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CHAPTER 1

Having God's Man in God's Place for Ministry

For the first time in American church history, the major church groups have stopped growing and have started to shrink. In 1967, the ten major denominations started their downward trek, and they have kept going since that time. Between three and four thousand parishes dissolve or merge every year. The "signs of death" as cited by Lyle Schaller in his book, *The Local Church Looks to the Future*, are making an appearance. The churches are concentrating their resources on member-related activities. An excessive amount of time is spent in holding anniversaries in order to recall the good old days. The church has lost touch with the community in which it is located. City churches are longing for the suburbs in hopes that a change of scenery will restore life.

The church is one of the last organizations to ask for help when it is in trouble. There are cover-ups which can be employed to delay the time of real decision. As long as we can show that one person was added to the rolls in the year, we can argue that the thousands of dollars were well spent, since the value of one soul cannot be counted in dollars and cents. This type of reasoning does not always make sense when that individual was merely transferred from another church roll to ours.

There are those who confuse the invisible Church with the visible church and keep whistling in the dark as they rely upon the fact that the Church belongs to Christ, and He has promised that it will never perish. In reality, the local, visible churches are perishing. Some attempt to cover their true spiritual depravity by building a

new building. There is the hope that the large monument on the corner will offset the fact that the sense of mission has faded. The church business can be carried on by an elite minority, thus making it practically impossible for the true conditions to become known. Few seek help until they realize that it is really needed.

If a problem in the local church should be discovered, then there is a supposed cure which has been applied in many situations through the years: blame the condition upon the minister and get rid of him. Some do this in a kind way and some use "the axe." The scapegoat is isolated and sent to die in the desert. There are times when the minister is responsible for the problems. It should be remembered, however, that when you have a losing team, it does not always become a winning team by firing the manager. If the pastor is God's man in God's place for ministry, the church should be careful about dealing with God's anointed. We are not just playing games where we can change personnel by whim. We are dealing with God's work, where we should be involved in change of personnel only within the scope of His will.

An effective pastor is a very important factor in getting a church on target. He should be God's man in God's place in God's time. There is a unique place for him to fill. Three analogies give insight into his responsibilities. He is a bond servant carrying out the commands of his master. As a shepherd, he provides food, protects from foes, and makes preparation for the future. He serves as a steward managing the affairs until his Master returns. He rejoices in the privilege of being a co-laborer with Jesus Christ.

Changing times have brought many changes in the life and labors of the pastor. In days past, he maintained a unique position in the community because of his professional standing and education. This has changed. He can no longer expect that position and authority will come to him automatically because of age, profession, education, or culture. Many in the community will have an advantage in one or more of these areas. His authority must now, maybe more than ever before, be centered in his position as a spokesman for God. His authority must be based upon "thus saith the Lord."

The pastor is expected to be a preacher, counselor, teacher, administrator, theologian, public relations expert, fund raiser, and

churchman. The multiplicity of tasks confronting him causes the pastor to have real questions regarding his role. Many pastors have considered their most pressing personal question to be the matter of the purpose and ministry of the church. The bells are still ringing. The rheostats are taking the lights up and down. The doors are still opening and closing. But the machinery has caused the real mission to become clouded and sometimes even lost.

This age of revolutionary change and tension is making unprecedented demands upon the time and resources of the pastor. It is imperative that he make a careful analysis of his motivation for entering the ministry and also of his concept of the church. He needs to have a realistic view of the pastoral office. A good analysis prior to becoming involved may help to lessen the confusion later. The pastor not only needs to know God's job description for his task, but he should try to make certain that this job description is understood by the local church.

THE PASTOR

An evangelical pastor is expected to be an informed man, thoughtful, apt in independent investigation, and well oriented in respect to all truth. He is to be a man of integrity, truthful, honest, self-controlled, and morally pure. He is to be a man who is emotionally mature. He should be gracious, cheerful, positive, and cultured.

As a Christian, he should be committed to Christ, sensitive to the Spirit of God, and faithful in using the means of grace. He must be rooted in biblical truth, conscious of his position within historical Christianity, aware of his responsibility to the whole Christian community, and constant in his witnessing for Jesus Christ.

