

**CHURCH
LIFECYCLES**

FELLOWSHIP PACIFIC

Search Team Handbook

2018

Embarking on the journey of finding a new Pastor can be both an exciting and daunting task, all at the same time. This handbook is intended to give you guidelines, resources, and ideas to help you along the way.

We have chosen to use a simple, and relatively short format in order to help guide you as efficiently as possible. However, you will find many links to other resources that can help you in this process, should you choose to pursue more detailed assistance.

We have also chosen to focus on the process for finding a Lead Pastor. Your church may have other processes in place for finding other ministry staff members, or may choose to use a very similar process. If so, it should be relatively easy for you to adjust the process in this handbook to your own context. Most of it will be easily transferable.

If you would like to have someone from the Fellowship Pacific Ministry Centre come to an initial meeting with your Search Team (or any other meeting you feel would be of benefit) please do not hesitate to call.

We are looking forward to hearing how God will lead your church during this time.

Fellowship Pacific Ministry Centre

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Introduction

It is almost impossible to overstate the significance of the role of a Pastoral Search Team in ensuring that the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ is fulfilled. While this may seem like a hyperbole, our experience in the Fellowship Pacific Ministry Centre has repeatedly demonstrated that this is the most critical decision your church will make.

One of the five key values of Fellowship Pacific pertains to the value of leadership. We believe that when churches have the right (God-chosen) Pastors, working in unison with a unified and supportive church Board, then those churches will usually thrive. Other than dependence upon God and His Word, the right leadership is the single most critical factor in the growth, effectiveness, and health of the church.

This means that your commitment to the Search Team process is paramount to the future ministry of your church. Your job is nothing less than discovering the Pastor that God desires to have leading in your church. The good news is that God wants you to find this person. While there may be long or discouraging days in the process, it is encouraging to remember that God is even more invested in having the right Pastor in your church than you are.

This Search Team Manual has been developed by the Fellowship Pacific Ministry Centre staff as a resource to help guide Search Teams through the process of finding church staff. Our goal is to give you a step by step approach to finding your next Pastor(s).

There is one other introductory note worth your time to read. Every church is unique, and therefore believes that their situation is unique. Generally, this is a true statement. However, where Search Team processes are concerned, your uniqueness does not validate ignoring the guidelines, suggestions, and warnings that are part of the Search Team Handbook. Simply put, you ignore them at your own peril. This may seem somewhat arrogant or even self-serving for us to say, but there is a backlog of hard-won experience that teaches why these guidelines are important.

The ministry staff at Fellowship Pacific exist to serve you. Our only agenda is to help you find great leaders. And the only reason we would give this warning is because we have seen the results when these guidelines are ignored. So please give your role on a search team the attention it rightly deserves!

Now That Your Previous Pastor Has Left

When a Pastor leaves a church, there are a number of questions that come to mind or ought to come to mind. These questions have to do with the past, with the present, or with the future.

Why Did Your Pastor Leave?

Pastors play a vital role in the ongoing life of the church. No matter what the Pastor and congregation relationship has been in the past, when a Pastor leaves there will be people who feel unsettled. Obviously, the reason the Pastor left will determine the degree to which your church people feel optimistic about the future. There may be a legitimate concern that change will occur, and for some people an overwhelming sense of loss.

These feelings are not experienced in the same way by every member. Gracious, warm, and humble departures leave sweet memories, even though mixed with sadness. Difficult departures that have involved conflict and upheaval can leave considerable collateral damage, including deep resentment. Regardless of the context in which the Pastor left, you can be sure that there will be a wide range of responses from grief to relief, from resentment to gratitude.

There are a couple of important lessons to apply as you consider this initial question. First, it is important to do everything possible to ensure a smooth and positive transition. Saying “goodbye” well is important for the future of the church. Likely, it is most important when you least feel like doing so! Second, please remember that if the situation seems overwhelming, you can contact the Fellowship Ministry Centre and we will do our best to help you think through this time of transition.

What Does our Congregation Need?

Understanding that your congregation and staff may be feeling a variety of emotions, it is important that you consider what those emotions are before moving forward with a Search Team. As mentioned above, healthy search processes begin with healthy farewells -- so if that wasn't your experience you need to process these emotions before proceeding. A failure to do so creates a flawed foundation upon which to build a healthy search process.

As a board, have an honest conversation about where healing needs to take place within your congregation. Are there certain groups that need the opportunity to be heard? Specific people who need encouragement? Has trust been eroded? If so, take enough time to rebuild the trust as much as is possible.

