

11. Did the search committee voluntarily share any information about the church they considered to be negative or detrimental?

Yes

No

12. To what extent did this information affect your decision to continue the process?

Not at all

Very little

Somewhat

Significantly

Very significantly

13. Other than a Director of Missions, area supervisor or some other denominational employee, did you consult with others you considered to be informed sources regarding the church in question?

Yes

No

14. If so, how many of these sources were area pastors?

All

More than half

Less than half

None

15. Did you consult with the previous pastor of the church?

Yes

No

16. Please rate the value of the information you received from these sources

No value

Little value

Some value

Valuable

Very valuable

17. Do you feel you were able to learn all you needed to know about the church in order to make a good decision for all concerned?

Yes

No

18. Do you feel the search committee was completely honest in how the church was presented to you?

Yes

No

19. Looking back, are there questions you wished you had asked that, if answered factually, would have significantly impacted your decision to continue or abandon the process?

Yes

No

20. Please indicate the general area of church life such questions would have addressed

Unity

Finances

Reputation

History

Facilities

Expectations

21. How likely would accurate information regarding these matters have affected your decision to continue or discontinue your participation in the search process?

Not likely at all

Somewhat likely

Likely

Very likely

22. Given what you know now, do you plan to remain in your current position or location indefinitely?

Yes

No

23. Are you now actively pursuing other opportunities?

Yes

No

24. How likely are you to pursue church related or denominational positions other than pastor, senior pastor or church staff if the opportunity were to arise?

Not at all likely

Not very likely

Somewhat likely

Likely

Very likely

25. Are you currently planning to leave pastoral ministry for a secular vocation?

Yes

No

Pastor Survey #2

1. Did you enter pastoral ministry as a result of what you perceived as a calling from God to do so?

Yes

No

2. If you answered yes to question #1, how clearly do you recall the calling experience?

IF YOU ANSWERED NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 6.

Very clearly

Clearly

Somewhat clearly

Not too clearly

Vaguely

3. Did you first begin to perceive God's calling in

A worship service or revival

A conference or retreat environment

Private devotional time

A suggestion from a friend or mentor

Other

4. Was your experience specifically to pastoral ministry or was it a more general call to ministry?

Specific

General

5. Have you ever doubted the authenticity of your experience?

Yes

No

PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION #10

6. Did you choose ministry as a career out of a desire to

Serve God and His Kingdom

Maximize the use of your spiritual gifts and natural talents

Help people, especially during the difficult times of life

Express your gratitude to God and the church

Other

7. Having chosen ministry as a career, are you

Very satisfied with your choice

Satisfied with your choice

Somewhat satisfied

Not satisfied

Disappointed

8. Do you consider pastoral ministry to be a unique form of service or is it to be equated with other helping professions—e.g. counseling, medicine, grief assistance, etc.

Definitely unique

Not unique, but exceptional

Equated with other helping professions

9. Do you feel you would be as satisfied in a similar, less religious profession?

Yes

No

10. Overall, do you feel that pastoral ministry is a worthwhile investment of your life?

Definitely yes

Yes

Most likely

Probably not

No

11. Are you aware of the spiritual gifts the New Testament requires for those who serve as a pastor?

Yes

No

12. Do you feel you possess these gifts?

Yes

No

13. Do you believe the gifts you possess enable you to teach or preach and lead the church?

Yes

No

14. In your experience as a pastor, which of the following do you feel less equipped to do well

Teaching, preaching, exhorting

Leading, directing, vision-casting

Both

Neither

15. As a leader, do you find your personality to be more of an asset or a liability in providing direction for the church, explaining or presenting new programs, or in responding to questions or criticisms regarding the direction of the church?

Always an asset

Usually an asset

Neither

Sometimes a liability

Always a liability

16. Do you believe you have at least an adequate understanding of how your personality affects the use of spiritual gifts?

