

BC Association

Search Committee Protocol

Revised 03/17/09

Step 1-Initiate

A. Primary Responsibility of the Search Committee

Your task is to select a lead pastor or associate who will lead, direct, and guide your congregational ministry for Christ in the world. In some cases you may also be asked to coordinate pulpit supply, determine overall staffing needs, respond to conflicting visions for future ministry, and even create a financial package for an incoming candidate. However it is necessary to create boundaries that will protect you from being sidetracked from your primary responsibility.

Your responsibility is to find the best possible candidate for your church. Too often search committees dismiss serious consideration of a younger candidate just out of training or an older minister with significant years of service to give. In doing so, great opportunities can be missed. A younger person brings to ministry freshness and vitality that can be new energy and vision to your congregation.

Keep in mind that you are seeking an individual who will meet your church's specific current needs as well as help your church fulfill its ministry in the future. Your committee's primary function is to find that minister and recommend him to your church for approval and call. Your regional minister will help you with assessment tools that will enable your committee to better understand the congregation's vision of ministry.

As you prepare to call a new pastor:

- Actively seek the leading of God's Spirit.
- Give thoughtful, prayerful consideration to each potential candidate.
- Carry out your responsibilities with integrity and with confidentiality.

Resources: Characteristics of a Search Committee Candidate
 Search Committee Covenant

B. Forming a Search Committee

- 1. Appointment of Members:** This process should be carried out prayerfully. Your church constitution may provide guidelines for electing committee members according to title, or the board* may be responsible to appoint the committee. In such a case, it is helpful to let the congregation members put forward names. Each appointee should make this responsibility a priority in the coming months. A search committee comprised of five to seven people will make for efficient group dynamics.

*Throughout this document the word 'board' will be used in reference to the highest level of elected leaders in the church.

Practical Observations:

- a. Frequently search committee members are chosen according to the area of church life they represent, but this is not necessarily the best approach. To find good candidates ask:
 - Who has a passion to pray about the church and its ministry?
 - Who has demonstrated spiritual and personal maturity in relationships with others?
 - Who in the church has a good track record of search committee work?
 - Who has experience hiring or managing staff in their workplace?
 - Who has an understanding of the pressures pastors and their families face?
 - Who is gifted at setting priorities and managing details?
 - Who has experience in denominational life?
- b. It is important that pastoral staff persons (e.g. associate pastor, youth pastor) not be on a search committee seeking a senior pastor.

- 2. The Importance of the Chairperson:** The chair is a pivotal position on any committee. A weak chairperson will inevitably lead to a lengthy, confusing and frustrating search process. On the other hand an insensitive or autocratic chairperson will similarly generate a stressful and frustrating set of dynamics. Somewhere between these extremes most committees include among their members that special person who is balanced and sensitive in thinking and acting, who has a clear grasp of the task ahead and can articulate it, and who is devoutly committed to Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church. This is the person that you need to chair your search.

The chair becomes the key individual who will determine the actual nature of the meetings and whether or not the search process keeps moving. The chair must also accept responsibility for the orderly and straightforward conduct of business, and a clear process of communication and reporting.

The chair is also accountable to elicit a co-operative commitment from each committee member to give the necessary time and attention to the committee work.

Qualities of a Good Chairperson

- Able to lead the group to consensus
- Able to involve every member of the committee in sharing their ideas and opinions
- Able to fairly bring his/her own viewpoint into the discussions without controlling the decision-making process

C. Review Pastoral Staff Search Information Together

At first glance, this process may appear to be somewhat overwhelming. However as you become familiar with the process, you will discover that it portrays in an orderly manner the 'best practices' that congregations have used through the years. At your first meeting review the material together; you will discover that at least someone in the group will navigate the material more easily than others. Make that person, in conjunction with the chair, your information resource person.