Be sure to have open and candid conversations with the staff and key leaders at this time. If you feel a survey would be an effective communication tool, this might be a good time to ask your church questions about the current condition of the church. It is important not to rush to the search process, as this can cause anxiety and uncertainty if the groundwork hasn't been properly established.

Who Do We Have to Lead Us Through This Time of Transition?

Your board needs to determine whether or not you have someone in place to guide you through the transition. If not, you will need to seek someone to come in and help you through this transition period. Some considerations include:

- Who will be responsible for Sunday Services and preaching, or for arranging these?
- Who will lead the staff team during this time?
- What will your organizational structure look like through this interim period? How will responsibility, authority, and accountability be apportioned?

If you think you need an interim Pastor, the Fellowship Ministry Centre can help you to get in touch with people who do this sort of ministry. Interim Pastors can be contracted for a variety of roles, ranging from pulpit supply through to full Lead Pastor responsibilities. Usually interim Pastors are contracted for a specific period of time, with the option of rolling that agreement into another contract should it be required.

If significant healing needs to take place, you may want to look for someone who specializes in this area. These are specially trained individuals, usually referred to as “Intentional Interim” Pastors.

It is important to know that interim Pastors should not be considered for the Lead Pastor role. If this becomes a consideration, they should resign from the Interim role and step away in order to ensure a legitimate and fair search process is followed.

When Do We Put Together a Search Team?

Before creating a Search Team, it is important for your church to define what their role will be. In most cases the Search Team is responsible to assess the needs of the church related to the role you are looking to fill. Then they are to secure resumes or profiles of prospective candidates that meet those needs and, after thorough investigation bring the candidate(s) before the church. Alternatively, depending on your by-laws, they may need to bring the candidate(s) to your Board. Be sure to refer to the by-laws or policies to be clear on the role of the team, if Search Team responsibilities are defined there. If they are not clearly defined, then this should be the first step of the Search Team, in concert with the church Board.

The method of selecting a Search Team may vary from church to church. Most church bylaws will direct the congregation as to how this team is to be selected. If the bylaws are not specific, you may find the following general guidelines to be helpful:

- 1) The church Board should, after consideration, nominate or appoint 5-7 representative members (male and female, variety of ages, etc.). Normally the Search Team includes some representatives from the Board, but these representatives should form a minority of the Search Team. The only exceptions to this are when the church bylaws indicate an alternative approach, or when the search role has been delegated by the bylaws, the Board, or policy (for example, when the search for Staff roles is delegated to the Lead Pastor).
- 2) The nominees should be selected for their spiritual maturity, working knowledge of the Word of God, willingness to serve sacrificially, understanding of Fellowship Pacific, and be persons with insight and love. They should know the Mission, Vision, and Values of the church, be a member, and, as appropriate, be involved in the ministry area you are looking to hire for.
- 3) There are a few different ways to go about confirming Search Team members. One way is for the church Board to appoint members of the Search Team and have the members ratify the Board choices. Another option is for the church to nominate the Search Team members, and approve them at a meeting. In such a case, the Board usually determines who will serve as their representatives on the Team. A third option is for the Board of the church to operate as the Search Team. Again, let us remind you to check your bylaws first to see if they tell you the process you need to follow.

What Are the Duties and Expectations of a Search Team?

Before anyone agrees to be part of the Search Team it is important to define their duties and expectations; this is usually done through a Terms of Reference Document. In this document, the details of who is on the team, member roles, and duration are laid out. See www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement for an example.

A Search Team needs to appoint a Chair, Secretary, and Communications Coordinator.

It is not recommended that the Chairperson of the church Board also be the Chairperson of the Search Team, as it would likely place too large of a workload on the individual during this transitional time.

The role of the Chair of the Search Committee is to set the agenda and monitor the pace and workload of the group. They are often the one communicating to the church in regard to the search, but this could also be delegated to another member of the Search Team.

The role of the Secretary is to take the minutes of each meeting and send them out to the Search Team. It is also their responsibility to destroy the minutes once a candidate has been chosen. Remember, you need to keep all employment applications and reference checks for each applicant permanently.

The role of the Communicator is to be the contact person that receives the resumes/profiles and does all the communication with the potential Pastors. This role could also be shared or distributed among the Search Team. If so, then the Secretary should track who has accepted the various responsibilities.