Yes, I have a very good understanding

Yes, I have a fairly good understanding

Yes, I have an adequate understanding

No, I'm not sure how these two work together

No, I've never considered how the two work together

17. In your current position, would you rate yourself as an effective leader?

Always

Usually

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

18. Have you ever been asked to explain or defend your leadership style before a pastoral oversight, personnel committee or deacon council?

Yes

No

19. If you answered yes to question 18, how frequently has this sort of thing occurred?

Once

2-5 times

6-10 times

More than 10 times

20. If you answered no to question # 18, do you find your leadership style, personality and spiritual gifts are a good match for your current position?

Yes

No

21. How long have you been in your current position?

Less than 1 year

2 to 5 years

6 to 10 years

Longer than 10 years

22. Have you ever been questioned by a pastor search committee about your personality, leadership style or spiritual gifts?

Yes, all three

Yes, two of the three

Yes, spiritual gifts only

Yes, leadership only

Yes, personality only

No, none of these

23. Have you ever been asked to leave a church or felt pressured to leave?

Yes, asked to leave

Yes, felt pressured to leave

No

24. If you answered yes to #23, was personality and/or leadership style a factor in the situation?

Yes, both

Yes, personality

Yes, leadership

No

25. Do you feel it would be helpful to learn that your personality, leadership style, and spiritual gifts would or would not be a good match for a prospective church?

Yes, very helpful

Yes, helpful

Yes, somewhat helpful

No, of little help

No, not at all

APPENDIX H

**QUESTIONS FOR PASTORS TO ASK WHEN SPEAKING WITH A
PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE**

By Dr. Donald Hicks

1. What priority does this church give to the preaching and teaching role of the pastor?
2. What is the church's doctrinal statement of Faith? Is the church pastor led, deacon led or elder led and or ruled? Who sets the churches vision?
3. Do the church and its leadership hold to the inerrancy of the Bible?
4. Are there any current unresolved conflicts, problems or issues going on in the church of which I need to be aware?
5. What do you require of a pastor regarding visitation of the sick?
6. How many deacons/elders does the church currently have? How are they chosen, examined as to their biblical qualifications and elected by the church?
7. What are the ministries of the church such as youth, children's and adult ministries etc.? What is the church's position and level of support for such ministries?
8. Is there a church budget? What is the financial position of the church?
9. What are the church's belief, involvement, and financial support for home and international missions?
10. What current evangelistic programs and outreach does the church have and how do you see the pastor involved in these ministries?
11. What responsibilities will the pastor have in regular pastoral counseling?
12. How often does the church have a business meeting? Do you expect the pastor to be the moderator during these church business sessions?
13. What outreach ministries does the church currently have? To the lost, unchurched, de-churched? Nursing home? Jail? Elderly shut-ins? Others?
14. What role do you see the pastor's wife having in the life of the church?

15. What various committees make up the leadership of the church?
16. What priority do you give to the discipleship of new Christians? Do you currently have a new believer's class? New member's class?
17. On what grounds and by what criteria does the church accept members?
18. Does this church practice Biblical church discipline? If so, what is the process?
19. What is the breakdown and priority given to the Sunday school and small group ministry?
20. Will the church allow & pay for the pastor to attend yearly pastoral conferences? Will they pay for his wife to accompany him?
21. What accessibility to the pastor does the church require during the week?
22. What is the church's position and belief on the ordinances of the church? Baptism? Lord's Supper?
23. Where do you as a church see yourself in 5 years? Long-term goals? Short-term goals?
24. How would you describe your church?
25. Why was the church started? History? Does it have a constitution? By laws? Is it incorporated? If so when?
26. What is the church's purpose and mission statement?
27. What is the churches unique role in this community?
28. How would a neighbor around the church portray this congregation?
29. How would you describe the atmosphere of: worship, small group Bible studies, board meetings, business meetings, and special events?
30. What are the three areas you feel must be changed in this church?
31. How many strong ministries does your church have? What are they?
32. What new ministry initiatives has the church launched in the last five years?
33. If you knew you couldn't fail, what would your dreams be for this church?
34. What are the statistics on church membership for the last five years? Why do you think there has been a membership decline? Or growth?