D. Schedule Meeting with the Regional Minister

The BC Association has dedicated itself to resource the process of pastoral search. The Regional Minister (RM) is available to provide assistance to your search committee as you seek to find a pastor for your congregation. Normally all communication between the RM and your committee will proceed through the chairperson.

The RM is available to meet with your committee at this stage to answer process questions and provide encouragement. Such a meeting may be face to face or through teleconference. In some cases, depending on schedule, he will ask an experienced layperson or pastor to visit with you.

E. Establish Reporting Process to Congregation

At the beginning of this process, it is good to introduce the committee to the congregation:

- Explain briefly the steps you will be following
- Request prayer support for the committee members and the task they are undertaking
- Specific information, such as names being considered must **not** be shared
- Explain the ways you will be providing input as time goes on
- If the previous minister is still in the church, he or she should only be provided with the information that is released to the congregation as a whole.

F. Predictable Dips in the Road

1. **Discouragement:** At some point in a search committee's tenure weariness will set in. Theodore McConnell, who coined the phrase "exhaustion cycle", predicts that will strike the typical committee at the six or seven month point. If the committee's work has been marked by clear goals and marked progress, any discouragement will not be as severe.
2. **Power Plays:** It is predictable that powerful people, or people who seek to have disproportional influence, will seek to influence the work of the search committee. The most acceptable resolution to this possible pitfall is to see to it that "power players" do not get assigned to the search committee.

Step 2-Survey

A. Great Decisions Begin with Solid Foundations

Four variables contribute to successful pastoral search. Obviously, the committee will seek to discover as much as possible about a candidate by asking significant questions of credible references. At the same time a good match will also depend upon your ability to uncover your church's history, unwritten values, and preferred future. An accurate understanding of the needs of your community will enable you to call a pastor who is able to lead you to respond to others. An exit interview with the outgoing pastor, if available, will also be profitable.

At first impression the survey requirements suggested below will appear too extensive. Experience has shown, however, that the more thorough your portrait is, the more helpful the information will be to both committee and candidate. **While the survey process should come**

under the oversight of the search committee membership, others can be delegated to implement this process.

- 1. Church History:** Assign someone from outside your committee to prepare a congregational history document outlining when the congregation was formed, when buildings were built, names and tenure of pastors etc. It is also helpful to create a personal narrative history revealing the highs and lows of the church through the years.
- 2. Pastoral Exit Interview:** (optional) An exit interview conducted just prior to the pastor's departure will accomplish the following:
 - Provide opportunity for the pastor and congregation to say thank you to each other
 - Reveal patterns that contributed to past accomplishments and difficulties
 - Bring meaningful closure between leaders prior to departure
 - Enhance the future ministry of this pastor, the new one, and your congregation

If the pastor is married, the spouse should be invited to participate in the exit interview. In some circumstances it may be advisable for the spouse to be interviewed separately. Include board members, pastoral staff, and church members as necessary.

Resource: Pastoral Exit Interview

- 3. Anonymous Feedback:** Distribute a questionnaire, such as the one attached, to leaders and regular attendees. Aim for at least 30 responses after two weeks. Answers may remain anonymous but should be reviewed and summarized by a team that includes two respected church leaders and an outside representative from the association. Recommendations shall be presented to the board and the search committee. An agreement should be reached between the board and the BC Association as to how to respond to the presenting issues. Follow-up meetings should be scheduled in three, six and twelve months.

Resource: Anonymous Feedback Tool

- 4. Core Values Discovery:** In marriage and business, spoken and unspoken values influence how decisions are made and how we respond to conflict and the unexpected. The greater the number of people involved, the more difficult it can be to discover the most potent influences. The same is true in congregational life. Distribute the following document to different groups – church leaders, moms and tots participants, recent graduates etc. for discussion. A summary of the results should be presented to the board, the search committee, and the RM.

Resource: What Currently Has the Most Influence in This Church?

- 5. Congregational Profile:** Collect information regarding how your congregation reflects the demographic of your community, its programmes and financial health.