As a servant of Christ in the church, he ought to be oriented sympathetically toward the problems of his contemporaries and be alert to ways in which God's Word may be applied in specific concrete situations. He must be able to communicate the Gospel effectively. He should be able to provide challenging leadership. There should be a positive relationship maintained with the denomination in which he labors, and he should be appreciative of the traditions and contributions of other denominations.

As a member of society, he should be alert to the world in which

he lives. This should result in his opposing the evil and promoting the good. He should be ready to assume his responsibility to the community in which he resides.

James D. Glasse, in his book *Putting It Together in the Parish*, has a section dealing with competence in the ministry. He emphasizes the operational understanding of the ministry. The first of the five competencies discussed is that of relating effectively to congregations in their particular social, economic, political, and cultural context. The second competence is that required in the management of the organization. This includes such matters as goal setting and the development of leadership. The pastor must be able to help individuals mature through teaching, counseling, and helping them in spiritual living. The fourth competence involves the development of the pastor's own personal and professional resources. The final competence is in the matter of leading people in worship.¹

It is important for the pastor to recognize and develop the spiritual gift or gifts given to him by the Holy Spirit. Several of these gifts have special relevance to the pastor and his ministry.

The gift of *teaching* is mentioned in Romans 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11. It is the divine enablement whereby a believer is able to communicate the Word of God by explaining and applying the truth of the Scriptures.

The gift of *pastor-teacher* is mentioned only in Ephesians 4:11. This carries with it the idea of feeding, protecting, and expressing concern. This gift carries in its meaning the thought of giving special attention and self-sacrifice to those under his shepherding care.

The gift of *evangelism* is mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 and pertains to the divine enablement of the believer to proclaim the Gospel and witness the result of men being born into the family of God. The gift is the same in mass evangelism and in personal evangelism.

The gift of *exhortation* is accompanied by the divine enablement whereby people respond practically to the sharing of the Word. It is the gift which provides the ability for a man to disciple another in the things of the Lord. It is the ability to stimulate faith in others.

The gift of *administration* involves the ability to rule within the

body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, the gift is designated "to govern," meaning to guide. In Romans 12:8 the word means "to preside, rule, or govern."

The gift of *helps*, in Romans 12:7, refers to service, or ministry. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 it is a word meaning "to lay hold of" or "exchange." In both cases, it carries the meaning of one helping to carry the burden of another. God gives some believers a special sensitivity to the needs of others and the ability to do something about these needs.

THE PASTORAL OFFICE

The offices of bishop and elder are the same (Titus 1:5,7), and the pastoral office (Eph 4:11) belongs to the bishop-elder category. There are two classes of elders: the teaching elders, who also rule, and elders who rule but who ordinarily do not teach. The pastor must truly be a gift of God to the church (Eph 4:11). His personal, moral, and spiritual qualifications must be recognized by the church (Ac 20:17-35; 1 Co 12:1-11; 1 Ti 3:1-7; 4:13-16; 2 Ti 1:6; 2:2; Titus 1:5-9).

It is the duty of the teaching elder to declare his understanding of the Word of God concerning the great issues of our day. It is his duty to teach the stand of the wider church, denominational and national, on these issues. It is also his responsibility to raise all the important moral problems he feels to be inherent in these positions. The congregation, with the leadership of the pastor and in relation to Scripture, will seek to find the will of God through His Word.

It is the minister's task to bring the judgment of God as well as the comforts of His grace upon the congregation and its life. It is his task to make the glory, judgment, and love of God real in the midst of the community of men. He must bring to bear on the concrete issues of life the reality of God's presence through His Word of judgment and promise. The pastor is a witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The minister must learn to share leadership and responsibility. It is his task to equip the laity for its mission. The minister must develop the skill of making conflict creative and rewarding enough so that it will not be resisted as being evil. He must develop the skill

of encouraging trust and honesty. He must be able to facilitate communication and promote dialogue. The development of these skills is discussed at length in separate chapters in this book.