35. Do you have a plan for growth?
36. What is the single biggest obstacle to growth in this church?
37. What role do you feel laypersons should play in the development of a strong, growing congregation?
38. When did your last new members join? When was your last baptism?
39. Is there any conflict in the church now? In the past? If so, explain.
40. What issues or people have regularly caused friction in this church?
41. What is it that sparked your interest in me as a candidate?
42. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your previous three pastors?
43. What has been the tenure of previous pastors/staff members?
44. How does this church view its staff?
45. What is the structure for responsibility in staff positions?
46. Has the interim period been redemptive and healing? What did you discover about yourself?
47. What is the role of the senior pastor? Provide list and contact information for all previous pastors.
48. Will the pastor be given freedom to shape a ministry team that is sympathetic to his vision and have the power to hire and fire his own staff?
49. What are your expectations of my wife and family?
50. Does the congregation have a policy of reviewing the pastor's salary each year? What will my salary be? What would my benefits be? Will the church pay for my relocation?
51. Does the pastor search committee represent the overall congregation and leadership? How?
52. How many are in the membership of the church?
53. What is the average attendance in small groups, Sunday School and worship?
54. How many serve on church staff? Paid? Unpaid?
55. Does the church keep church records in the church office? (Example: finance records, church minutes, committee minutes, deacon minutes, etc.)

56. Does the church have full cover insurance for all church property, director/officer coverage, pastor counseling and malpractice? What other insurance coverage does the church have?

57. How is the church money collected, counted and deposited? How many signatures does the church check have? Do you have a purchase order system? How much money does the church have on hand? CD's, savings or other investments? When is the last time the church was audited internally and/or by an outside firm? What is the name and contact information for the firm that did this audit? Does the church have a lawyer? If so – name and contact information?

58. How many decisions have been made by people trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord as a result of church's outreach over the last five years? How many baptisms the last five years?

59. Is the church and its leadership involved in personal and servant evangelism? Give examples of what evangelism training tools you have used.

60. What association is your church a part of and the contact information for your Director of Missions?

APPENDIX I

TWENTY-FIVE QUESTIONS A PASTOR SHOULD ASK THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE IF THEY DISCOVER THAT THE CHURCH WAS OR IS IN CONFLICT WITH ANY PRESENT OR PREVIOUS PASTOR OF THE CHURCH

By Dr. Donald Hicks

1. What was the reason for the conflict with the past pastor?
2. How was the conflict handled and by who?
3. Have you terminated any of your previous pastors? If so, who? When? Reason? What was verbally communicated? Who was involved? How was it done? How much severance? Was the church told?
4. Have you forced terminated any of your past pastors? If so who? When? Reason? Who was involved? How was it done? How much severance? Was the church told?
5. Have you pressure terminated any of your past pastors? If so, who? When? Reason? Who was involved? How was it done? How much severance? Was the church told?
6. Are any of the individuals on this present pastor search committee on any of the other pastor search committees that caused or were a part of questions 3-5? If so, explain.
7. What is and was your process for removing a pastor from office of pastor?
8. Was the termination, forced termination or pressured termination of a former pastor for Biblical, ethical, legal issues? If not, why? Explain.
9. How was the pastor and his family affected?
10. Are you willing as a church, individuals and a pastor search committee to make things right with all pastors who were removed from office wrongly?
11. What do your Bylaws say (ask for a copy) about how a pastor is called and how he is terminated?
12. Do you have a pastor job description? (Ask for copy)
13. Is this church pastor-led? Explain.
14. Is this church deacon-led? Explain.
15. Is the church elder- led? Explain.