Resource: Congregational Profile

In addition to this congregational profile two additional tools should be used in order to give a complete picture of the congregation: Ministry Match and Natural Church Development Congregational Survey.

Typically, the Ministry Match tool is used by individuals, however for comparison purposes it is of value for the tool to be used, in a modified way, by a group who will respond on behalf of the church. In doing so, it will be possible to compare the church with potential candidates who have also taken the Ministry Match themselves. Specifically the comparison will demonstrate similarities and differences between church and candidate temperament, motivation type, leadership style and approach to participation. The RM is the best person to lead the discussion at this point. Although a questionnaire will not be used, the issues found in the Ministry Match will be discussed that the group will define the profile that best reflects the church.

Although not required it is recommended that the church also do the Natural Church Development Congregational Survey. This tool has been widely used throughout Canada and internationally to help churches identify and understand their health profile in relation to eight quality characteristics. In the end the church will receive a health report that will be very helpful when in conversation with potential candidates. From this report the church and future pastor will have a benchmark from which to measure progress in the movement toward increased church health. This may also give the church an indication as to the strengths, passions and abilities needed in a future pastor.

Resource: Natural Church Development Congregational Survey
Contact your Regional Minister

- 6. Community Profile:** Demographical information based upon Statistics Canada material that can provide strategic insight regarding your community is available – i.e. cultural heritage, language groups, median age and income, religious preferences etc. can be obtained from your local government offices or Outreach Canada according to postal code for a nominal fee. Contact your local government offices or www.outreach.ca

Resources: Community Profile
Sample Outreach Canada report –

<http://w2.outreach.ca/resources/research/resources%20available/demographics/sample%202001%20community%20profile.pdf>

- 7. Preferred Attributes of an Incoming Pastor:** You have spent time probing your congregation's past, looked at its present membership and your community, and have begun to see more clearly, the direction you need to go in the future. You are beginning to recognize the leadership gifts you will need in the days ahead. What you now have to determine, is what leadership gifts are already in the church, and which ones you will need in your next pastor.

Resources: Preferred Attributes of an Incoming Pastor

www.surveymonkey.com – Create and analyze your own easy to use custom web survey to assess valuable responses from a large portion of your congregation.

- 8. Develop a Job Description:** The development of a job description is one of the most significant responsibilities presented to a congregation. In some cases this will be the responsibility of the search committee, in others the senior board. A well-defined and clearly articulated statement is a foundation for successful ministry. It is important

the congregation and the pastor have the same understanding of the church's mission, and the part he has to play in fulfillment of that mission.

Though it is important to secure as much valid input from the congregation as possible, it is also important for the search committee to secure the advice, counsel and guidance of the regional minister.

A well conceived job description would include the following:

- **Preferred Personal Qualities:** Cover such matters as relational skills, spiritual gifts, sensitivity to the identified contemporary issues in the church and its community.
- **Desired Professional Skills:** Define expectations in the areas of counseling, preaching, administration, leadership ability and communication. Specific details such as particular target groups etc. can be added.
- **Job Responsibilities:** Create a clear delineation of the actual duties and responsibilities attached to the specific pastoral responsibility. Define the respective duties and responsibilities that are attached to each responsibility.

It should be noted that the proposed job description should also be seen as a guideline for hiring, but the final job description should be developed after with the newly selected pastor so as to express the uniqueness of his personal gifts, skills and expertise in the light of the needs of the church. Job description samples may be obtained from the ABA office.

9. Prepare Congregation and Community Information Package:

Compile in one file a copy of each of the documents prepared in Step 2 above. Send one set to the RM and retain other copies to be released to prospective candidates of your choosing.

- 10. Create a Salaries and Benefits Agreement Draft:** It is profitable to determine before speaking with candidates the high and low ends of the salary and benefit spectrum. We strongly recommend the use of two documents when creating a package that will be acceptable to both the congregation and incoming pastor. An annual Salary Grid reflective of teaching salaries in the province and a contract draft will assist your board to come to a fair decision. Both documents are prepared as recommendations.