** Please note that the majority of the sample documents provided on our website are constructed in Microsoft Word. They may be used in whatever way you deem appropriate, without permission from Fellowship Pacific. However, be aware that the documents should be edited to fit your situation. At a minimum, you will need to adjust the header and the logo. As well, please be cognizant of the fact that these are provided to help you solely as examples, and Fellowship Pacific retains no legal liability should you choose to use them.

Where Are We in Our Church Lifecycle?

If you are looking for a new Lead Pastor, it is valuable to have a conversation regarding where your church would place itself on a church lifecycle grid. Knowing your position as a church is critical to knowing who would best serve your church in the next phase of development and service. The grid is available as a resource on the Fellowship website at www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement.

The lifecycle grid gives a summary understanding of whether your church is in a growth trajectory, operating at peak ministry capacity, or on the downward slope of ministry effectiveness. It is based on how you describe yourselves in a number of categories such as vision, volunteers, structure, giving, etc.. This gives you a snapshot view of the current state of your church, and gives some brief suggestions about what your next steps should be.

For now, allow us to give you a very short description of how to use the grid. Using the first page of the grid, have each member of your Search Team follow along the horizontal rows – deciding which descriptions on each category (Mission and Purpose, Worship, Involvement, etc.) best defines your current church status. Once done for each category by each person, discuss it together and see if you can come to some consensus about which stage best represents your church.

Then turn the page over and look at the descriptors on page two. You will see explanations regarding kinds of behavior often experienced in that stage, the sorts of issues that emerge, and what are some of the things that you should be considering as action steps.

Obviously, using the lifecycle grid is just the beginning of an important conversation. Please feel free to contact a member of the Fellowship Pacific staff to get some help understanding the lifecycle grid in more detail.

Stage 1: The Search Team Has Gathered

As you begin each of your meetings it is imperative that you begin in prayer. Prayer must be the foundation of your search process. As such, it would be wise to ask the church family to have a specific season of prayer or put aside a day or an evening of specific prayer for God's wisdom and guidance. As the search process continues, there may be opportunity to call the church to prayer at specific stages of the process.

The goal of this first meeting is to clarify expectations, and to get the necessary resources created that will allow your team to begin to interact with potential candidates for your staff role.

Expectations and Commitment

At this time, you will want to appoint the positions that were discussed in the previous section: Chair, Secretary, and Communications Coordinator.

You will also need to discuss the time commitment necessary, how often you will be meeting, what is the best way to communicate with each other, and the location of the meetings. If your Search Team is sufficiently comfortable with digital communication, it would be wise to discuss setting up a digital repository for jointly held information such as profiles on potential candidates, interview questions, minutes of meetings, etc.. This might take place through something like Google Drive, or Dropbox. Finally, you will want to document all of this in the Terms of Reference and provide a copy to each member of the team.

Confidentiality

At the beginning of your journey together as a search team you will want to underscore the need for confidentiality. It needs to be clearly understood by everyone on the team that this is a sensitive time in the life of your church. What is talked about during your meetings must remain within the group, unless specifically stated otherwise.

It is particularly critical that no names of potential candidates are released from any member of the Search Team. Allowing such leaks can prove harmful to your process and may create great distress in other churches. This is of sufficient significance that many churches include a confidentiality clause in their Terms of Reference document, and have each member of the Search Team sign it.

Process & Timeline

Since each church is unique, there really isn't a set timeline that works for every church. During this first meeting, work together to create a loose timeline.

In order to help you further we have divided this process into 6 "stages." It is very likely, depending on your circumstances, that you will need additional meetings to be added as you go along. As well, you will need to rearrange what is exactly done in each meeting. It is also unlikely that your actual timeline will be the same as our theoretical example! See www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement for an example.

Decision Making

It is valuable to determine your approach to decision making now, prior to interviewing any specific candidates. See page 35, under "Achieving Consensus" for comments on how to make decisions through a consensus approach.

Communication to the Church

Communication is an essential element as you work as a committee and will be a priority to the people in your congregation. They will want to know what is happening! You will need to determine the methods of communication that work best for your church: email, newsletters, bulletins, website updates, or verbal reports during the worship services. Your team must decide how this will happen and when it will happen.

As well, it is important at the end of every meeting to clarify what information will be distributed or passed on to the church through the designated Communications Coordinator. It is valuable for the church to be aware of the process as it moves forward. It is good to be as transparent as you can be, without violating the terms of confidentiality. Thus, at the end of every meeting you should review and agree on your flow of information to the church.

You may want to add key communication dates to your timeline.