The pastor must provide the congregation with preaching and worship, teaching, pastoral care, and administration. The Bible divides the tasks of the minister into two classifications. He is to feed the flock of God and take oversight thereof (1 Pe 5:2). As the overseer, or bishop, his first duty is to rule (Ro 12:8; 1 Th 5:12; 1 Ti 5:17). This means that he is to superintend or preside over the congregation. As the teacher, his duties are largely educational. Their exercise should produce a well-informed, spiritually wise congregation. He should give attention in this educational ministry to reading, teaching, and preaching (1 Ti 4:11,13; 2 Ti 4:1-2). The ministry of shepherding and teaching should be carried out without desiring personal glory.

THE PULPIT COMMITTEE

The process of finding God's man for God's place in God's time will vary, basically because of differing denominational practices. Where no denomination is involved, the local church has greater freedom but also faces greater problems.

The most critical experience of the pastor's adjustment in his vocation comes when he faces his first church. That first church can either make him or break him, humanly speaking. He may be tempted to throw his weight around before he has any.

If the church which is seeking a pastor is a "good" church, there will be an abundance of interested aspirants. If the church is a star of lesser magnitude, there may still be a number who in desperation will seek to fasten their wagon to even this small star. Pulpit committees normally prefer to seek the man rather than having the man seek them. The problem on both sides, however, is what is God's will in this whole matter.

Three suggestions may prove helpful in discovering God's will. We can discover His will in His Word. His will never contradicts His Word. His will can be discovered through the works of providence. God is in charge and can and does make "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the

called according to his purpose" (Ro 8:28). His will can be discovered through the witness of the Spirit. He gives that feeling of either confirmation or dissatisfaction within the soul whereby the child of God has an inner assurance that something is or is not His will.

The pulpit committee may be elected by the congregation or designated by an official board of the church, or the official board itself may serve as a pulpit committee. In a church where the center of power rests in the congregation, it is recommended that the congregation elect the pulpit committee.

The committee should be small in number and representative in membership. A pulpit committee of five regular members and two alternates should be adequate for a medium-sized church. The two alternates should attend all meetings and should vote only when one of the regular members is absent. Some steps should be taken to make sure that the membership of the committee is representative. The five members may consist of two from the ruling board of the church, one from nonoffice-holding membership of the church, one representing the interests and concerns of the youth, and one member at large. It is wise to have both men and women on the pulpit committee.

The written ballot can be divided into sections, with several nominations for each committee post. The nominations may be made by the nominating committee of the church or by the official church board if no nominating committee is provided in the church constitution. Before a name is included on the ballot, the individual should be contacted to make certain that he will serve if elected. Additional nominations can be made from the floor.

Once the committee has been elected, its first task is to elect a chairman and a secretary. It is normally wise to have one of the two members from the ruling board of the church serve as chairman. He will be the one to make the reports of progress to the church. The secretary of the committee will be responsible for correspondence with all the prospective candidates, the mailing and receipt of questionnaires, and the keeping of the minutes for the committee. Reports will also have to be prepared for the church.

The committee should begin its work by studying the biblical

purposes of a church. This will lay the foundation for establishing a job description for a new pastor.

The purpose of the church should be noted in the church constitution. If they are not, then the pulpit committee should ask the church to clarify in writing what the purposes of the church are, since they will expect the pastor to guide them in the fulfillment of these purposes.

The pulpit committee will want to make a careful analysis of the Scriptures to determine the spiritual gifts desirable in a potential candidate. Some pulpit committees have had a tendency to establish human boundaries such as age or marital status. When this is done, potential candidates are often automatically eliminated from consideration because of personal biases rather than scriptural grounds.

When a church needs names for consideration, the denominational office or officials can often supply a list of names of men who might consider a change. This is one of the blessings gleaned from being part of a denomination.

The committee may turn for help to Christian colleges, Bible schools, and seminaries which have placement departments. It is their responsibility to work with churches and ministers seeking God's man for God's place.

The members of the congregation may be invited to submit names of possible candidates to the committee. It should be made clear that these names will be given careful and prayerful consideration, but all may not be contacted, for any number of reasons.

There may be pastors who can supply names of men who might consider a change of pastorate. In some cases, the pastor giving the name may not want his name made public.