A final package should include the following information: salary range, pension and health coverage, housing, hospitality, vehicle and telephone expenses. It is recommended that such a document include further details re study leave, holidays, attendance at denominational events, office equipment etc. **Make sure that the church leadership is in agreement with the proposed terms and conditions.** Again, this may be delegated to a group outside the search committee.

Note: The Alberta Baptist Association Salary Guidelines can be used in BC.

Step 3 - Discern

A. Receive Ministry Information Profiles (Optional)

North American Baptist (NAB) and BC Association maintains a list of pastors who have indicated openness to new ministry opportunities. Prospective candidates prepare a Ministry Leader Profile and Ministry Match through which you can compare one individual to another. More than resumes, these documents (often 20+ pages in length) provide significant details about a pastor's background, journey of faith, ministry experience and priorities. A profile can be obtained by going to www.nab.ca.

The RM will prayerfully recommend individuals that are a potential fit to your congregation. Non-NAB/BC Association approved candidates may be considered but it is expected that they will participate in the same candidate screening process.

Other candidate sources include seminaries and Bible Colleges, congregational connections, sister denominations, even the Internet. Private submissions may also become available. Recognise, however, that the further outside the NAB/BC Association circle an individual comes from, the more difficult it is to determine if the references are reliable. **Agree and hold to a cut-off date for receiving names.**

B. Short-List Candidates

Keeping in mind the church profile, and the criteria for leadership that has emerged, it is now necessary to reduce the prospect list down to two or three. This part of the process can take several meetings, and you may need the help of a BC Association representative.

C. Gather Preliminary Information

Reference checks for short-listed candidates: Contacting the references listed in the candidate's Ministry Leader Profile is an important part of a selection committee's work. It is imperative that this part of a process be conducted in a most confidential manner; referees may reveal highly personal information about the candidate. Relationships between pastors and their churches can be easily disrupted; be sensitive to and exercise care in contacting the provided references. It may be wise to ask the RM for an additional referee beyond the congregation, at this stage, to be sensitive to any anxiety that the pastor or referee might experience.

The importance of gathering information from discerning people who have experienced the life and work of a candidate cannot be overvalued. It is possible to become so enthusiastic about an individual that the significant input of referees becomes superficial. Pastors frequently do not have a complete understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and how their leadership style may affect others.

Your search committee should decide which of its members will make the calls to the referees provided. It is helpful for two members to share the line to pick up as much information as possible. Plan the questions you will put to a referee as carefully as you will plan your interview questions. Identify specific topics about which to ask. Be ready to describe your church's situation. The person giving the reference often needs such information in order to make appropriate comments. Be careful not to make promises or commitments, which you may personally favour but for which you have no directive from the congregation to make.

Resource: Sample Reference Check Form

Close your conversation with the referee by asking a general question that invites the volunteering of information not otherwise covered. For example - "Is there anything else that you believe our search committee might need to know about this candidate?"

D. Review Collected Information

Your committee will want to discuss all comments received, whether positive or negative. Seek the Lord's wisdom through prayer. Commit yourselves to being open with each other about any feedback that may require follow-up or concern. Make sure to make a note to follow up these concerns if a candidate interview is scheduled. Of course, your concerns must be addressed without violating confidences. Remember that the most effective leaders will still not be able to please everyone. Do not reject a candidate merely because of a single unsubstantiated negative comment. What you want to watch for are positive or negative patterns that appear from several conversations.

If there are outstanding questions after reviewing the referees' comments feel free to discuss them with the regional minister who will have contacts that may be able to help clarify unresolved issues.

E. Select Candidate of Choice

In summary, through prayer, preliminary reference checks, your committee will come to a consensus on the candidate of choice (top candidate). All others must now be set aside until this 'candidate of choice' is eliminated for any reason. The search committee can then decide whether or not to approach the next person on their prioritized list or establish a fresh candidate list.

