

# MINISTER SEARCH GUIDE





Dear Pastor Search Team,

One of the most significant decisions made by a church is the choice of a new pastor. The office of pastor is defined and described by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Paul's attention to detail in this passage underscores the importance of the position and the critical nature of finding the right person for the role. As you move forward in leading your church through this crucial process, let me encourage you to keep several things in mind.

First, you want to find someone who is **called**. God has always made a habit of calling certain people to be prophets and servants and pastors to His people. He called Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Paul. While some may question whether God extends a special call to ministry, history has proven that those who offer the most faithful service are those who have been chosen by God for the work.

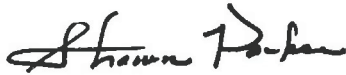
Another quality you'll want to look for is **conviction**. A man who has been called by God should study to show himself approved and capable of teaching others sound faith and practice (2 Timothy 2:15). While a pastor ought not to be quarrelsome (2 Timothy 2:24), he also ought not merely to be a people pleaser. The truth of God sometimes will rub people the wrong way, and the finest pastors are those who can speak the truth in love out of deep conviction.

One final quality that you should be looking for in God's man is **character**. He should be a man of integrity and humility and spiritual maturity. The best preachers are those who preach with their lives first and foremost.

Your daunting responsibility is to identify the man who can offer the leadership your church needs to fulfill the Great Commission. Thankfully God offers His guidance and help in this process. In fact, you can be sure that He's already at work to connect you with His choice for your next pastor. The most important key for you is to be tuned into His leadership through prayer.

This booklet is designed to help you and to encourage you in this epic responsibility. You can anticipate experiencing some unexpected bends in the road and maybe even some dead ends. You can be sure, however, that God will make all the crooked paths straight, and He'll turn the dead ends into launching pads if you'll trust Him. May the Lord bless you in this glorious obligation. If we can help in any way, know that we stand ready to do so.

Your fellow servant,



Shawn Parker  
Executive Director-Treasurer  
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## INTRODUCTION

At this moment, about two to three hundred churches in the Mississippi Baptist Convention are seeking pastors. On any given date, ten to fifteen percent of our churches need help in this most important area. The material in this book has been compiled with Mississippi Baptists in mind. We want to give special thanks and recognition to the following servants at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board who contributed to the content and production of this booklet throughout the years: Cliff Perkins, Louis Smith, Frank Harmon, and Bruce Cappleman.

This material is meant to be a guide to the Pastor/Minister Search Committee in their important process (**see Appendix B for a flowchart of the process**). Please understand that no two churches are alike, just as no two individuals are alike, and that every Mississippi Baptist church is autonomous. Therefore, use this material in its entirety or any part of it that you choose. The most important thing is that you follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in finding God's minister for your church.

## WHEN THE PASTOR/MINISTER RESIGNS

We believe that God already knows the next pastor/minister for your church, and now you are in the process of finding that individual. This book is a guide to help you in this important process. The most vital thing is that you follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in finding God's minister for your church. If you seek Him, He will guide you in the search process.

The Bible is also our guide. In Jeremiah 29:11, the Bible declares, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." God does have a plan for your church and for the minister He will lead you to find. In vs. 12-13 God said, "Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart." Also, in Jeremiah 33:3, God commanded, "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."

The plan that God had for Moses is an exciting story of God's guidance. God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness. When it came time to enter the Promised Land, God told Moses that he was not going. In Deuteronomy 31:2-3, Moses said, "I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The Lord has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.' The Lord your God himself will cross over ahead of you..." Moses was the only leader that Israel had ever known. Some probably felt they could not go on without him, but Moses reminded them that it was the Lord who was their true leader. Deuteronomy 31:7-8 tells us that God had already raised up a new leader to lead them: "Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.'"



The understanding of God's love, might, and work should encourage you to put your trust in Him. The Bible calls us to remember who God is and what He has done. Because of what God has done, we can put our hope in Him and follow the plan that He has for us. Deuteronomy 7:9 states, "Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps His covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes His unfailing love on those who love Him and obey His commands."

Like the children of Israel, a change of leadership is a time to reaffirm God as our true leader and Christ as the Head of the church. Just as God chose Moses, God chose you. Just as God had a plan for Moses, God has a plan for you and your church. Just as God led Moses, God will lead you.

This time of transition should be a time when each member commits that God's will must come first. To know the will of God, the church must devote itself to earnest prayer. Failure to do so will mean the church will miss the power and direction of God, making the search process frustrating as the church misses the will of God by not seeking God's leadership and power.

In this spirit of prayer and dependence upon the Holy Spirit, the church first turns to the election of the Pastor/Minister Search Committee. This is the most important committee in the life of the church because it deals with the most delicate and determinative thing ever to come before a church – the selection of a pastor/minister. The health of the congregation for years to come will hinge on the committee finding the minister God has chosen for their church.

### **SELECTION OF THE PASTOR/MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE**

The first step in selecting the search committee is to consult the church's constitution and bylaws. This document should set forth the guidelines for the election of the search committee, stating the number of people to be elected and the general make-up of the committee. If the church does not have a constitution and bylaws, the church must decide how the committee will be elected. Past history is a good guideline. Since this is such a delicate and important matter, this may not be the time to try new ideas. However, several questions always arise. The first question is, "How many should serve on the committee?" As to the number, the committee should be large enough to be representative of the church and small enough to be efficient. An effective number is usually 5 to 7 people, with 1 to 2 alternates. In order to be representative of the church, the committee should be made up of both men and women. However, regardless of the number and make-up, the committee must have the confidence of the church. Those elected to serve should have a proven track record of faithfulness to the church, and should be spiritually mature and able to work cooperatively with others.

The next question that will arise is "How do we select the committee?" Southern Baptist churches use a variety of methods. It is generally considered unwise for the departing pastor to participate in the selection of the committee. It is also not the best practice to nominate committee members from the floor.

Some churches have the deacons assume the responsibilities of nominating a representative committee to be voted on by the church. Others ask their regularly elected nominating committee to bring recommendations to the church for a vote.

Another method used leaves the decision completely up to the congregation. A list of the entire membership is distributed at a called meeting of the church. The members vote for the required number of persons. Those receiving the largest number of votes are elected.

Whatever method a church chooses, it should be careful to preserve the democratic process with the church family voting on and electing the search committee. Again, make sure to consult your church constitution and bylaws and follow the process as laid out in these governing documents.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE

In order to function effectively, the committee should be organized, electing a **chairman**, a **secretary**, and a **prayer coordinator**.

The **chairman** presides over the meetings of the committee and gives overall leadership to the committee. They will also be the spokesperson for the committee to the church. This person should make periodic reports to the church on the progress of the work of the committee. In order to maintain consistency in reporting to the church, the chairman or someone appointed by that person should be the only one communicating to the church on the work of the committee. These reports should not violate the confidences of the committee or mention the names of any person being considered. The chairman should also see to it that the church pays any bills the committee incurs in its work.