The pulpit committee may, at this point, have several names before it for consideration. Some on the committee may know some of these men already, and they can share some information. The committee should at least know where the men are presently serving. If they are in a denominational church, the committee can check the yearbook and discover the size of the present church, salary, and several other meaningful bits of information.

The names can then be sorted into groups. The most likely prospects are placed in group one. This group will contain the names of

those who on the surface seem to have the best potential for service in this type of church. The leading of the Holy Spirit will be an important consideration at each decision point.

A preliminary questionnaire will be formulated and sent to this first group. The questionnaire should be simple and easy to complete. The committee will want to know whether the potential candidate would under any circumstances feel that he could consider a call at this time. If there is a possibility, then he should describe his general spiritual history, educational background, and church experience. When the committee receives this preliminary questionnaire, some of the names will be automatically excluded from further consideration. Dependent upon the response from the first group, the committee may want to select a second group of names and send the preliminary questionnaire to those men also.

When, after prayer and study, three or four names surface as strong possibilities, the next step should be taken. This involves the formulation and sending of a more extensive and exacting questionnaire. This will request more specific information regarding personal spiritual background, academic preparation, professional experience, pastoral record, denominational connections and cooperation, and three or four names of individuals who would be able to provide further insight regarding the potential candidate. The committee should also request a short statement of faith and list a few specific items to be considered. This not only will assure the committee of getting the specific information they desire but will also give the possible candidate some hint as to the type of church that is considering him and the matters which they consider of special importance.

When an individual has taken time to complete such a questionnaire, the committee should make certain that appreciation is expressed for his work and that he is notified regarding the general progress they are making as they search for God's man for that church. This questionnaire should put God's spotlight upon one or two individuals who seem to be special possibilities.

The next step in investigation is visiting the church where the possible candidate is now serving. The committee should go unannounced and try to be rather inconspicuous in the congregation. After the morning and/or evening services, the committee may

want to caucus and decide whether they would like to meet personally with the potential candidate to get to know him a bit better.

If they decide they would like to have further contact with him, they can arrange such a meeting. After finding out whether he is still open to a change of pastorates, they can give him a copy of their church constitution, a statement of faith, a description of the purposes of the church, a job description, and other information which they feel would be helpful. The potential candidate should be given time to consider this material and to seek God's leading and enlightenment.

After some days have passed, the pulpit committee should contact the individual. If he is interested in pursuing the matter further, a meeting can be arranged where he can discuss matters with the pulpit committee. The pulpit committee should be prepared to lead in this discussion. A good way to begin is to ask the guest for his testimony regarding his commitment to Jesus Christ. After the committee has asked questions and provided information, the potential candidate may then be given the opportunity to ask questions that he may have. At this point, both the pulpit committee and the potential candidate will have gained much information. The committee must now decide whether they want to invite him to candidate at the church. If it is mutually agreed that this shall take place, then some careful planning should be done.

The pulpit committee and the church should remember that the candidate is not to be judged just on the basis of one or two sermons preached within the church but rather on the basis of the thorough examination and recommendation of the pulpit committee. He is also to be evaluated on the basis of his general rapport with the people.

The ideal length of time for a candidating experience is two consecutive Sundays and the week in between. This gives the candidate an opportunity to preach at least four times and conduct a midweek service. It also provides time for a church fellowship time. The candidate will also have an opportunity to visit some of the homes and become acquainted with the church and neighborhood. The pulpit committee should take advantage of every opportunity to give the church people a chance to meet and converse with him.

The church is responsible for caring for all of the expenses in-

curred by the candidate during this visit, together with a stipend to provide for the pulpit supply in his home church. This money should also cover the visit of his wife and even his family, if possible.

THE PASTORAL CANDIDATE

There are several items which the pastoral candidate will try to clarify through quiet observation.