Inform your candidate of choice by telephone of your interest in continuing to another level of discussion. It is imperative at this early stage of exploration that both the pastoral search committee and the candidate recognize and agree that a 'willingness to explore a call' does not commit either party to any obligations.

Once there is willingness to explore a call, the committee should forward any outstanding documentation to the candidate - detailed job description, community and congregational profile, and Ministry Match etc. Provide as much material as possible so the candidate can prayerfully consider the opportunity.

Inform unselected candidates that have submitted profiles directly to the search committee that someone else is being pursued further. A short email is sufficient. A formal letter to all unselected candidates is not required until your candidate of choice has agreed to a candidacy weekend.

Resource: Sample Letter to Candidate No Longer Being Considered

The full search committee will proceed to a first formal interview with the candidate of choice and his spouse. Conference calls are the normal means of interviewing at this stage.

Step 4 - Decide

When the search committee agrees together to proceed with one candidate, the whole committee may schedule a follow up call with the selected candidate's references. Then an interview with the candidate can be set up. In some rare instances members of a search committee visit a worship service or some other situation where the prospective candidate is leading/preaching so as to see the candidate function in the context where he is currently serving. If such an on-site visitation occurs it should always be with the prior consent of the candidate and should not gain the attention of the pastor's congregation.

A. Interview Essentials

- 1. Interview Format:** There are two steps to the committee-candidate interaction.
 - a. Telephone/Video Conference:** The first step is to secure a location with quality speakerphone or videoconference capability. Such a setting will provide advantages beyond cost saving. It will permit you to discover how the candidate relates with others without getting too far into the process, it will introduce you to the practice of sharing the questioning and answer interpretation, and it will allow the pastor's spouse to enter the conversation without feeling unnecessarily pressured. Determine in advance what issues need to be discussed and who will raise them with the candidate.
 - b. Face-to-Face Interview:** The second step is to have the candidate and spouse meet the committee face to face. It is important, that the search team have some degree of certainty as to suitability of the candidate prior to an on-site visit. It is advisable to have the teleconference first and then, if the committee and candidate wish to pursue further, to arrange for the face-to-face meeting. Establish an interview date which allows all committee members to attend. Allow sufficient time, preferably a full evening or its equivalent. The interview could be at the church, or in a home. Ensure that the setting will allow for a relaxed atmosphere and ensure confidentiality.
- 2. Interview Preparation:** The value of an interview will depend on the committee's preparation. Each member will arrive better equipped if you follow these practices:
 - a.** Prayerfully review the candidate's profile as well as any background information that has been gleaned from referees and others.
 - b.** Review the Congregation and Community Information Package in conjunction with the gifts, character and experience of the candidate. The candidate should also by now have reviewed this material as well.
 - c.** Each member of the committee should become well informed about the church, its membership, structure, direction for ministry and relationship to the community. They should read again the congregation's constitution and by-laws. This will ensure that the candidate will be able to receive answers to his/her questions with accuracy and cohesion.
 - d.** If the candidate is married, the spouse should be invited to the interview. Although it is the candidate who will primarily serve the church, an awareness of the

spouse's feelings towards a call are most important. The interview process should include time for the spouse to participate.

- e. Establish an interview date which allows all committee members to attend. Allow sufficient time, preferably a full evening or its equivalent. The interview could be at the church, or in a home. Ensure that the setting will allow for a relaxed atmosphere and maintain confidentiality.
- f. A confirmation email should be sent to pastoral candidate. This should give all the details; hospitality arrangements, time of the interview, expense arrangements, exact place of the meeting(s) and directions. Even if these have been given in a telephone conversation, it is important for these details to be sent in written form.
- g. The committee is responsible for **all** expenses or arrangements related to hosting candidates and spouses. These will include accommodation, meals and transport costs. Prompt reimbursements will give the candidate a good impression of the administrative structure of the church.
- h. If scheduling more than one interview you may wish to increase the number of people on the search committee for the second interview by adding spouses and/or other church leaders. Continue to stress the need for confidentiality.
- i. Be prayerful, well organized and prepared, and your interview will go well. Remember that you are going to be giving the person their first impression of your church. Make sure it is a good one!
- j. **Confidentiality is essential.** The persons who have been interviewed are not ready to have their current congregation know they are considering a move.