Creating a Church Profile

The church profile is often the prospective Pastor's first look at and, therefore, their first impression of the congregation. There is a resource guide on how to write a good church profile on our webpage at www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement.

Of course, your website and online presence say a great deal about your church to prospective candidates, so make sure that whatever you put in print is supported by what you have online, and vice versa. You can be quite certain that viable candidates will have learned what they can about your church through your website. It is also likely that if they didn't bother to look you up online—you probably don't want them! They either don't care enough or are Luddites. Look it up.

Another aspect of your Church Profile is a brief summary of the characteristics of your community. This community profile should give sufficient information about your town or city for the candidate and family to understand how they would fit in, and who your church will be trying to reach. It should also highlight some of the wonderful elements of living in your community. Most of this information will be available at your city hall or on the city website. As with most aspects of the search process, you are trying to be honest while also pointing out the advantages of living in your community. The example Church Profile on our website includes a sample community profile.

The initial work in gathering information and creating a document can be done by a subgroup of the Search Team, but the final outcome should be agreed upon and owned by the entire team.

Creating a Job Description

Normally the Search Team will work alongside the church Board to create a Job Description. One may already exist, may need revision, or may need to be created. Be sure to talk to the Board as to whose responsibility it is to create the Job Description, and what deadline exists for getting it finalized or updated. It is almost impossible to search for a Pastor without this critical task having been completed. Remember that since the Board must work with the new Pastor, the Job Description must have their approval.

Before you dive too quickly into the “we want a Pastor who does...” start with the broad context of ministry.

People need to know how their job connects with the Mission and Vision of the church. Every Job Description should start with those things. Don't give people a list of responsibilities without first talking about why they matter. See www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement for an example.

Pastors who are looking at your Job Description will desire some job context. They need to know where they fit on the team. They need to clearly understand who they work for, who works for them and who they are expected to influence. That's why every Job Description needs to include a statement outlining your clear lines of authority.

Now you can get into discussion about some of the responsibilities for your new Pastor. An effective Job Description has a defined list of responsibilities. This list should focus on the key concerns of the church, and should have some understanding the role of the Pastor in your next stage of ministry growth.

If you accomplish all this, then you had a great first meeting! Remember to spend some time in prayer.

Stage 2: Who Are You Looking For?

As you begin this second stage, please remember to pray. This is about finding the person God has already in mind for your church, so time spent listening to Him is not wasted.

This phase of the process focuses on preparing to receive profiles from potential candidates for your staff role.

Review Church Profile and Job Description

Spend some time during this stage confirming the church profile which has now been drafted by a subcommittee of your Search Team. Make sure you have included the history, core values, Mission, and Vision.

Also spend some time confirming the Job Description. What does your church need in a Pastor? Review where you are on the church Lifecycle grid, one more time. Begin compensation conversations, so that you have a ball-park idea of what you can afford to pay. This is another conversation to have with the church Board. It is important before you have a candidate to have already clarified whose responsibility it will be to finalize negotiations regarding salary, benefits, etc..

Where Are You Going to Advertise?

Make a list of all the places you would like to advertise this position. (Church website, Fellowship Pacific website, Fellowship National, etc.). You may also want to expand beyond this to post at some common church ministry websites. For example, you may choose to post at such places as christianjobs.ca, ca.indeed.com/Church-Jobs, churchstaffing.com, or ministryjobs.com.

This would be a great time to begin talking with someone at the Fellowship Pacific Ministry Centre and ask for recommendations. It is usual for Search Teams to have someone from Fellowship Pacific to meet them early in the process in order to answer questions and develop a relationship.

At this point it is worth noting that the further afield you go in your search, the less information you will be able to obtain about the candidate. Fellowship Pacific has detailed knowledge of most Pastors or potential Pastors within our region, and have significant information about most Pastors within Fellowship National. The Ministry Centre personnel will also be able to help you with information regarding individuals within evangelical denominations within our region. However, the wider your circle of searching grows, the more dependent you will become on what the candidate tells you and what you may (or may not) be able to glean from reference checks.

Going Beyond a Passive Search

A frequently asked question is “Are we allowed to talk to Pastors that are already on staff in another church?” The short answer to this is “yes.”

The fact is that many of the individuals you would most like to have as your next staff member will already be serving in an existing church and be doing some great ministry there. It is likely that you have already had people in your church suggest “why don’t we get the Pastor from…” We recommend that this be one of the conversations of your Search Team as you begin your discovery process.