The **secretary** should keep good notes of all the meetings. The notes should be complete and neatly prepared so that if questions are raised about previous discussions or decisions, it will be relatively easy to find answers in the minutes of the meetings. The secretary will also be responsible for all correspondence that goes out from the committee, whether to the church or to candidates being considered.

The **prayer coordinator**, with the help of the members of the committee, should be responsible for enlisting the entire church to pray for the committee. They should contact every Sunday School Department Director, teacher, and organizational leader and ask them to have prayer for God's leadership in the process of finding a pastor/minister, and emphasize this prayer effort in the worship services and activities of the church.

### THE INTERIM PASTOR/MINISTER

Another important step the church should take at this time is securing an interim pastor/minister who will fill the pulpit and perform other duties specified by the church. The search committee

is often given this responsibility. If this is the case with your committee, then this task should be given priority before you begin your search for a pastor/minister. Securing an interim will relieve the committee of the responsibility of filling the pulpit on a Sunday-by-Sunday basis. Search Committees would be wise to call a minister as interim who is not interested in being called to serve as the pastor/minister (**see Appendix A**). This fact should be stated when the committee recommends the interim. The committee should also state what the compensation will be as well as the duties and responsibilities the church expects of the interim.

## **THE WORKING AGREEMENTS**

### **Confidentiality**

From the beginning of its work, the committee should agree that each member will hold in confidence the affairs of the committee. They will need to discuss matters of character and personal judgment frankly. The committee members will be asked to give their opinion as to what they like or dislike about candidates. These discussions should remain strictly confidential. The names of candidates being considered, background information, and information gained from interviews must remain confidential. Great harm can be done to ministers if a committee breaks confidence and shares about their contacts with the candidate. The committee will not secure the cooperation it needs unless its integrity is unquestioned.

### **No Agenda**

No member of the committee should come to the committee with their own personal agenda. Each member should have an open mind to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Each member should have the desire to seek the will of God and to find the person God has chosen for their church. Any member seeking to impose their personal will upon the committee will frustrate the progress of the committee and harm the ministry and the unity of the church.

### **A Unanimous Decision**

Another agreement the committee should make is that a prospective pastor/minister will not be invited before the church in view of a call unless the committee is unanimous in their choice.

## **DEVELOPING PROFILES**

### **The Church**

After organizing, the committee should begin the process by taking an in-depth look at the church. The committee should take a very honest approach in examining both the strengths and weaknesses of the church and its current ministries. A list of these should be made and studied. Questions that need to be answered include: "How can the church better meet the needs of the congregation?" "How can the church better meet the needs of the community?" "What should be our priorities over the next two to five years?" (**see Appendix C for a thorough set of questions**)



A 10-year statistical profile of the church will be helpful in examining the direction of the church, and whether it is growing, declining, or has reached a plateau. A demographic study of the community can reveal information that even the most observant member of the community might not discern. The Leadership Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board can provide these resources for the church. The search committee should study materials such as the church's budget, organizational structure, committee/team system, evangelism and outreach efforts, discipleship activities, ministry and mission work, and worship experiences in considering strengths and weaknesses of the church as they pray about and seek a new pastor/minister.

This self-evaluation has a two-fold purpose. First, the search committee should be able to answer the questions of a prospective pastor/minister. Second, and most importantly, such a study should give the committee insights into the characteristics needed in a pastor/minister who can lead the church into the future.

### **The Pastor/Minister**

After looking at the church and discovering needs and future directions, the search committee should ask the question, "What type of pastor/minister do we need?" The committee should spend significant time thinking and discussing the qualities, skills, and strengths needed by the next pastor/minister in order to be an effective leader of their congregation. The pastor/minister will serve in all the areas of pastoral ministry, but the candidate will have greater skills in some areas more than others. Refer back to your church profile and look at the church's strengths and weaknesses. Remember, you are looking for someone uniquely gifted for your church and its current ministry, and someone gifted to pursue the vision of greater ministry for your church in the future.

Another source that will help the committee with the profile is the Pastor/Minister Search Committee Church Family Survey (**see Appendix D**). This survey is to be given to each member of the church. This survey will serve two purposes: first, it will let the congregation know that you value their opinion; and second, you will gain important insights into the mind and attitudes of the congregation. Effective ways of dispersing the survey are through Sunday School/small groups, worship on Sunday morning, and letters or emails to the entire church family. If done during Sunday School/small groups or worship on a Sunday morning, allow time for the survey to be completed and returned during the Sunday School or worship hour. The information gained from the survey should be taken seriously. However, it is probably best not to publish the data. Publishing the results could have the effect of establishing a profile in concrete, so that the committee becomes too constrained in their search.

## **COMPILING THE LIST**

The search committee should now be ready to seek resumes from prospective pastors/ministers. There are several sources from which resumes may be obtained.

### **The Leadership Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention**

When you contact our department's resume services through the convention website, [www.mbc.org/church-growth/pastor-leadership-development/church-minister-relations/resume-services/submit-a-job-opening/](http://www.mbc.org/church-growth/pastor-leadership-development/church-minister-relations/resume-services/submit-a-job-opening/), you will be asked to give information about your church on a submission form. This information will help us to send resumes within the ranges of your profiles. The resumes sent by us are not to be considered as recommendations. Our department will also help obtain resumes of those candidates whose names and addresses can be provided to us. This service may save time, since we may already have the resume. It also may eliminate any undue expectation on the part of the candidate. After being called by the committee, the candidate may expect follow-up information.

In addition to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, resumes may be obtained from:

- Other State Conventions (**see Appendix E**)
- Church Members
- Seminaries and Baptist Colleges (**see Appendix E**)
- Other Ministers and Association Mission Directors
- Placing an ad in *The Baptist Record*, our Mississippi Baptist newspaper.

The committee should give adequate time for the collection of resumes. The committee may set a deadline date, or the chairman and committee may decide when it is time to begin the examination of the resumes.

## **NARROWING THE LIST**

In most situations, the committee will be overwhelmed by the number of resumes received, so the number must be reduced. Committees can accomplish this in many ways. One way is for each committee member to work through the resumes, with the profile in mind, to determine their top ten candidates. The committee would then meet and work out a composite top ten list. Each committee member would then work through these ten resumes to narrow the list to five, and the committee then selects a consensus top five. These candidates should now be called to determine if they are still available for consideration. They should also be asked if they are working with another search committee and if they would agree to be a candidate. Circumstances may have changed since the committee received their resumes, and the committee need not waste time considering someone who is not available. If the individual agrees to be a candidate, the committee should inform them that a Consent to Release Confidential Information Form will be sent to them. By signing and returning this form, the candidate will be granting permission for the committee to proceed with a comprehensive background check.

## THE BACKGROUND CHECK

The intensive work of the committee is just beginning. While every step in the committee's process is important, the background check on each candidate is absolutely essential. Passing over this element of the search, or treating it lightly, is one of the most serious mistakes made by search committees.