3. Question Preparation: Search committees generally ask questions that reveal valuable character, competency, and experiential information about a candidate. Yet important insight can be gained from how a question is answered; a willingness to be transparent, to speak of lessons learned the hard way, and evidence of allowing for the give and take of an interview, reveal deeper competencies that will contribute to the maturation of relationship between an incoming pastor and the congregation. Tentatively discuss remuneration and employment commitments.

Resources: Sample Candidate Interview Questions
 Questions You May Be Asked

4. Interview Evaluation: Meet as soon as possible, as a committee, to carefully evaluate the interaction with the candidate. Prayer should be central to the committee's deliberation, seeking direction and guidance in selecting the person needed for your church.

Look again at the findings of the congregational survey, showing the needs of the church and the personal and professional competencies needed by the new pastor.

- Did the candidate meet these expectations?
- Respond to the manner in which he answered the questions.
- Did he demonstrate the professional abilities necessary for your congregation?
- Does he have the leadership style and ability that will fit your congregation?

- What did you discover about his spiritual journey that would help in relations with others?
- How aware was he of his personal strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures?
- How well does he grasp the issues within your congregation and community?

You will need to decide if further information is still needed, either from the candidate, referees or the RM. You may wish to spend a further week praying before making a decision.

B. Return to References, Review Credentials, and Seek God’s Wisdom

Unanimously Come to a Decision: You will need to check your church constitution, but the normal process would be to first take the name of your potential candidate to the board. Then, after giving the required notice for calling a congregational meeting, the name will be taken to the church as a recommendation of the board and the search committee. Make sure you know what the quorum is, and what percentage is required for this decision. If you are unable to reach agreement, you may choose to continue in prayer, re-interview, or return to Stage 3, E Select Candidate of Choice.

C. Confirm Details of the Salaries and Benefits Agreement with the Candidate of Choice

It is appropriate that the candidate know the details of the salary and benefit package framework before he or she will be presented to the congregation. The ABA (used by permission in the BC Assn) salary guide provides a figure for the salary including clergy housing allowance before taxes. Benefits are not included in this figure. The grid makes no distinction about pastoral role.

D. Obtain Permission to Present Candidate Name to Congregation

This may seem to be obvious but there have been situations where the enthusiasm of a search committee exceeded the decision-making pace of a pastoral family.

E. Inform Unselected Candidates of Candidacy Decision

Resource: Sample Letter to Inform Candidates Not Yet Notified of the Candidacy Decision

Step 5-Announce

A. Present Candidate

- 1. Provide Candidate’s Name to the Board:** You will need to check your church constitution, but the normal process would be to first take the name of your potential candidate to the board. Then, after giving the required notice for calling a congregational meeting, the name will be taken to the church as a recommendation of the board and the search committee.

2. Establish Clear Agreement re the Purpose and Process of Visit:

Before a candidate is introduced to the congregation there should be a clear agreement as to the purpose of the visit, the discussion subjects, and nature of the proposed interaction. It is imperative that the committee, the candidate and the board affirm that this stage of exploration still does not impose any obligations on either party to extend a call or affirmatively reply to a call. Clearly delineate how the candidate's expenses will be prepaid.

3. Plan Candidacy Weekend: It is important to allow the candidate and church to mutually engage in the activities of an average congregational weekend. He should preach if preaching will be a major responsibility. Balance should be maintained between exposure to large groups, individuals, and families.