When entering into conversations with Pastors who are currently serving elsewhere and have not actively sent you a profile, there are three keys to remember:

First, remember that you do not know what the Holy Spirit is currently doing in the life of that Pastor and their family. They may be praying for wisdom from God about their current role, and your phone call may be part of that process. So do not discount that possibility. Also, it helps to know that most Pastors do not mind the occasional hint that people have noticed and appreciated their ministry! It can be encouraging.

Second, be gracious and open-hearted in your contact with these Pastors. You want to know if they would entertain some conversation about a role at your church, but you do not want to create disquiet in their hearts about their current ministry. So, engage directly but gently. If the answer is “no, I am called to where I currently serve,” then thank them and offer to pray for God’s blessing upon them in their existing church.

Third, always ask if they are aware of other Pastors or friends who might be excited to hear from your church. This “secondary referral” may be the way that the Lord leads you to your next Pastor. Often Pastors interact with one another informally, allowing them to have the greatest insight about who is currently available or considering if God is leading them to move into a new ministry season.

Receiving Pastor Profiles and Resumes

There are a variety of ways that you will receive resumes or profiles. Some Pastors may mail them in or drop them off at the church. Almost certainly, you will receive some profiles from a staff member at the Ministry Centre, assuming you have contacted the Fellowship Pacific staff for help.

However, you will receive many resumes or profiles from individuals who directly email them to you, or upload them to you through the websites where you may have posted your search parameters.

We recommend setting up a separate email address that goes to the Communications Coordinator of the group. This person is then responsible for sending resumes or profiles out to the rest of the group to review. Alternatively, all resumes could be posted to a common cloud-based folder, with the Communications Coordinator informing the Search Team of new profile arrivals.

Be sure to let Fellowship Pacific know who your appointed Communications Coordinator will be. As mentioned already, some churches prefer to have the Chair of the Search Team to fulfill the Communications role as well.

As you receive profiles from individuals, it is good to send them a standardized and short acknowledgement that you have received it.

Determine a Cutoff Date

Determine a date after which you will no longer be accepting resumes or profiles, and add that to your timeline.

Stop here for a brief reality check on Search Team processing. Although you set a cutoff date for when you will no longer accept resumes, it may be a relief to know that churches often extend this date. In fact, while there are no specific statistics on this, our anecdotal evidence suggests that it will take most churches between 6 to 18 months to discover their next Lead Pastor. It may take a similar length of time to find various associate staff.

The most crucial thing to remember is that while you want to be efficient and expedite the process, it is far more important to get the right person than it is to get somebody quickly. As stated in our introduction to this manual, if looking for a Lead Pastor, then finding the right person is the most important task your church will accomplish this year.

Stage 3: Let's Talk About Potential Pastors

This stage of your Search Process enters into the exciting and sometimes frustrating process of trying to winnow through the various potential Pastors in order to find the one that God has for your church. This can be long, stressful, and cyclical.

It can take a while to do this. It can initiate a variety of conversations and opinions from those on the Search Team, thus creating stress within the team. It can be cyclical in that your first round of processing may not discover a candidate you are excited by, thus necessitating an extension of your time line as you push the “reset” button. All of these realities teach one critical and non-negotiable truth: Pray.

Initial Processing of Profiles

Now the real fun begins! Hopefully by the time you are at this stage you've received some resumes and have had the opportunity to review them. Each Pastoral profile is studied, reviewed, discussed, and then given appropriate consideration. There will be a range of gifts, needs, and personalities that will serve as parameters for considering possible candidates.

When reading these Pastor's profiles, the challenge is to keep an open mind and heart. Be aware that as much as a church may be tempted to “airbrush” its own profile, so too may a Pastor. Profiles offer glimpses and snapshots of who a Pastor may be. But profiles don't say everything. So this would be a good time to do a little research on your own, visit Facebook and other social media outlets as they can sometimes give you a candid and realistic idea of who your potential candidate is. You may also discover some mutual friends.

If you have had many people respond to your ministry posting, it may be helpful to separate the list into three piles: those who fit the criteria you listed in your Job Description, those who do not meet every criterion but you find intriguing, and those whom you definitely do not intend to pursue. This may sound harsh, but is necessary if your team is to move the process forward.

However, the wider your circle of searching grows, the more dependent you will become on what the candidate tells you and what you may (or may not) be able to glean from reference checks.

Creating a Short List

After reviewing your potential candidates create a short list of those you wish to continue getting to know.

For those you decide not to continue with, be sure they are contacted by the Communications Coordinator so they can be made aware that you are not going to be moving forward with them. You should have a standard reply for them. We would suggest creating a standardized letter/email to send out. See www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement for an example.