1. Do the people carry their Bibles to church? Do they use them during the Scripture reading and sermon?
2. Is there a genuine sense of freedom while preaching in the church?
3. Are there people of all ages and sexes in the congregation?
4. Is the church favorably located with regard to the shopping district and housing developments?
5. Is the congregation lower class, middle class, or upper class?
6. Is there potential for growth and room for expansion?
7. What is the number and nature of services scheduled for the coming week and month? Check the bulletin, church literature, and tract rack.
8. Is there any evidence of the church's impact upon the community?
9. Who appears to be the church boss? Who really runs the church?
10. Does the congregation appear to be of one mind in supporting the denomination? Check the bulletin, mission list, and literature.
11. Was the previous pastor held in high esteem? What might have been his reason for leaving?
12. Do the people appear to be hungry for the Word of God?
13. Is there a church study for the pastor?
14. Is the parsonage suitable for the pastor's family?
15. Does the attendance at prayer meeting give evidence of an interest in spiritual development?
16. What is the general cultural and educational background of the congregation?

17. How is the church equipped with regard to heating, air conditioning, ventilation, and lighting?
18. How is the church equipped with regard to visual aids, cloak rooms, and parish house?
19. Is the church located in a good neighborhood?
20. What appear to be the major hindrances to the success of this church?
21. What is the average attendance at the various services?
22. What is the quality of the work of the church staff?
23. Is an attitude of friendliness evident? Are people greeted upon entrance to the church? Upon leaving it?
24. Does the quality of congregational singing indicate at least moderate musical talent within the church?
25. Is there a spirit of reverence before the service? Or is there talking or restlessness?
26. Do the ushers, choir, and organist appear to have made adequate preparation for the service?
27. Are there a Sunday evening service, Sunday school, youth organization, and other scheduled activities?
28. Are there an adequate music department, qualified organist, choir director, and good hymnal?
29. Do the people seem to enjoy coming to church?

The pastoral candidate should try to learn the answers to the following questions by discussing them with responsible people. He should make it clear that at this point he is only seeking information and not expressing personal desires.

1. What are the statistics on church membership and attendance?
2. Is a parsonage provided for the minister?
3. Are parsonage utilities paid by the church?
4. Does the church make any provision for secretarial help?
5. Does the church make any provision for the pastor's car expense?
6. Does the pastor get an annual vacation? How many Sundays or how many weeks?
7. Does the church have a budget? What items are included in it? Do the members have copies?
8. Is the church interested in missions? How much does it give?

9. What is the financial condition of the church? Is the church in debt?
10. Are there plans for building in the near future?
11. How does the church raise money?
12. Does the church have a constitution? Obtain a copy if it does.
13. Is the church incorporated?
14. How long has the church been without a pastor?
15. Is there a known reason for the previous pastor's leaving? How long was the previous minister there?
16. How well is the Sunday school organized? Has the leadership received training?
17. Does the church own any audiovisual equipment?
18. Is an excessive amount of visitation required of the pastor?
19. Can the pastor rely on deacons for aid in visitation?
20. How many and what meetings will the church expect the pastor to attend?
21. If a call to the church is accepted, would it be for an indefinite period of time? What is the church procedure for severing relationships with its pastor?
22. Are there responsibilities which the church expects to place upon the minister's wife or family?
23. Does the church provide a nursery?
24. How many men have already been considered for this pastorate since the former pastor left? How many men have been offered a call and refused it?
25. Does the church make provision for moving expenses?
26. Is there an assistant to the minister? What are his duties? To whom is he responsible?
27. Is there a deacon available to accompany the minister on emergency night calls?
28. Does the church have a policy regarding open or closed communion?
29. Does the church have policies regarding divorce? Remarriage? Membership? The holding of office?
30. Do all the deacons believe in and practice tithing?
31. Does the church pay the organist, choir director, secretary, assistant pastor, song leader, sexton, and other staff?
32. Has the church ever had a membership visitation program?

33. What day of the week does the church consider the minister's day off?
34. Does the church have a policy regarding the use of the church for weddings and funerals of nonbelievers and nonmembers?
35. Has there been an increase in the church attendance and budget during the past five years?
36. What are the church organizations for youth, young couples, and adults?
37. What is the church's attitude toward lodges, councils of churches, drinking, smoking, dancing, church fairs, bingo, church suppers, and other activities?
38. What type of special evangelistic services does the church expect to promote? How often?
39. To what extent is there cooperation with other local churches?
40. Is there a doctrinal statement and church covenant to which the pastor and people must adhere?
41. What is the church policy regarding offerings being taken by outside speakers? How much does the church pay supply preachers?