When the information release form is returned by the candidate, the committee can then proceed with the background check (**see Appendix F**). There are several companies you may choose to run a background check. If needed, a list of these may be obtained from our department. This list is not intended to be understood as recommendations. These companies will charge for their services, however, this is money well spent. You should do at least a criminal check, a credit check, and sexual offender registry check.

Before you begin to interview the candidates' references, you should decide what questions you want to ask. To call and ask very general questions will lead to very general answers and may not give you the information needed. Review the sample questions in **Appendix G** and decide which questions you should ask. The list of questions should not be so long that the person being interviewed becomes frustrated with the length of the interview. The first calls should be made to those who are listed on the candidates' resume as references. Do not stop with these references. Next, call the Associational Missions Director in each of the associations where the candidate has previously served. Obtain from the AMD the names and phone numbers of individuals in the church where the candidate has served. These people should be able to inform you of the candidate's leadership style, his ability to communicate, his people skills and any other information that may be vital to the ministry that the minister will perform in your church. Remember that while pastors/ministers may institute different programs for different churches, their personality will usually stay the same. Therefore, the candidate's leadership style in previous churches will likely be the style of leadership you can expect in your church. Your committee may also want to review the candidate's social media accounts in assessing the candidate (**see Appendix H for other helpful resources in seeking information from references**).

## CONTACTING THE CANDIDATE

After the examination of those on your list, your committee is now ready to make contact with the person God has led you to as your top candidate. This individual is the one that best fits the profile you established and the one the Holy Spirit has led you to select. The chairman should call the candidate and set up a meeting. If the candidate agrees, this first meeting should be at a site where the confidential nature of the process can be preserved.

The first meeting is a time to get acquainted with the candidate and their family. The conversation will be of a more general nature compared to the detailed question and answer meeting later on. In this meeting, first impressions are important. Remember, you get only one chance to make a first impression. Your professional courtesy should be highlighted at this meeting. You



should cover all expenses incurred by the candidate including meals, travel and, if necessary, overnight lodging. Following this meeting, the committee should discuss prayerfully whether or not this candidate fits the personality and needs of the church and if you feel God is leading you to proceed to the next level. If the answer is “no”, then the candidate should be notified that the committee is moving on to other candidates (**see Appendix I**). If the committee feels positive about this meeting, then the candidate should be contacted and a time set for you to visit their church or another church to hear the candidate preach and lead in worship.

If possible, this second visit should be to the church where the candidate is the pastor/minister. If distance makes this prohibitive, or if the candidate is not a pastor/minister at this time, arrangements can be made to hear them preach at another church. Also, the committee may be able to view services through recordings or video streaming of the church’s services. Do not bring the candidate to your church for the committee to hear them preach, for this will only confuse your congregation. A visit to the candidate’s church will give you an opportunity to not only hear them preach, but you can observe the candidate in the entire worship experience and church context. You will hear the candidate make announcements, pray, read Scripture, or preside over the worship service. Your evaluation should include the entire experience. At the next meeting of the committee, each member should be given an opportunity to give their evaluation of the candidate. The committee must decide if they feel led by God to proceed to the next level with the candidate. If not, inform the candidate of your decision and move to your next candidate. If, however, the committee is still positive, then contact the individual and arrange another meeting with the candidate and their family.

This third meeting should feature an in-depth question and answer time. The committee should prepare for this meeting by discussing information that they need to gather from the candidate through well-planned questions. A list of possible questions can be found in **Appendix J**. This meeting should take place at a neutral site. Remember that confidentiality is still a very important matter in your contacts with the candidate.

The three meetings described above are the suggested minimum number of visits with the candidate. If needed, other visits can be planned to clear up questions or address special issues. Usually this occurs if there is indecision or if there are questions that emerge from the previous visits. The point is, you must have clarity and certainty. Therefore, have as many meetings as necessary. Both the candidate and the committee must have their questions answered with honesty and sincerity. The committee must be solidly in agreement before they can justify introducing the candidate to the congregation.

The compensation plan for the candidate will also be an important part of the discussions at this point in the process. If the committee needs help or guidance in this important matter, the *Compensation Planning Guide* from GuideStone is a valuable resource and asset, and can be accessed and downloaded at [www.GuideStone.org/CompensationPlanning](http://www.GuideStone.org/CompensationPlanning). Our department will also be glad to assist in this discussion and work as well.

## **PRESENTING THE CANDIDATE TO THE CHURCH**

By the time the candidate and the committee reach this step in the process, both should have a firm conviction that this is God's will for their ministry and for the church. The committee and the candidate will decide on an acceptable weekend for the candidate to be introduced to the church and to preach in view of a call before the church.

This is a critical time. The committee must remember that the church has not been privileged to the information they possess. The process to this point has been confidential, but now the committee should be open and thorough in their presentation of the candidate. Plans must be made for the weekend and appropriate information must be shared with the church. How the candidate is presented to the congregation will make a tremendous difference on how the candidate is received by the church.

One to two weeks prior to the candidate's visit to the church, the committee should be given considerable time in the morning worship service to reveal to the congregation their decision and the upcoming plans. The chairman of the committee should begin by sharing the process that has brought them to this conclusion. The church will want to know that the committee has taken their task seriously and has done a thorough job. He should discuss the candidate's strong points and why the committee believes that this person, out of all the candidates, is the minister God has chosen for their church. Each of the committee members should also be given time to express their support and reasons why they believe this is God's will for their church. If the committee is excited, the congregation will catch that same excitement. A biographical information sheet can also be used at this time to give each member information to take home and review. A picture of the pastor/minister and their family, along with important information about their ministerial experience, will help to inform the congregation. Also include in this printed material the schedule for the weekend, along with the time when the vote will be taken. Be sure to consult your constitution and bylaws and follow the standards set forth in this document for the calling of a pastor/minister. This is not a time to change the rules. If you do not have a constitution or bylaws, or if it does not address the calling of a pastor, then tradition usually provides the guidance and standards for this process.

With the presentation of the committee and the printed material in their hands, the congregation should have all the information it needs. However, some committees have utilized a question and answer meeting to share information about the candidate and their process, and respond to the church's questions that may include questions about salary, benefits, vacation, time off or other matters that need to be addressed. Of course, these matters should already have been approved prior to inviting the candidate to come in view of a call. In order to avoid conflict later, the committee should share all agreements that have been made between them and the candidate on behalf of the church. This should be a time to create trust and confidence, both in the work of the committee and in the candidate.

## **EXTENDING THE CALL**

The time and procedure for the vote should have been announced when the committee first announced to the church that they were ready to recommend the calling of a pastor/minister. If the constitution and bylaws stipulates how a pastor will be called, these guidelines must be followed. When this question is not addressed in the constitution and bylaws, the congregation should understand when the vote will be taken, how the vote will be taken, and what percentage is required for a call to be extended to the candidate.