At this point, you will want to check in with the Ministry Centre for any additional information on those whom you have on your short list of Pastors. If looking for someone who will have a preaching role, you should also begin listening to the candidate's sermons online.

If possible and appropriate, you may want to send a couple of Search team members to observe the candidate in their current ministry setting. However, you don't want to be obvious, so don't have the whole Search team go at one time. Also, don't be weird about it. You are simply doing your due diligence.

An important note: Due to the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FIPPA) in British Columbia it can be difficult to give meaningful reference information. Essentially, the Fellowship Pacific Ministry Centre staff can pass on information to Search Teams that is accurate, verifiable, and to some degree – personal viewpoints on strengths and weaknesses of candidates. However, the Ministry Centre staff cannot give information based on speculation or rumor that will in any way affect the potential employment of an individual. To do so in a reference check creates liability for the person giving the reference, such that they may be required to prove their statement in a court of law. With this in mind, you should know that when Ministry Centre staff feel they cannot give a full report to your Search Team, they will likely give no reference comments at all.

Stage 4: Getting to Know One Another

Now that you have made a short list of potential Pastors, you need to do the work of getting to know them better. This will almost certainly take more than one actual meeting.

This portion of the process is about getting into the details that will help you to make an informed decision.

Prioritize

By this stage you should have taken the first steps towards determining who you want to proceed with. Your short list should be no more than three, preferably just two, or maybe even just one candidate.

Initial Phone Interview

Decide who on your team is going to make the first call. Once this is determined it is up to each person or persons to set up an interview time with the potential candidate. You can find a list of suggested questions on our webpage at www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement for an example.

You will need to alter this list of questions to fit your own context, ensuring you get answers to the questions that matter to your church at this time.

Make sure you take detailed notes of your conversation, usually on the interview form, so you can relay the information back to your team.

Clarity & the Candidate

If you are interacting with more than one candidate at this time, be sure to let them know that this is the case. The anticipated ethics of search processing is that while the church is interviewing more than one candidate, it is appropriate for the candidate to be available to speak to more than one church. However, once the church determines that they are only going to pursue the process with a single candidate, it is reasonable to ask the candidate to do the same until such time as the church or candidate resolve their interest in serving together.

However, for these assumptions to be followed, the Search Team needs to clarify their expectations with the candidate. If the potential Pastor does not want to operate within the same restrictions, then it will be up to the Search Team to determine if they still want to continue. The important thing is to have agreed upon expectations and transparency in the process.

Detailed In-person Interview

Once your initial phone interviews are done and you have decided that you want to move forward with a candidate, you will want to set up a face-to-face interview between them and the Search Team.

You will need to set up a time that works for the whole team to meet with the potential Pastor. Decide on who will lead this interview and what questions will be asked. The entire team should all have the opportunity to ask follow up questions as they feel led. See www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement for an example.

Be sure to pursue lines of inquiry that may have arisen during the initial phone interview or from the Birkman Assessment (mentioned below). However, please note that if issues arose that could be “make or break” types of discussions, you would normally have had a follow-up phone interview before deciding to expend the resources and time to have a face-to-face interview.

Also note that by this time you may have narrowed your candidate pool down to one person. However, while that is often the case, it is not necessarily true. It is possible to have more than one good candidate, and the purpose of the in-person interview is to help you determine which one is the best fit at this time. If you are still talking to more than one candidate, please ensure that they are aware of this at the time you set up the interview.

There are some candidates that will not be willing to pursue the process at this level without knowing that the Search Team is now only considering them as the single candidate. If this occurs, it will be up to your Search Team to determine whether or not they are willing to operate within those restrictions.

Birkman Assessment

We would highly recommend that prior to the face-to-face interview a Birkman Assessment be taken by each of the potential Pastors. The Birkman Assessment is a personality/style indicator that gives insightful information regarding the normal behavior, stress behaviors, style, and preferences of the candidate. It is broadly used within large companies and non-profits for Human Resource and Team Building purposes.

Please contact the Ministry Centre for more information and to set this up. The Ministry Centre has a number of Birkman coaches, and can provide this service for an at-cost fee of \$175 (normal cost for outside Assessors range from \$500 to \$1500) . Once the candidates have taken this assessment, a certified Birkman coach will go over the results with the search team, as well as the potential Pastor. It is required that the Search Team obtain permission from the candidate for their Birkman results to be released to the team. The Ministry Centre staff will require this permission, in writing (email is sufficient) from the candidate. An email address for the candidate Release of Information will be provided when the Birkman Assessment is set up.