The pastoral candidate should provide the pulpit committee with information pertaining to the following:

1. His attitude toward the privacy of his home
2. The hours he expects to spend in study without interruption, except for emergencies
3. The name he prefers ("Pastor Smith," not "Joe" or "Reverend Smith")
4. An understanding that the wife is not the assistant pastor
5. His position on tithing
6. His attitude toward marriage of divorced people, mixed marriages, and marriages of nonbelievers
7. His practice of premarital counseling
8. His attitude toward church finance, suppers, sales, and other fund-raising activities
9. His attitude toward denominational meetings
10. The extent to which he will cooperate with other churches
11. His attitude toward missions and giving to them

12. The procedure he will follow when leaving town for twenty-four hours or more
13. What he believes to be biblical preaching
14. The procedure of obtaining permission from the church board before accepting outside speaking engagements
15. A summary of his doctrinal position
16. His position regarding baptism, Lord's Supper, and dedication of infants
17. His view of the specific responsibilities of deacons
18. The desire for a private telephone line
19. The possibility of his teaching a Sunday School class
20. The desire for his office to be private
21. The desire that no one should speak for him, privately or publicly, unless he specifically asks them to do so

At least a short period of time should elapse between the candidating experience and calling for a vote by the church. This will give time for extended prayer on behalf of both the church and the candidate.

The vote for the calling of a pastor should always be by secret ballot. The number of votes necessary for extending a call is normally set by the church constitution. Absentee or proxy votes are not normally accepted. The votes should be counted and the results made public at the meeting. Note that we have been dealing with only one candidate; therefore there is no competitive voting. When the voting is complete and the findings have been declared, the church should move to notify the candidate at once.

If the vote is favorable, the candidate should be given the count which was taken on the first ballot, and he should be assured that a letter giving the specifics of the call will be in the mail in a few days.

The formal letter of call should include information on such matters as housing or housing allowance, salary, length of vacation, car allowance, moving expenses, utilities covered, insurance, and other matters discussed and agreed upon by the then potential candidate and the committee. This letter of specifics is important and should be formulated with care. If the pulpit committee has any questions

about specific items within the letter, they should go back to the church for clarification.

The candidate will normally need from one to two weeks to come to a settled conviction regarding the Lord's will in connection with the call. If more time is needed, he can ask for an extension.

If the candidate feels led to accept the call, his present church should be notified on or before the date of the reading of the acceptance letter in the new church. The letter of acceptance should be gracious and general, with the exception of noting the time when he plans to arrive on the new field. The letter of acceptance will indicate that a letter of specifics will follow, which will be shared with the church at a later time. This letter will include the matters mutually agreed upon by the candidate and the committee. It is important that the entire church family know of the agreements which have been made with the new pastor.

As soon as the new pastor has accepted the call, the pulpit committee should send notices to all potential candidates who were kind enough to complete questionnaires, advising them that a pastor has been called.

The church should call its new pastor for an indefinite period of time. A yearly vote takes away a sense of security on the part of the pastor and his family. It also tends to add a note of instability to the work of the church. It will take a new pastor at least three years to get to know a small church and at least five years to get to know a larger church. The church family should plan to be tolerant and give the pastor time to survey the situation as well as time to build.

THE PASTOR AND A CALL TO A NEW PARISH

As for the pastor who has accepted the call, his church constitution will normally note the amount of time required between the giving of a resignation and the actual consummation of his ministry there. Some denominations advise as much as three months. Several feel that this is too long a period and that thirty days is a more reasonable length of time.

This interim period will be a very busy time for the pastor. All of the people who have been planning to have him and his family over will now realize that this must be done immediately. He may find

that his family will be entertained for one or two meals each day. He must also proceed to pack his books and belongings. If his new charge is many miles away, he will have to decide whether to sell some of his present furniture and buy new at his new location or pay for the moving of his present furniture.