Be sensitive to the stressful nature of this exploratory visit. Most candidates will prefer to be hosted in a local hotel, which will allow for reflection and recovery time for the candidate and spouse. Meal provision in family homes should allow for relaxed interaction.

Provide opportunity for meetings with other staff or boards, tours of the church buildings, community, schools, and parsonage, as appropriate. A real estate agent from the congregation may be willing to introduce the candidate to the housing market.

4. Announce Candidate's Visit to the Congregation: Members and adherents should be notified of the intended candidating visit. The notice should include a brief but adequate resume of the candidate and the activity timetable. Delay the release of the name as long as possible to protect the candidate who in most cases will not have announced the visit to his current congregation. In some cases it may be best that the name not be provided until the visit begins.

5. Introduce the Candidate in the Major Congregational Setting: A search committee member should outline the candidate's background and experience. It is important to tell the congregation why this particular person is being presented, their impression of his ability and skill for ministry, and their reasoning why this individual is the candidate of choice. Speak clearly of the way God has led you. Additional members of the search committee may also wish to share their convictions.

B. Call for the Congregational Decision

After the candidate agrees to let his name stand for recommendation, the search committee or board should immediately make the necessary arrangements to call the congregational meeting where the recommendation will be put to a vote. Congregational by-laws generally call for as much as two weeks notice for such a meeting. The candidate, and his family, should not be in attendance.

The committee should describe in a general way, the terms and conditions that have been offered to the candidate. Any discussion should remain confidential. Voting instructions should include the following – voting eligibility, secret ballot, and the number required for a quorum when calling a pastor, the percentage required to accept the recommendation, etc. This information can be found in the congregational by-laws.

Provide adequate opportunity to fully process the decision in a prayerful and carefully reasoned manner. It is imperative to have congregation seek the Lord's direction and reveal the intention of the greatest number of people.

- 1. Communicate the Result:** If the vote is positive, put forward a motion to authorize the search committee chairperson to immediately extend the invitation of the congregation by telephone. He is entitled to be informed of the percentage. Time should be given to the candidate for prayerful consideration before the final acceptance of the call is made. In some cases the candidate may have already reached a decision to accept the call if extended. He may be prepared to indicate an immediate acceptance. It is appropriate to establish a period (up to two weeks) in which the candidate is expected to either accept or decline the call. A follow up official letter, including the salary and benefit agreement, should be forwarded to the candidate as soon as possible after acceptance. Inform the congregation the following Sunday of the candidate's intention.

If the vote is negative the search committee chairperson must immediately notify the candidate by telephone of the negative result, and then forward a letter through which an official indication of the negative vote is communicated.

Resources: Sample Letter Extending Call
 Sample Letter Releasing Candidate after Insufficient Vote

- 2. Confirm Intention of Candidate:** Candidate informs search committee of intention in timeframe agreed upon.
- 3. Inform BC Regional Minister:** Call or email to keep the RM up to date on the result of congregational vote and candidate's decision.

Step 6 - Transition

A. Establish a Ministry Partnership

- 1. Warmly Welcome Your New Pastor and Family:** Your new pastor and family will come to your community as strangers. Your committee and the board can do much to make them feel at home, and to introduce them to your own congregation, and your community.
 - If a pastor is purchasing his own home, they will need to be introduced to a real estate agent that has demonstrated a servant heart in other roles.
 - Temporary accommodation for home location trips.
 - If there are children it can be helpful for others of the same age from your congregation send greetings by email or regular post.
 - If there is a parsonage, make sure it is completely ready. Any redecoration should be done in consultation with the incoming pastor. Repairs and maintenance should all be completed.
 - In some cases meals are provided for on the day the family moves in.
 - Introduce your new staff member to the community through an article in the local paper, as soon as he arrives.