When is the best time to vote? Since we want to involve the most people, Sunday morning would be the logical time for the vote. Most churches vote the Sunday following the “trial sermon” preached by the candidate the previous Sunday. This time frame provides the congregation a week to pray about their vote. This also gives the congregation the feeling that they are not being rushed into a decision. The alternative to this time schedule is to vote immediately following the trial sermon. Many churches do this because they feel that those who are present and have heard the candidate should be the ones who vote.

How should the vote be taken? In order to have the most accurate opinion of the congregation, the vote should be done by secret ballot. The method of taking the vote, counting the vote and announcing the results should be well-planned as well, and follow any written standards found in the church’s constitution and bylaws.

As soon as possible after the result of the vote is announced to the congregation, the candidate should be informed about the result. The candidate will want to know the exact count as they prayerfully make their decision. Most pastors want to receive at least a ninety percent or above positive vote to accept a call to a church. Also, make sure to know if the church constitution and bylaws sets a percentage standard for votes to call a pastor/minister to the church.

## **THE PASTOR/MINISTER SUPPORT COMMITTEE**

With the call extended and accepted, it may seem that the work of the committee is finished, but this is not the case. The committee should remain together as a Pastor/Minister Support Committee. The pastor/minister and the church should be informed that the committee will stay in tact but will take on a different role. The committee will meet with the pastor/minister at least once a month for a period of up to a year. The purpose of these meetings will be to support the pastor/minister, to answer questions they may have now that they are on the church field, and to give encouragement during this critical time of adjustment. The pastor/minister and the committee have already established a trusting relationship, therefore this group is best equipped to help the pastor/minister get off to a good start. After the pastor/minister has settled into their work, and feels comfortable with the new congregation, the Pastor/Minister Support Committee can discontinue their work.

## **Appendix A**

### **THE “NO CANDIDACY” STANDARD FOR THE INTERIM PASTOR/MINISTER**

One of the common problems that churches have when there is an interim pastor/minister is that the people like the interim so much they want them to be called to the church. However, we strongly recommend against such an action.

**The Question: Why is it not good practice for interim pastors/ministers to be considered as a candidate for the church? How can we keep this from happening?**

**Rationale #1: Interim pastors/ministers can enable congregations to deal with their agenda better if they have no vested interest in their own long-range call to that congregation.**

The interim pastor/minister needs to be free to be involved from a perspective or stance of “what is best for this congregation during the interim period.” Interim pastors/ministers need to help congregational leaders identify key needs to be addressed at this time. Thus, it is extremely difficult for an interim to be objective when the question becomes, “What must I do to be called to this church?”

**Rationale #2: Trusting that a person will keep their word is essential in covenant relationships. Changing the “rules of the game” may foster distrust in the interim and the congregational leaders.**

When an interim becomes a candidate for the open position, it changes the agreements and the specific purpose upon which they were hired. Usually, the church leaders did not involve the congregation in a search process for an interim. Some people may feel betrayed, fooled, or taken advantage of, and distrust may then become part of the climate with the interim and the search committee.

**Rationale #3: Consideration of the interim pastor/minister as a candidate will shortchange the search process.**

When a search committee decides to consider the interim as a candidate, it will probably shortchange their search process. The focus will likely be on the personality of the interim pastor rather than on an objective definition of what the congregation needs to be in the future, and the appropriate skills, strengths and abilities needed in the next minister. When the search committee decides to find a way to “keep the interim,” they can no longer be objective in the crucial task they are performing on behalf of the congregation.

**Rationale #4: It is risky to call an interim when there may be underlying opposition to that individual by persons in the congregation.**

The interim pastor/minister may be liked by many, but usually there will be some persons who do not like the interim for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the interim has had to push, confront, challenge or strongly discourage certain behavior, actions, or policies. This may have angered or alienated some individuals or groups. The anger or hostility can usually be tolerated knowing the interim will one day be leaving, but now if the interim is called to the permanent ministry

role, there will likely be opposition and undermining of the interim's ability to be effective for the long term.

**Rationale #5: The church needs to be fair to all possible candidates and protect the concept of what an interim ministry program can provide for the congregation.**

Calling the interim to the open ministry position is not fair to other persons who need to be considered for the role. The interim will have a decided advantage in the call process. Such an action also will build up distrust in the interim process.

**Rationale #6: When an interim becomes the pastor/minister, there is not a "honeymoon" period for the church and minister.**

Every church needs that period of time when there is great excitement and joy at the arrival of a new pastor/minister. If the interim becomes the pastor/minister, there is no difference between last Sunday (when the minister was an interim) and this Sunday (when the interim is the installed pastor/minister).

If the interim wants to be considered by the search committee, then the interim should resign, submit a resume, and go through the same process as all other candidates. The system of searching for and calling a pastor/minister is built upon a foundation of ethics and trust.

---

I have read the above and understand that I will not be considered as a possible candidate to become the pastor/minister. If at such a time there is a change of mind, then I will resign as interim, submit my resume, and go through the same process as all other candidates.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

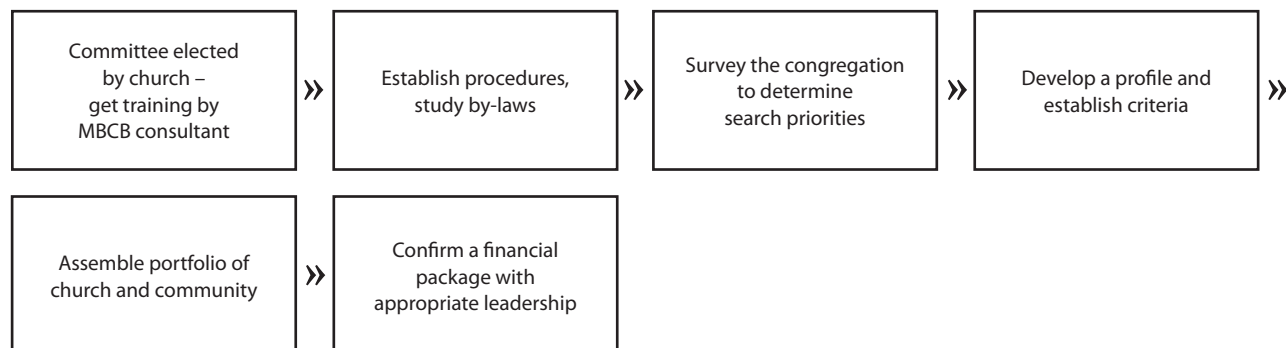
Interim Pastor/Minister, \_\_\_\_\_  
(church name)