After he has read his resignation, he is a "lame duck" pastor. Everyone realizes that he is merely filling the gap until the next permanent pastor can be interviewed and invited. People will be hesitant to join the church during this period, since they have no assurance of the future direction of the pastoral ministry of the church. The church constituency will be hesitant to institute new programs, since these might not fit into the plans of the new pastor. For these and many other reasons, the pastor who has resigned should not remain more than thirty days before moving.

The pastor who has resigned should not participate in the process of seeking his successor, but he should do all he can to help prepare the way for him. The church should be in good condition. A list of members should be available for the new pastor. The new pastor will appreciate little hints that will help him in calling and shopping.

A pastor should let his people know that when he leaves their church, he is really going to leave it. He will want them to show the same support and loyalty to the new pastor as they have shown to himself. He will pray for them, but he should not make regular trips back nor in any way take part in solving future problems that may arise. Correspondence with the members of one's former church should be held to a minimum. If there is correspondence, no references should be made to church problems and future possibilities in the church just left. When a pastor leaves a church, he should leave it alone and not dabble in its life and activities. He should help former parishioners forget him so that they can more effectively center their attention on the work of the Lord through their new pastor.

THE PASTOR AND HIS NEW PARISH

As the new pastor heads toward his new field of service for Christ, there are several matters which he hopes his new parishion-

ers will keep in mind. It would be presumptuous for him to give such a list to the church, but if someone else made this list available for the new church to take care of, it would be a great relief to the new pastor.

A check must be ready for the movers when the van arrives. Most companies will not unload the furniture until they are paid. They will charge rental until the check is forthcoming. If the pastor is delayed in arriving, the furniture should be unloaded but not unpacked, since the contents of the boxes are personal.

It would be a pleasant surprise for a new pastor to walk into the pantry of his new parsonage and find it stocked with canned goods. Some churches even arrange a schedule for bringing a hot dish to the parsonage door once or twice a day during the first week.

The new pastor will need a complete set of keys to the church, the parsonage, and any other church buildings. He will also appreciate knowing where the keys are kept for the church closets, offices, and vehicles.

He will want a private telephone line. The church may be able to arrange this for him or have someone available to go with him to the telephone office and to help him contact other utility offices in the community.

He will be concerned about any responsibility which he may have for the bulletins for the first Sunday and in the future. It will be helpful if he does not have to worry about the bulletin for the first Sunday.

He probably will not want to be called Reverend but prefer to be referred to as Pastor. It is normal that the pastor not be referred to by his first name nor his wife by hers, except when they are in very small, private groups of adults.

It will be difficult for the new pastor to find his way around the community. Perhaps a deacon could give some help in this matter by providing a map of the community with significant markings locating such buildings as schools, hospitals, shopping areas, and town or city offices. One of the deacons may also be available to go with the pastor on emergency calls at night.

He will appreciate being taken by his parishioners to his first denominational meetings and conferences. They will then be able to introduce him to the group as their new pastor.

Everyone knows that the pastor is relatively ignorant about the church when he arrives. It has been suggested that he seek as much information as possible about the church. Since he is new in the parish, people will not feel he is prying. The pastor's main concern for the first few months is gathering information. There will be many meetings that the new pastor and his wife will be expected to attend, especially during the first few weeks in the new parish. If there are small children, the cost of babysitting can mount up. The church might provide some help at this point, both in personnel and in finances.

As a new pastor, he is desirous of knowing the church "secrets." Many churches have unwritten rules which are actually followed but which the pastor has no way of knowing unless someone tells him. These may include such policies as: no divorced people can hold office in the church; an evangelistic invitation must be given at the close of each service; the morning service must end promptly at noon; no one can serve on a board or committee unless he can be present at all meetings. Any number of other items may be included in this list.

There may also be rather unique services which this church has held for years. It would be helpful for him to know of these well in advance. One church, for instance, cooperated each year in a community service for burning Christmas trees. Another church held an early morning service each Christmas day. Another church always had at least one series of revival meetings each year. Some churches may even have a speaker engaged for special meetings in the future. The new pastor's ability to unearth these secret procedures and customs and his ability to deal with them constructively may have a very positive effect upon his ministry at that church.