16. Is this church controlled and led by a family? If so who?
17. Is this church controlled by a group of people in this church? If so who?
18. Has any of the staff or ministers been a part of the pastor being terminated, forced terminated or pressure terminated?
19. Was your former pastor under a written contract? Was he given a written separation agreement? If so, will you provide me a copy?
20. Would you be willing to request of the church to take a church health survey before I come to be your pastor?
21. Would you recommend to the church to have a church health consultant to come in as a third party to speak with the church about answers to all of the church health survey?
22. Would you provide me with the following information? A copy of your bylaws and constitution, business meeting minutes during the time of any and all church conflicts, copy of the budget, copy of the deacon minute for any and all times of church conflict, a report from your interim, contact information for all former staff members and pastors, a copy of the church directory, a copy of a church history book (if available), a list of all church leadership for the last 5 years and the committees and members that were approved for the last 5 years, current money owed by the church (itemized), copy of any former or current lawsuits against the church, copy of any insurance claims against the church for any reason, list of all church conflicts in the past and present; church discipline to whom and why, how many pastors have served this church (names and dates of service), are their family members still in the church? former pastors?
23. What are you willing to do to make things right with former pastors and their families that have been treated wrongly, terminated, forced or pressure terminated?
24. If I came to be your pastor after all these questions are answered and solved Biblically would you protect me and my family by placing a written section in the bylaws about how you as a church would protect me, and discipline me when needed, if I should be considered for termination that my family and I will be treated right and have due process by a third party mediator/arbitrator agreed on by me and the church leadership?
25. Will you enter into a church/pastor covenant with me that would explain what you will do for me and what I will do for you and what we will do together for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ?

APPENDIX J

PROJECT DEFENSE

A PROPOSED MANUAL TO GUIDE THE PASTORAL CANDIDATE IN INVESTIGATING AND EVALUATING A PROSPECTIVE CHURCH:¹⁵³

A Project Defense

- Project Rationale
 - Topic Choice
 - Preponderance of terminations
 - Brief pastoral tenure
 - Need for congregational renewal
 - Lessons Learned
 - Need for self-knowledge among pastors
 - The significance of the role of leadership style
 - Magnitude of the challenge faced in obtaining church data
- Theoretical Basis

Pastoral self-knowledge in the areas of

- Spiritual heritage
- Personality
- Spiritual gifts
- Leadership style

Are essential to presenting an accurate portrayal of the candidate to the church

Self-knowledge plus information gained about a prospective church from

- Traditional sources
- Non-traditional sources

¹⁵³ This defense is an outline of the material presented as a PowerPoint presentation along with the oral presentation and defense of the project.

- Both objective and subjective in nature

Enables the candidate to understand the operating basis and expectations of a church

Both self-knowledge and reliable understanding of the prospective church enhances the probability of an acceptable match between the candidate's leadership style and the church's operating style and expectations. This match encourages longer pastoral tenure and greater stability for the congregation.

- Research Methodology
 - Solid reliance on the work of others in related research
 - Surveys of pastors and denominational staff who assist/influence the pastor search process
 - Investigation of the "normal" search process
 - Conversations and interviews with individuals who interact with churches
- Thesis Construction

The project is divided into two parts

- The first part of the study focuses on providing a basis and tools for investigating both the candidate (self-study) and the church.
- The second part presents a manual to guide the candidate through the process of self-investigation and the investigation of the prospective church.
- The Candidate

Self-knowledge begins with an examination of the pastor's

- Spiritual heritage
- Salvation experience
- Call to ministry
- Personality
- Spiritual gifts
- Leadership style
- Congregational Leader-Style
- Church Investigation:
Traditional Sources

- Director of Missions
- Church Minister Relations office
- Search Committee
- ACP
- Church Investigation: Non-Traditional Sources
 - Objective sources
 - Specific questions addressed to the committee
 - Credit reports business contacts
 - Church health assessments
 - Census data
 - Subjective sources
 - Local business persons who interact with churches in the course of trade
 - Residential neighbors, pastors in the area
 - Former church employees
- Evaluating the Data
 - Long-term trends in participation and growth
 - Reconnoitering church environment
 - the balcony – relationships/interactions
 - “right-braining” the ACP
 - Comparative demographics
- Evaluating – con’t.