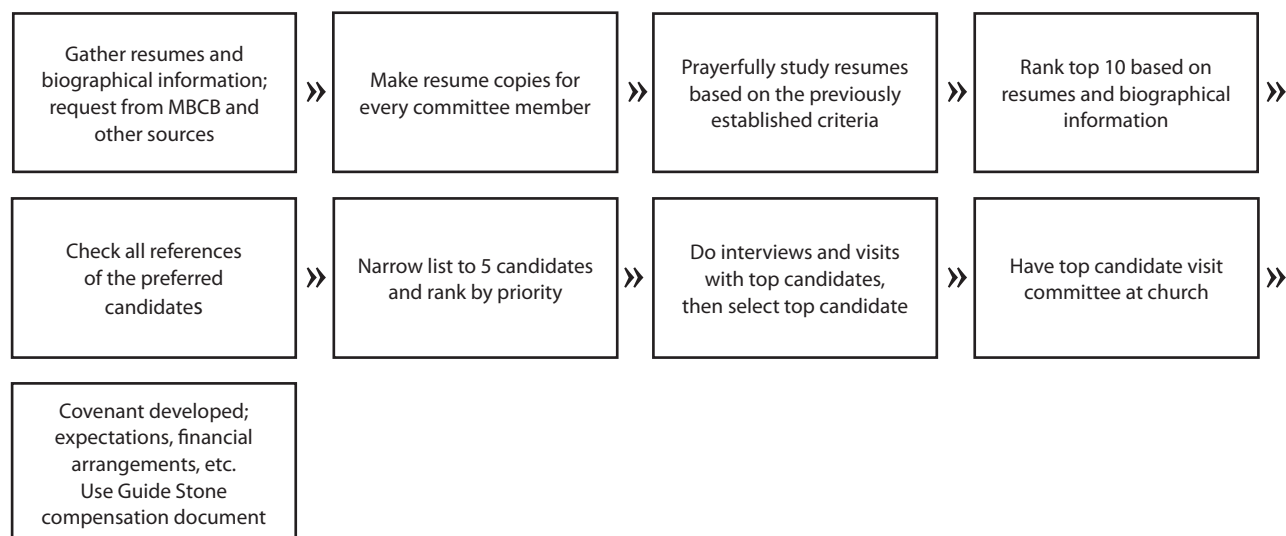
## Appendix B

### PASTOR/MINISTER SEARCH PROCESS FLOW CHART

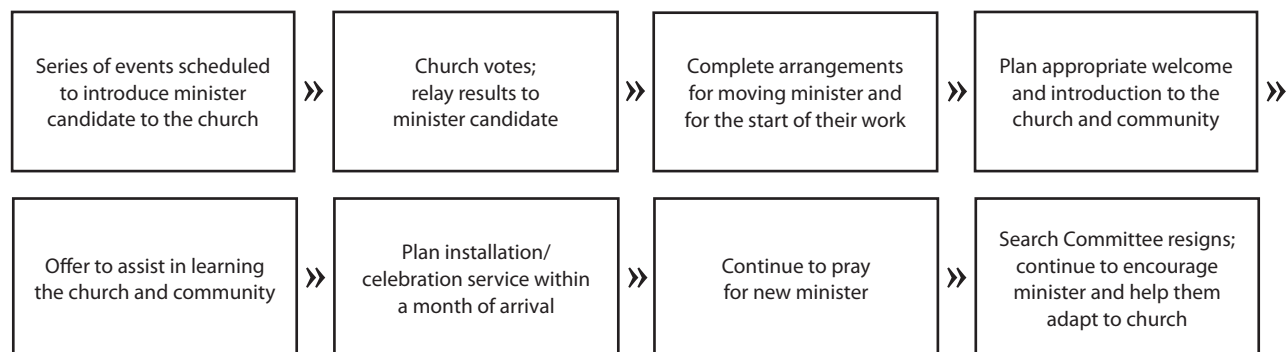
#### Preliminary



#### Search Phase



#### Call and Presentation



**Appendix C**  
**CHURCH EVALUATION SURVEY**

This survey is to be completed by the members of the Pastor/Minister Search Committee. This will aid in analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the church as the committee starts the process of seeking a new pastor/minister. For each statement please circle one number. Give your best attention to questions on the final page.

**0** = Not at all   **1** = Poor   **2** = Fair   **3** = Adequate   **4** = Good   **5** = Excellent   **n/a** = does not apply

Please circle the answer that best describes your church.

***HOW WELL DOES OUR CHURCH:***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Provide a Christian witness to every person in the church and community?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a                                     | 7. Conduct revivals and other evangelism projects?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a  |
| 2. Provide Bible study for every person in the church and community?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a  | 8. Create opportunities for witnessing at local community events?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a                                   |
| 3. Encourage personal, daily Bible study and worship in the home?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a   | 9. Help establish new churches and do mission projects to reach unreached persons in our community?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a |
| 4. Help members discover spiritual gifts for Christian growth and service?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a                                      | 10. Start new Sunday School classes, choirs, discipleship groups, and mission groups?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a               |
| 5. Train members in how to witness to lost people in their setting?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a   | 11. Elect Sunday School teachers and officers on an annual basis?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a                                   |
| 6. Keep an up-to-date prospect file and assign members to witness to unsaved persons and reach out to visitors?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a | 12. Train and equip Sunday School teachers and officers?<br>0   1   2   3   4   5   n/a  |
-

13. Use Sunday School/small groups to teach the Bible and build fellowship among members?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
14. Use Sunday School/small groups to minister to members and non-members with special needs (divorce, single parents, grief/loss, handicapped, unemployed, etc.)?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
15. Plan, promote, and conduct Vacation Bible School?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
16. Provide continuing discipleship training for church members?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
17. Provide training for new Christians and new church members?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
18. Train potential leaders?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
19. Understand the distinctives about Baptist doctrine and beliefs?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
20. Understand how Southern Baptists govern themselves (local church, association, state convention, national convention, etc.)?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
21. Encourage young people to participate in Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament events?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
22. Plan church worship services that glorify God and meet the real needs of the people?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
23. Provide a warm, joyful, and friendly spirit for church worship services?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
24. Enlist church members to help church staff conduct worship services?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
25. Provide music ministry for all age groups?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
26. Provide resources, support, and other supplies for all the church's music programs?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
27. Provide time and materials for teaching missions through Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood, and other missions programs?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
28. Encourage everyone to pray for missionaries and missions programs?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
29. Emphasize the annual weeks of prayer and giving emphases for international, North American, and state missions?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
30. Enlist members to participate in mission efforts and projects in our community, state, nation, and world?	0	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

---

31. Provide an effective, ongoing prayer ministry?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

32. Emphasize financial giving as one of the most important parts of stewardship?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

33. Teach our people that stewardship involves managing the resources God has given us?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

34. Teach tithing as the minimum for financial giving?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

35. Plan an overall church budget each year?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

36. Operate all the church programs under the annual church budget?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

37. Commit a percentage of church offerings to missions by giving through the Cooperative Program and Association Missions?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

38. Help preserve and strengthen marriages and family relationships?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

39. Minister to church families through the service of deacons?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

40. Seek to reclaim inactive church members?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

41. Communicate to church members and people in the community the positive work that is occurring in the church?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

42. Maintain and supervise the church's property (buildings, grounds, furnishings, equipment, etc.)?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

43. Follow a planning process in developing an annual or semi-annual program of ministry and activities?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

44. Use a council of key leaders to coordinate the ministry of the church?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

45. Evaluate the ministry of the church on an annual basis?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

46. Create opportunities for cultural-racial reconciliation in our church and community?

0 1 2 3 4 5 n/a

47. How can the church better meet my personal needs and the needs of my family?

48. How can the church better meet the needs of our community?

49. If I could set forth our church priorities for the next two years, the areas of ministry I would emphasize are:

(1)

(2)

(3)



**Appendix D**  
**CHURCH FAMILY SURVEY**  
**PASTOR/MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE**

In order to effectively perform the important task assigned to us by the church, we are asking everyone in our church family to supply us with the following information and opinions. Please give prayerful consideration as you complete this questionnaire.