Theological Review

If helpful to your church, the Fellowship Pacific staff are available to have a brief interview with your prospective candidate with regard to their theological position. As a Pastor in the Fellowship, they will be required to sign our Statement of Faith before being credentialed with the government through Fellowship Pacific. As such, if the candidate has not been serving within our family of churches, it is important to ensure that they can sign the Statement of Faith with good conscience.

Obviously, it is difficult for a church when they hire a Pastor, and then discover that the Pastor does not agree with the Statement of Faith and cannot be credentialed with the Fellowship. If there is a possibility of a question regarding this, we strongly encourage your church to request an initial review of the Statement of Faith with a Fellowship staff member. A report on this interview, noting any potential issues, would be provided to the Search Team by Fellowship Pacific. This can avoid unnecessary pain for all concerned.

Reference Checks & Criminal Record Check

Like the phone interviews, decide who will do follow up reference checks. Again, take detailed notes. Also be on the lookout for any red flags. An example of suggested questions to references can be found on our webpage at www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement.

As with the results of the Birkman Assessment, it is advisable that the Search Team get the potential candidate to sign a release form allowing you to check references. See www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement for an example.

By this point you should be looking into and requesting a Criminal Records check. This cost should be covered by the church.

Stage 5: The Visit

If you are this far along in the process, then you are doing great. Congratulations! Now you are moving on to one of the most critical elements of the search process – the visit of the prospective Pastor to your church.

This visit is an opportunity to come to some final conclusions by the Search Team and by the candidate. As such, it is important to be frank, honest, gracious, and supportive. On the one hand, you want to learn what you need to know to move forward. On the other hand, you want to act in such a way that the candidate is also excited about the prospect of coming to the church.

Praying about this visit seems like an excellent plan.

Achieving Consensus

If, after careful inquiry, investigation, and evaluation, the Search Team feels like they have the right person, the team should invite him to candidate. Normally, the Search Team should have consensus on inviting the candidate.

For Search Teams, consensus is usually defined as “everybody minus one.” This means that one person does not have the right to veto the desire of the group as a whole. Obviously, it is far preferable to have every member of the team agreeing. If there is a dissenting member of the Search Team, it is important to take the time to think, talk, and pray it through. The dissenting member should be carefully heard, and they should know they have had opportunity to clarify and express their reservations. Time permitting, it is often valuable to set aside a week of prayer by every member of the Team, and then reconvene for a second discussion. However, it is possible for individual members of a Search Team to have personal concerns that influence their view of a candidate. Thus, consensus equates to “everybody minus one.”

This consensus perspective assumes that reasonable people, when carefully heard, are able to operate for the good of all. It is important to agree upon this approach to the process before the final decisions are made, and is usually defined in the Terms of Reference document.

Prior to the Visit

Here are a few things that should be done in preparation for the coming of the candidate:

- 1) Assure the candidate that all expenses will be paid by the church. Detail what expenses you will cover. (airfare, hotel, rental car, meals etc.). Ensure the candidate knows that expenses will be covered upon submission of receipts. Clarify with the candidate who will be responsible for bookings.
- 2) Arrange for hotel accommodation. Your church can pay for this in advance. Do not have the candidate and their family stay in someone's home. Some churches choose to get a nice snack basket placed into the candidate's hotel room prior to the visit, along with a card signed by the staff or Board of the church welcoming them to town.
- 3) Promote the potential candidate's visit to the congregation, and ensure the congregation is aware of the schedule you will follow.

During the Visit

It is important to have a detailed schedule prepared for the potential Pastor, and sent to him ahead of time. As mentioned earlier, please be clear as to whether or not the candidate will be driving in, renting a car, or being picked up at an airport (or wherever).

- 1) Arrange for the candidate to meet with various groups in the church. This normally includes meetings with the Search Team, the Staff, the Board, as well as some meetings open to the church as a whole. It should include both formal (interviews) and informal (lunch, dinner, etc.) settings, so that the Search Team has the opportunity to see the candidate in a variety of settings. The plan should also include preaching at the worship service if that will be part of the responsibilities of the new Pastor.
- 2) The schedule should allow for someone from the Search Team to give the candidate a brief tour of the city or area, and also some free time for the candidate and family (or spouse) to look around on their own.
- 3) The schedule should include a discussion with a designated member of the Search Team or Board, who will clearly communicate issues of compensation, vacation, and benefits. The conclusion about these matters should be given to both the Board and the candidate in writing. It is possible that this discussion will need some interaction with the Board as a whole, depending upon the responses of the candidate. If you need help determining an appropriate compensation package, the Fellowship Pacific Ministry staff may be able to give assistance. The candidate should be informed that, pending a positive vote by the church, a formal offer of employment will be sent to them.
- 4) The candidate should be informed as to when the vote of the church will take place. The membership meeting to vote is usually at the end of the weekend or in the week immediately following the visit. The candidate should be told exactly when to anticipate hearing the result of the vote from the Search Team.