The candidate as seen from the balcony

- Providing what the church expects
- Fitting into a well-established paradigm
- Avoiding the dangers of narcissism
- Responding to a call

- The Proposed Manual

Three sections

- Self-discovery
- Church investigation
- Resources for consultation
- Self-discovery
 - The pastor in his current ministry setting
 - The pastor identifying who he is
 - The pastor and his ministry
 - The pastor as a leader
 - The pastor as a whole
- Church Investigation
 - Investigating inside the church
 - Questioning the search committee
 - Questioning the search committee again – 60 questions
 - Questions where there is a history of conflict
 - Uncovering the church's "Code"
 - Investigating outside the church
 - Informing the church of the investigation
 - Identifying sources of information
 - ❖ Traditional
 - ❖ Non-traditional
- Evaluating the Data
 - Determining the fit
 - Positives
 - Negatives
 - Noting danger signals

- Summarizing reactions and impressions
- Making the Decision
 - Making a family decision
 - Making a ministry decision
 - Making a leadership decision
- Conclusions

The pastor

- The influence of events and experiences of the formative years of life should not be minimized or ignored as irrelevant
- Salvation experience and call to ministry provide a foundation for ministry
- Personality is neutral, but will serve as an asset or a liability if it is not understood
- Narcissism poses a real threat to effective ministry
- Conclusions – con't.

The church

- Most churches and lay leaders share the pastor's concern for the church
- The church's code in conflict with the pastor's leadership style produces conflict
- It is the pastor's responsibility to discover the church's code through investigation
- Investigating a church is challenging for all parties concerned
- Recommended Applications
 1. The gospel preached with determined clarity as the "power of God" (Rom. 1:16) and as an appeal to condemned men and not as an attractive option appealing to sentimental desires or the need for self-fulfillment.
 2. Those claiming to be called by God to preach must demonstrate the ability carry out the basic function of preaching/teaching.
 3. Spiritual gifts are not discovered through the use of assessment tools alone. Gifts are discovered in ministry or service settings
 4. Small groups are more conducive to the discovery of gifts and calling due to the ministry orientation of groups.

5. The matter of ministerial apprenticeship needs to be explored for a practical arrangement where the young and inexperienced can learn from the older and experienced.
 6. The church must speak the truth regarding its condition in all areas. Denial of the facts will only lead to greater dysfunction between congregation and pastor. Local associations should provide the DOM with protection clauses in contracts freeing them to speak without fear of reprisal from dysfunctional churches.
 7. The manual which comprise chapter four of this project should be made available by disseminating it to pastors and association offices. Pastor Search Committees, as a demonstration of the church's desire to be transparent, should present a copy of it to those they seriously consider as viable pastoral candidates.
- Personal Lessons Learned
 1. I have failed to investigate every church I've served as pastor.
 2. I have failed to provide those same churches with a complete profile of who I am and how I will lead them.
 3. I did not realize or understand the dynamic relationship between spiritual gifts and personality or their product – Leadership style.
 4. The majority of problems I have faced in ministry were the results of inadequate knowledge of the church and an inflated sense of my own abilities as a leader and pastor/teacher.