***PREFERRED AGE OF A PROSPECTIVE PASTOR/MINISTER***

☐ Under 30   ☐ 30-39   ☐ 40-49   ☐ 50-59   ☐ 60 or older   ☐ No preferred age

***DESIRED EDUCATION*** (Check all that apply.)

☐ Bachelor's Degree (4-year college)   ☐ Doctoral Degree from seminary  
☐ Master's Degree from seminary   ☐ No educational preference

***DESIRED EXPERIENCE*** (Check one.)

☐ No previous experience   ☐ 5-10 years   ☐ 20 years and above  
☐ 1-5 years   ☐ 10-20 years

***PRIORITY MINISTRY SKILLS*** (Number in order of importance.)

___ Preaching Ability	___ Outreach Leadership
___ Administrative Ability	___ Bible Teaching
___ Evangelistic Ability	___ Christian Education Leadership
___ Community Leadership	___ Denominational Leadership
___ Pastoral Leadership	___ Mission Focus and Leadership
(counseling, visitation, etc.)	___ Worship Leadership
___ Youth and Children Leadership	

Provide the personality traits and characteristics you feel are most important for a minister:

What questions would you like the pastor/minister search committee to ask candidates?

Other comments?

Please turn in these questionnaires no later than \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your valuable input.  
Pastor/Minister Search Committee

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**  
**RESUME CONTACTS AT SURROUNDING**  
**SBC STATE CONVENTIONS AND SEMINARIES**

**Alabama Baptist State Convention**

Dale Huff  
P.O. Box 11870  
Montgomery, AL 36111  
Phone: 334-288-2460  
Email: dhuff@alsbom.org  
www.resume.alsbom.org

**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**

CMR Consultant  
3939 Gentilly Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70126  
Phone: 504-282-4455  
Email: cmrconsultant@nobts.edu  
www.nobts.edu/CMR

**Arkansas Baptist State Convention**

William Jaques, Jr.  
10 Remington Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72204  
Phone: 501-376-4791, ext. 5114  
Email: dcouch@absc.org  
www.resume.absc.org

**Tennessee Baptist Convention**

Judy Harvey  
P.O. Box 682789  
Franklin, TN 37068  
Phone: 615-371-2010  
Email: jharvey@tnbaptist.org  
www.sbcworkspace.com/home

**Louisiana Baptist Convention**

Dr. Bill Robertson  
P.O. Box 311  
Alexandria, LA 71309  
Phone: 318-448-3402, ext. 292  
Email: bill.robertson@lbc.org  
www.louisianabaptists.org/about/directory/  
pastoral-leadership/resume-services/

**Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

CMR Consultant  
P.O. Box 22000  
Fort Worth, TX 76122-0120  
Phone: 817-923-1921, ext. 6330  
Email: cmr@swbts.edu  
www.swbts.edu/offices/office-church-ministry

**Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary**

CMR Consultant  
2095 Appling Road  
Cordova, TN 38016  
Phone: 901-751-8453  
Email: churchrelations@mabts.edu  
www.resume.mabts.edu/home

I understand that \_\_\_\_\_ (church name) in \_\_\_\_\_ (town name), Mississippi (the "Church") will conduct an investigation of my background including criminal, driving, financial, consumer, and/or other reports, less and except any personal medical information. These reports will include information as to my character, work habits, performance and experience along with reasons for termination of past employment from previous employers. Therefore, I authorize any persons, references, employers, churches or organizations with whom I have had any contact to release to the Church, or its agents, any information (including opinions) they may have regarding my record, character, and fitness for work. I also authorize the Church, at its discretion, to contact any background screening company, law enforcement or social service agency to determine whether I have been charged or convicted of a crime, and I authorize such companies and agencies to release such information to the Church. I fully release the Church, its agents, and all persons, organizations and agencies from any right or claim of confidentiality and from all claims, actions, or causes of action that may arise as a consequence of exchanging such information.

Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License No.: \_\_\_\_\_ State Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that, according to the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, I am entitled to know if employment is denied based on information obtained through background inquiries. I also understand that I am entitled to receive, upon written request, a copy of any investigative report(s).

**Appendix G**  
**POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ABOUT MINISTERS**  
**THAT PASTOR/MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEES MAY WANT TO ASK**  
**REFERENCES AND CONTACTS**

1. How would you rate the candidate as a preacher and teacher of God's Word?
2. Are the candidate's sermons based on the Bible?
3. When the candidate preaches sermons, do they appear to be both spiritually and intellectually prepared to preach?
4. How would you rate the candidate as a pastor/minister? Do they visit people and show a real love for them and interest in their concerns?
5. Does the candidate relate well to other staff members and key leadership in the church?
6. How does the candidate relate to all the various age groups in the church?
7. How would you rate the candidate as a leader in the church and community?
8. Does the candidate exhibit a Christ-like spiritual maturity and devotion to spiritual growth?
9. What is the candidate's involvement and participation in the worship services of the church?
10. Is the candidate committed to, and personally involved in, evangelism and missions in the church, community, and world?

11. Are there any concerns or issues about the candidate's theological belief or practice that we should know about?
12. Are there any major church conflicts or controversies that the candidate was a part of in the church? How did they seek to manage and resolve that issue?
13. Was the candidate committed to, and personally involved in, discipleship (growing Christians spiritually) in the church and community?
14. Did the candidate motivate and inspire people to do God's work?
15. How would you rate the candidate as an administrator in the church and office?
16. What was the candidate's reputation for taking care of their personal financial obligations?
17. Was the candidate's family supportive of their ministry?
18. Did the candidate take part in community affairs and activities? How so?
19. Did the candidate support and participate in Baptist associational and state convention work? Were they a supporter of the Cooperative Program, Baptist mission efforts, and the efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention?
20. Is there anything about the candidate's personal life or past events that we should know about?