Each church has its own identity, its uniqueness arising from various factors. There may be geographical barriers dividing the parish or geographical oddities which will definitely influence the church activity. There are sociological factors, so it is important to know who lives in the community and how long they have been there. The cultural, racial, and ethnic factors will have an influence upon programs which may be started and special features which need to be emphasized, and in some cases will pose problems for the membership committee. There are value systems, traditions, and habits

which will exert an influence. The church may hold a certain viewpoint on such issues as smoking, movies, and lodge membership. Every church operates on the basis of its history; the past experiences of the church will have its influence upon present and future activities and plans. The size of the church building and church membership will also be significant; for instance, a large building may demand an undue amount of money from the budget to keep it functioning.

The new pastor will find it helpful to make a list of the community resources available. These may be discovered by checking the telephone directory, or the city register, or contacting the chamber of commerce. He will then want to list beside each the reason for considering that resource important and how he can contact that resource. Once a relationship between church and community is established and developed, it can work both ways. Both the church and the community can profit.

Any increase in attendance during the first year should be evaluated with wisdom. It does not necessarily mean that the work of the new pastor is better than that of his predecessor. The fact that a pastor is new in the community will in itself bring a temporary increase in attendance and enthusiasm. Remember the old adage, "A new broom sweeps clean." Just novelty and curiosity may be the reasons for increased attendance. Pay more attention to an increase in attendance after a year rather than after the first month.

The pastor should make certain that he becomes known as a calling pastor. He will want to call on his entire membership during his first year, if at all possible. That first call is a get-acquainted call and should not be of extended duration except in rural localities. The pastor's wife might want to accompany her husband on this first round of visits. This will strengthen the emphasis on getting acquainted. The pastor will have to cut down on the number of calls after his first contact with the congregation since he cannot keep his feet going constantly through the parish and also have his head back in his study preparing messages from the Word. Both the pastor's feet and his head must share in the ministry.

During the first few months on the field, the pastor and his wife should provide opportunity for the church people to see the interior of the parsonage, perhaps by holding an open house. Most human

beings have an inborn curiosity. The new parishioners will be interested in discovering how the new pastor and his wife have decorated the parsonage. Rather than making the parishioners think up excuses for getting inside the parsonage, a new pastor should let them know he is going to invite everyone to come. They will then give him some time to settle, knowing that he has promised to invite them soon. The parishioners will appreciate his willingness to let them see his home since he as pastor will be visiting in their homes.

The pastor should use the first few months to gather information regarding the church's past and present accomplishments and failures. The procedures followed by his predecessor may not at first seem wise to the new pastor. As he discovers the procedures of his predecessor there may be a temptation to dub him an ignoramus. But he should wait a while; the former pastor may have been far wiser than the new one thinks. Time often adds its touch of wisdom. There may be unique features in that particular church which necessitated particular procedures.

A new pastor will have to listen on many occasions to a discussion of that which the predecessor did and did not do. He must listen, but he should say little. Remember that if they talk about the former pastor after he has gone, they will probably talk about the new one when he leaves.

Most churches have a church controller, or "church boss." This individual may not even be in an official position, but he has extensive influence within the church. The pastor should find out who he is and assist him in maturing spiritually. Remember, it may take a long time to discover this leading individual. He or she may stand back in the shadows at the beginning and show his real identity only about the time of the first church business meeting. But if he is growing spiritually, he will support needed programs and will also lead others to support them. When this individual speaks publicly or privately, he will sway the opinions of many of the voting members.

The pastor will want to be cautious in selecting helpers during the first year. First impressions are often misleading. Many who appear to have potential for service do not possess the ability to carry a project through to completion. Many will want to establish close

friendships with the pastor and his family during the early months, but only time will indicate where wise friendships can be formed. "Pine log" friendships burn brightly for a time but do not last.

God never makes mistakes, but pastors and pulpit committees are fallible. We would have less cause for concern and fewer problems if we could always be certain that God's man was in God's place for ministry. It is more profitable for a pulpit committee to spend a long time and seek special spiritual guidance in joining the pastor and the church than to have to go through the agonies of being forced to sever the relationship later. A pastor should be selected with prayer and care. The pastor and the church must both be on target.

ADDITIONAL READING

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