The Church Vote

Lead the congregation in the vote. In other words, do not just present the candidate but please remind the congregation of all the work you have done: the background checks, the series of interviews, the references contacted, etc.. It may be good to mention the positive attributes that you have discovered about the candidate, and to tell the church why you are excited about this possibility.

Help the church understand the work you have done in making the decision to present this candidate.

The Offer of Employment

Assuming that the vote on the candidate is positive, a designated member of the Search Team should contact the candidate extending an invitation to join your ministry.

Usually, a formal Offer of Employment will be sent to the candidate. This will include the details that you agreed upon previously regarding salary, benefits, vacation, moving expenses, start date, etc..

Some churches prefer to have a more formal and full Employment Contract signed. If so, you would normally summarize this in the Offer of Employment, while indicating that a more formal contract will be written reflecting the Offer to the candidate. Some candidates will want to see this contract prior to acceptance of your offer. Samples of both kinds of documents are available on the Fellowship website at www.febpacific.ca/ministry-placement.

Some churches prefer to not have an elaborate contract, and prefer to stick solely with the Offer of Employment. Regardless of your approach, a written and signed Offer of Employment is important for both the church and the candidate at the initial stage of making an offer, and decreases the possibilities of misunderstandings or conflict later on.

Stage 6: Time to Celebrate

Amazingly, you have accomplished your seemingly impossible task of finding the new Pastor that God had for your church! This might be a good time to stop and give thanks to God. Let us rephrase: this is definitely a good time to stop and praise God.

However, please don't stop your entire Search Team process quite yet. Instead, try to push through these next few details so that you finish the job well.

Celebration

The first year is an important year in which to make your new Pastor feel welcome. Be sure to have some sort of plan in place to ensure your Pastor and his wife and family feel welcome when they arrive.

The Search Team is usually the Pastor's first connection to the church. Perhaps getting together for a meal with the Search Team and their families and the Pastor and his family is a good way of growing the relationship. You may want to do a food drive to help them stock their new kitchen. Or, you may want to provide meals for the first couple of weeks of their new tenure with you. In whatever ways you choose to do so, help the new ministry family feel welcome.

Also, plan to have the new Pastor visit various groups in the church in order to deepen relationships and build trust among the congregation.

Moving Expenses

Moving expenses should be covered by the church. As a Search Team you will need to work out the details as to what this looks like for your new Pastor. Usually the church will clarify whether or not a moving company can be used, or what is the maximum they will pay towards moving. As well, clarify that costs will be reimbursed based upon receipts submitted. Be clear about what is included in that cost, and what is not.

This should be done well in advance and should have been negotiated when the offer of employment is accepted. Pay the new staff promptly, so that the financial stress of setting up a new home in your community is minimized for the Pastor.

Installation Service

Invite the Regional Director of Fellowship Pacific or another member of the Fellowship staff to bring words of greeting at the installation service of the new Pastor. The church should contact the Ministry Centre well in advance of the date to be sure the Regional Director can make it. If he is not available, ask him to send a letter of welcome to the new Pastor while also sending another leader from the Ministry Centre to represent Fellowship Pacific.

The Installation service should include:

- A welcome to the Pastor and his family by the chairman of the Search Team or the chairman of the church Board.
- A special welcome from Fellowship Pacific.
- A special time of prayer for both the Pastor and his wife.
- Refreshments should then be served.

Credentialing and/or Ordination

If the Pastor is new to Fellowship Pacific, they are required to be credentialed with Fellowship Pacific. This is done twice a year in conjunction with a New Pastor Orientation at the Fellowship Ministry Centre in Fort Langley. The credentialing allows them to be licensed for marriages within our Region. Please contact the Ministry Centre to reserve a spot for the next upcoming date.

If your church desires the new Pastor to go through the Ordination process, please have them contact the Ministry Centre for arrangements. This will normally require a few years of service within Fellowship Pacific prior to ordination occurring.