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CURRICULUM VITA

John David Lones

Memorial Baptist Church
P.O. Box
Pulaski, VA 24301
540-577-2184
jdavidlones@verizon.net

EDUCATION

Doctor of Ministry

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA

Thesis: *The Pastor Search Process: A Proposed Manual for the Objective Investigation and Evaluation of a Church by the Pastoral Candidate*

Anticipated completion:

May, 2015

Master of Divinity—Theology with Biblical Languages

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas

1991

Bachelor of Arts—Religion

Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee

1983

LICENSES/CERTIFICATION/TRAINING

Certified Transformational Pastor, *Lifeway*, SBC/Liberty Baptist Seminary

Certified to lead Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace University*

Trained to lead equipping seminars for Share Jesus without Fear

Trained to equip churches in G.R.O.W—God Rewards Our Work

Training to lead equipping seminars for Taking It to the Streets—prayer walk ministry in the local church

Trained to minister in a cross-cultural context with Operation Southern Cross in Thailand and with IMB missions in Honduras

Certified as a hospital chaplain by Pulaski Community Hospital

Certified as a trainer for Cell Leaders and Interns in the local church

Certified as a leader for The Navigator's 2:7 Disciple-Making Bible Study

Certified to lead Long-Range Planning Seminars for the local church by the Georgia Baptist Convention

Certified to lead *Making Peace with Your Past* discipleship study

Certified as a trainer/facilitator for Christian Leadership Training in understanding, interpreting and applying outcomes of personality inventories and leadership styles—Walk Thru the Bible Ministries

Certified to facilitate *Master Your Money* financial management seminars

Certified in both Advanced First Aid, CPR and helicopter evacuation procedures by the American Red Cross

Certified Weapons and Martial Arts Specialist, City Center Security/City Center Development Corp., Fort Worth, Texas and the Texas Department of Public Safety
 Certified as an armed Security Officer, Texas Department of Public Safety
 Trained in Continuing Witness Training, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT/EXPERIENCE

<i>Maysville Baptist Church, Buckingham, VA</i> Transitional Pastor	2014
<i>Memorial Baptist Church, Pulaski, VA</i> Senior Pastor	2002-2014
<i>Whitemarsh Island Baptist Church, Savannah, GA</i> Senior Pastor	1991-2002
<i>Pisgah Baptist Church, Decatur, TN</i> Bi-vocational Pastor	1984-1986
<i>Point Pleasant Baptist Church, Newport, TN</i> Bi-vocational Pastor	1981-1983
<i>Dumplin Baptist Church, New Market, TN</i> Interim Pastor	1980-1981

RELATED EXPERIENCE

<i>Pulaski Community Hospital, Pulaski, VA</i> On-Call Chaplain	2003-2014
<i>Revival and Supply Preacher in five states and two foreign countries</i>	
<i>Savannah Baptist Association</i> Prayer Coordinator for Cross Over Savannah	2000
Membership Committee	1993, 1998
Office Relocation Committee	1999-2000
Long Range Planning Committee	2000-2001

TEACHING/TRAINING/MISCELLANEOUS

<i>Brewton-Parker College, Mount Vernon, GA</i> Adjunct Professor of New Testament	1998-2002
<i>Savannah Baptist Association, Savannah, GA</i> Seminar Leader: Using Cross-Over Savannah Prayer Guide	2000

Isle of Hope Baptist Church Men's Retreat, Savannah, GA

Teacher/Facilitator

1996

Savannah Baptist Association

Bible Conference Speaker

1995-1996

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

City Center Security, Fort Worth, TX

Downtown Patrol Officer/Control Room Operator/Patrol and Control Room Supervisor and Residential Officer

1987-1991

Rockholt's Furniture, Inc., Decatur, TN

Furniture and Appliance Sales and Display

Furniture delivery

Appliance service

1984-1986

Peak Brother's Construction and Remodeling, Newport, TN

General Construction Laborer

Painter/Woodwork finisher

1982-1983

Fair Village, Morristown, TN

Security Guard

1982

Levi's Menswear, Powell, TN

Material Handler

1981-1982

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Practical and reproducible disciple-making strategies in the local church

Christian Apologetics

Mentoring/Apprenticeship strategies in preparation for pastoral ministry

Apostolic evangelistic preaching/missions strategies for the 21st century evangelical church