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Introduction

Search Committee Structure

The search committee should be representative of the church. It should have at least one elder (chosen by the elders), one deacon (chosen by the deacons), one representative of the Christian education work of the church (chosen by the Christian education department), and several members at large, elected by the congregation or appointed by the elders (particularly in churches over 400).

The committee should not be too large. Experience shows a committee of five to eleven is the workable parameter.

The directions for setting up the committee should be adopted by the congregation. They should be part of the bylaws of the church.

The controlling facets of the operation of the committee must also be adopted by the congregation and be made part of the bylaws. These include any quorum and minimum first vote percentages which must be predetermined for the work of the search committee and the congregation itself. This data must be incorporated in the bylaws of the congregation before the search committee begins its work.

Ideally, the search committee will agree 100% when deciding which man to call as the candidate. It is recommended that the figure be 85% to 90%; 75% is the suggested minimum.

The search committee and the congregation must understand that once the candidate is chosen by the committee, he should be presented in a positive and forceful manner. This is necessary since to present him neutrally, evasively or negatively will almost surely create division in the congregation. Also, it will seriously weaken the credibility of the committee to process and present another candidate if the one under consideration is not called by the congregation.

Prerequisite

Throughout the entire process, the search committee and the entire congregation must covenant to the Lord daily to support the effort in prayer. This will demand some communication, albeit somewhat guarded in order to protect the situations of men with whom general contact has been made.

Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to assure the church that the search for its pastor is thorough and equitable and will be conducted within a reasonable time span.

Terminology

This proposal uses three terms, and it is necessary to keep their definitions clearly in mind. They are:

A Prospect: A name on a large unprocessed list.

A Potential Candidate: One of only three or four names on a refined list derived from processing the list of prospects.

The Candidate: The individual to be presented to the congregation for a vote and possible call. The name is derived from processing the list of potential candidates. Only one candidate should be considered at a time.