**Appendix H**  
**SAMPLE LETTER OR EMAIL FOR CHECKING A REFERENCE**

Reference Name  
Reference Address  
Reference city, state, zip code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The Search Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church in \_\_\_\_\_ (town name), Mississippi has been given your name as a reference for \_\_\_\_\_, who is one of the minister candidates our church is prayerfully considering. Our committee is interested in your evaluation of \_\_\_\_\_ and will await your reply before proceeding with our consideration of this minister. We value your input and would greatly appreciate a forthright and honest opinion of this person. We have enclosed a brief form for you to complete (see next page for form). Be assured that this information will be kept in the strictest confidence.

We would also request a written narrative which includes your perception of the candidate's pastoral skills, preaching ability, accomplishments in ministry, and other positive or negative factors you feel would be of value to us. Thank you for your time and consideration in providing this information. Please pray for our committee as we seek God's will for our church.

Sincerely,

Enclosures

**Appendix H (continued)**  
**CHARACTER REFERENCE INQUIRY**

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

The person whose name appears above has been recommended to us as a candidate for the ministry position of \_\_\_\_\_. Please provide us the information requested below as well as any additional comments you feel are important for our search committee. Information will be kept confidential.

1. How long have you known the candidate?

2. What is your relationship to the candidate?

3. What are the candidate's personal interests and hobbies?

Please rate the candidate by checking the appropriate box by each qualification:

Qualifications	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Comments
Character						
Conduct						
Work Attitude						
Ability to Get Along with Others						
Cooperation						
Dependability						
Honesty						
Personal Habits						
Maturity (spiritual and personal)						

4. Other comments concerning the candidate:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Appendix I**  
**SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER OR EMAIL TO THE CANDIDATE**

Candidate Name  
Candidate Address  
Candidate city, state, zip code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Our search committee enjoyed the meeting with you and your family. We appreciate the information you shared relating to your ministry.

After prayer and discussion, our committee is not ready to make a final decision, and we plan to contact other prospects.

We pray that God will lead and bless your life and ministry now and in the future. Please pray for us as we continue this vital work for Christ and His church.

Sincerely,

## **Appendix J**

### **POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR A PROSPECTIVE MINISTER**

Good interview questions cannot be answered with a simple yes or no; but good questions call for some detail and explanation in the answer. Do not be afraid to ask hard questions. Learn as much as you can about the candidate at this time. This is a compilation of possible questions for a prospective minister. Select the questions that best fit your needs, and add others as appropriate to the position and your specific context.

#### **Conversion and Ministry:**

1. Tell about your salvation experience and your call to ministry.
2. Describe important people in your life and ministry and tell how they influenced you.
3. Describe past successes and failures in your ministry.
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses in ministry?
5. How have you grown, since entering the ministry, spiritually, personally, and professionally?
6. In what areas do you still need to grow spiritually, personally, and professionally?
7. How do you allot your time daily and weekly in ministry?
8. What do you like most about ministry?
9. What do you like least about ministry?
10. Describe your spiritual health and your feelings about spiritual accountability.
11. Describe your personal, private devotional time and life.
12. Share your personal plans and goals for spiritual, personal, and professional growth.
13. What do you consider the vital doctrines of the Christian faith?
14. What are your greatest strengths and your greatest weaknesses personally, spiritually, and ministerially?
15. The major elements of kingdom service are evangelism, discipleship, leadership, communication, administration, and ministry. Of these areas, which do you consider your greatest strength in the ministry and why? Which area is your weakest in ministry and why? Describe your philosophy of ministry.
16. How do you measure success in ministry? How do you know when you have done a good job or a bad job?
17. Who are your mentors/role models in ministry (past and/or present)?
18. Why would you consider moving to another church?
19. How do you classify or describe your preaching style? Describe your process of preparing and proclaiming a sermon.
20. What books have you read recently? In addition to the Bible, what other books have greatly influenced your life and ministry?
21. What terms would you use to describe yourself theologically?

#### **Denomination and Community:**

22. What is your relationship with your Baptist State Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and your local Baptist Association?
23. Do you support the Cooperative Program and a church faithfully giving to the Cooperative Program?

24. How active are you in:
  - Associational work?
  - State convention work?
  - Southern Baptist Convention work?
  - Civic clubs/social organizations in the community?
25. Give us your beliefs concerning the basic Baptist doctrines as stated in *The Baptist Faith and Message*.
26. How do you relate to ministers and churches in your community and other denominations?

**Family and Personal Life:**

27. How do people describe your personality and your wife's personality?
28. Describe your current family and tell how each member relates to the others and to the church.
29. Do any of your family members have any special needs?
30. How do you lead and encourage spiritual growth in your family?
31. What is your wife's role in, and commitment to, your ministry?
32. To what extent is your family involved in, and supportive of, your ministry?
33. How would your family feel about moving to our church field?
34. What hobbies and interests do you and your family enjoy doing together?
35. What are your hobbies and personal interests in life?
36. What do you do for entertainment?
37. Does your family support your calling and vocation?
38. Describe your two closest friends and the importance of their friendship.
39. How do you relate to other ministers?
40. Describe your personal financial situation.
41. What is your philosophy of stewardship and tithing? Do you and your family tithe?
42. Do you have outside business activities and income? If so, please describe.
43. Describe your physical health.

**Positions and Policies:**

44. What is your theological view and opinion about the Bible?
45. What is your view concerning missions?
46. What is your conviction and personal practice concerning evangelism?
47. What is your policy and practice concerning pastoral visitation?
48. What is your policy and practice concerning pastoral counseling?
49. Do you do pastoral counseling and, if so, on what level? How extensive is your training in this area?
50. What are your convictions concerning the following issues: alcohol and drugs, gambling, pornography, racial prejudice, divorce, etc.

**Leadership:**

51. When you come to a new church, what do you think is the most important thing for you to do during the first six months? The first year?



52. What do you consider, in the order of their importance, your main responsibilities as a minister?
53. Do you think your best work can be done in a relatively short or a relatively long pastorate?
54. What is your preferred decision-making process in ministry and the church?
55. What method do you use in accomplishing the goals and business of the church (pastor-led, staff-led, committee/team-led, deacon-led, elder-led, etc.)?
56. What will be your involvement with committees/ministry teams in church?
57. How do you see the role of the deacon or elders in the church? What is your expected ministry relationship with them?
58. The church allows you the opportunity to serve and attend revivals, conventions, etc. How many of these do you normally conduct/attend in a year?
59. What style of corporate worship and preaching do you prefer? What is your opinion about music worship styles?
60. How would you describe an effective worship service?
61. What is your personal belief about the nature and purpose of the church?
62. What is your opinion and approach toward the discipleship/education ministries of the church such as Sunday School, Small Groups, Discipleship Training, etc.?
63. How proficient are you with computers and technology?
64. How active and involved are you with social media?
65. Describe your leadership style and approach. How effective have you been as a leader?
66. What is your approach in making changes in a church?
67. How do you prefer to work with the leadership of the church in planning?
68. What role do you see for church laypeople in the decision-making process of the church?
69. How do you keep up-to-date with recent developments in church ministry and related issues?
70. Describe your preferred ministry schedule for a typical week.