- 2. Arrange The Move:** The total moving expenses for the new pastor's move should be borne by the church. Those expenses should include the cost of moving furniture, books, and all household effects. Provision should also be made for the travel, accommodation and meal costs for the pastor and his family from the time they leave their former home until they are established in the parsonage or in their own home.

Arrangements for the actual moving of books and household effects can be placed in the hands of the new pastor to arrange. If the pastor makes the arrangements with a moving company he is usually requested to secure three estimates and then communicate with the designated committee member to determine which company should be contracted for the move.

In some instances the pastor or individuals known to the pastor or to the congregation are willing to offer their own equipment or to rent equipment and to assist in the move. The congregation should be sensitive to the wishes of the pastor in this regard, and in all instances should be sure to secure adequate insurance coverage for the goods and furnishings while in transit.

The search committee should be authorized to pay for all expenses incurred. Receipts are required for repayment. If the move requires volunteer help the search committee is charged with overseeing the details of recruiting and supervising the move to ensure adequate assistance is provided at all stages.

- 3. Prepare The Study:** It is extremely important for a congregation to recognize that the pastor's study can either be a hindrance to, or encouragement in, his ministry. The property committee of the church should be encouraged in every way to give full attention to providing as much comfort, convenience, book storage, counseling space and work space as is appropriate to the job description and the congregation's expectations of the pastor. A major cleaning should be a minimal requirement. Many offices do not get updated with pastoral transition. If you have updated your home in the past five years, the office likely needs the same attention.

Unless major renovations are in order it may be easier for the property committee to await the pastor's arrival before undertaking to redecorate or make additions. Any plans for decoration or renovations should receive the pastor's approval in advance.

- 4. Extend Hospitality and Friendship:** The search committee should become personally involved in extending a tangible and warm welcome to the new pastor and his family. Creative individuals can be asked to form a special welcoming committee to provide assistance with unpacking (if pastor and family are open to such help), a pantry shower, a house warming party, take-in meals for the family during the unpacking stage, or hosted lunches and suppers during the unpacking period, guided tours of the community, etc.

B. Make Commitments

- 1. Plan the Commissioning Service:** While church leaders may take over on function, it is appropriate for the search committee to make sure that this is more than a ceremony. This service should be a real celebration. Some churches have the commissioning in a Sunday morning service; others would have it at a time when neighbouring congregations can participate.

Cooperating with the new pastor, you will need to plan the following:

- Determine service date and time
- Send invitations to nearby congregations; encourage those who can not attend to send greetings
- Select worship leaders and some one to bring a charge to the new pastor
- Secure someone to convene the Commissioning. This will normally be a denominational leader or nearby pastor. Material can be obtained from your RM.
- Officially yet warmly welcome the minister, spouse, and children with flowers or other appropriate gifts
- Invite leaders to share greetings
- Prepare a time of shared refreshment after the service

2. Establish a Pastoral Support and Advisory Group: For the sake of continuity, some congregations invite committee members to be part of a review process that takes place after the pastor arrives at scheduled intervals. This may or may not be the prevue of the board.

3. Register Benefit Packages: Shortly after his arrival at the church you need to inform the RM so he can arrange for a pastor new to NAB/BC Assn to receive a complete packet of information and registration forms re: pension and insurance benefits, health coverage etc. The forms should be completed and returned to the BC Association office as soon as possible because enrollment deadlines affect coverage. In most instances the pastor is responsible for completing these forms, but the search committee should make clear which benefits the church treasurer will be paying. Details regarding the various dimensions of benefits will have been agreed upon at the time of the negotiation of the salary and benefit package.

C. Publicly Acknowledge and Dismiss the Search Committee

The final responsibility of the search committee is to present a summary report of the process to the Church Clerk. When the committee's work is completed, its members should be thanked by the church leadership during a worship service; the committee then can be discharged with prayer. Minutes, or a summary of proceedings, should be stored to the church office.

All résumés and confidential papers used by the committee must be shredded.