**Staff and Church Relationships:**

71. What is your desired working relationship with the church staff?
72. Would you expect to be able to make changes in the current staff?
73. Do you see the staff as being called by the church? Are you willing to work with the present church staff?
74. Do you schedule office hours and days off?
75. Describe your effectiveness and approach in reaching and communicating with senior adults, young adults, median adults, students, children, families, etc.
76. How would you describe your interpersonal skills?
77. What is your concept of the role of the laypeople (both men and women) in the church?
78. What is your process and approach in handling conflicts and criticism between yourself and a member of the church? Between yourself and a staff member?
79. How do you manage conflicts and disagreements in the church and between church staff?

- 80. How comfortable do you feel in working with all age groups that make up the membership of the church?
- 81. In reference to your work schedule, how do you divide your time in the range of ministerial responsibilities?

**Questions for the candidate's wife:**

- 1. Please share your personal testimony of when you became a Christian.
- 2. Describe important people in your life and how they influenced you.
- 3. Describe your private devotional time.
- 4. Were you aware of your husband's call to ministry before you married?  
If not, explain how you have come to view and understand this call to ministry.
- 5. How do you prefer to relate to the church where your husband is a minister?
- 6. What is your role in the family?
- 7. How do you feel about moving?
- 8. Will you be working outside the home? What is your education background and occupational experience?
- 9. How do you feel about being a minister's wife?
- 10. What strengths and interests do you have for ministry in the church?
- 11. Describe your family and tell how each member relates to the others and to the church.
- 12. How do you encourage and guide spiritual growth in your family?
- 13. What do you and your family enjoy doing together?
- 14. What are your personal hobbies and interests?
- 15. What is your view of the Bible?
- 16. What is your position concerning missions?
- 17. What is your conviction and personal practice concerning evangelism?
- 18. What do you appreciate most about your husband and his ministry?

## **Appendix K**

### **UNDERSTANDING SEMINARY AND ACADEMIC DEGREES**

#### **Associates Level:**

A.A.	Associate of Arts
A.S.	Associate of Science
A.R.E.	Associate of Religious Education
A.Th.	Associate of Theology

Associate degrees are usually equivalent to a two-year college course of study.

#### **Bachelors (Baccalaureate) Level:**

B.A. or A.B.	Bachelor of Arts
B.S.	Bachelor of Science
B.Th.	Bachelor of Theology
B.R.E.	Bachelor of Religious Education
B.S.M.	Bachelor of Sacred Music
B.M.Ed.	Bachelor of Music Education
B.S.N.	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
B.M.	Bachelor of Music
B.D.	Bachelor of Divinity
B.A.C.M.	Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry
B.A.C.S.	Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies
B.S.C.M.	Bachelor of Science in Christian Ministry

Bachelors degrees usually represent the equivalent of four years of college. They usually provide a broad basic education with a major emphasis.

#### **Masters Level:**

M.A.	Master of Arts
M.S.	Master of Science
M.S.Ed.	Master of Science in Education
M.B.A.	Master of Business Administration
M.M.Ed.	Master of Music Education
M.S.W.	Master of Social Work
M.Div.	Master of Divinity
M.S.T.	Master of Sacred Theology (equal to M.Div.)
M.R.E.	Master of Religious Education
M.S.M.	Master of Sacred Music
M.Th.	Master of Theology

Masters degrees usually represent one to two years of specialized study beyond the bachelors degree. The Master of Divinity is usually a three-year degree program. Master of Theology may be three years beyond the bachelors degree (earlier seminary degree now called the M.Div.), or it may be one or two years beyond the Bachelor of Divinity or Master of Divinity.

**Doctoral Level:**

Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
D.Ed.	Doctor of Education
Th.D.	Doctor of Theology
D.S.T. or S.T.D.	Doctor of Sacred Theology
D.Min.	Doctor of Ministry
D.S.M.	Doctor of Sacred Music
D.R.E.	Doctor of Religious Education
D.D.	Doctor of Divinity
D.Hum.	Doctor of Humanities

The Ph.D. and the D.Ed. may be earned in any of hundreds of major fields, including religious areas. These usually take two to five years beyond the masters degree and are considered a research doctoral degree. The Th.D., the D.S.M., D.S.T. and the D.R.E. are doctoral degrees but are limited to the areas of seminary studies. These doctoral degrees prepare one to teach in graduate school.

The D.Min. Degree is one or two years beyond the M.Div. and is considered a professional doctoral degree. This degree is designed to provide advanced, additional skills in pastoral ministry.

The D.D. and D.Hum., D.Litt. (along with several others) are normally honorary degrees and represent no class work. These degrees may be given to recognize a significant financial contribution to a school. These degrees may also be given to recognize a significant accomplishment in a given field.

**WARNING:** Any of the above degrees may be obtained through mail-order, non-accredited schools. For monetary fees in varying amounts, any degree can be bought without substantial class work. Therefore, one should be suspect of, and closely investigate, any degree obtained from schools not known to be accredited by the regional accrediting agencies.

**ALSO:** Diplomas are not degrees. Diplomas are offered by a variety of institutions for the completion of a non-standardized class or correspondence work. The holder of a diploma may or may not have even completed high school.

**HOW TO CHECK ON THE VALIDITY OF EDUCATION:**

To verify the educational attainments of a candidate, take the following steps:

1. Phone the registrar of the college, university, or seminary indicated by the candidate. Ask for information regarding the person's degrees and attainments at that institution.
2. If you are not familiar with the institution, ask how the institution is accredited.
3. Phone the registrar of an institution that you know is a legitimate, accredited school and ask if they would accept credits from a school accredited by the agency in question. You may ask them about that agency and its validity. Fully accredited schools will not normally give full credit for course work taken at a school without worthy accreditation.
4. Begin by checking the candidate's highest degree attained. If that degree is valid, then the degrees before it should also be valid.

**Appendix L**  
**EVALUATION OF MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE TRAINING AND PROCESS**

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister Search Committee Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Was the presentation clear and understandable? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Were your questions answered to your satisfaction? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. How much of the process did your committee use? ☐ None ☐ Most of it ☐ All of it
4. Where does the process need improvement?
5. Would you recommend this training to other search committees? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. How long did it take your church to call a pastor/minister?
7. Were the resumes that we supplied to your committee helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Was the material in this book helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Did you have a need for other material not supplied in this book? If so, what?
10. Who is your pastor/minister?

When did he arrive?

Comments:

The Leadership Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board would like to thank you for the opportunity to work with your committee. We trust our ministry has been helpful. Please fill out and return this questionnaire to help us improve in this important ministry to our churches.

Please mail or email this questionnaire to:  
Leadership Department  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board  
P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530  
gbarker@mbcb.org or elindigrin@mbcb.org







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