

New Pastorates: Possibilities and Problems

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Submitted to the Faculty of Theology, Acadia Divinity College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

Acadia Divinity College
Acadia University
Spring Convocation 2011

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This thesis by Daniel Joseph Green was defended successfully in an oral examination on March 30, 2011.

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Abstract

Leaders have been following leaders in every walk of life since the beginning of recorded history. Newly arriving pastors follow pastors who have served before them in the church. This thesis seeks to help newly arriving pastors get a good start in a new ministry setting. The biblical and theological foundation of this research is based upon the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Head of the Church. The regenerate local church membership seeks God's will in the call of a pastor who desires to be in the precise place of God's will. From the Scriptures, examples are given of spiritual leaders who have followed leaders who have ministered before them.

Recently ten Atlantic Baptist pastors were interviewed to discover their experience of arriving in a new ministry setting. Part of these interviews concerned the type of pastor that preceded them. The age and tenure of the departing and arriving pastors, along with the strengths and weaknesses of each that may impact the new pastors' ministry, were considered. Different types of former pastors one follows were researched: e.g., following one who was typical, retired, who died, extraordinary, in a moral crisis or who split the church. What went well, or not well, during these transitions, was also explored. Along with these interviews, that were evaluated in light of the Atlantic Baptist context, other research and literature were consulted which reflected similar findings in other constituencies. In conclusion a number of suggestions are offered for incoming pastors to consider that might make a pastoral change more positive and fruitful. Understanding the many dynamics of arriving at a new church can help the newly arriving pastor and the congregation get off to a positive and encouraging start. May all who read find a word of encouragement and wisdom.

Acknowledgements

I want to say thank you first of all to the pastors who allowed me to probe into their past and present pastoral changes. Their real life experiences shared will be a blessing to future newly arriving pastors.

Another word of appreciation goes to my supervisors: Rev. Norman Hovland a wonderful mentor and friend who journeyed through this degree with me;

Rev. Dr. Andrew MacRae who encouraged me and who has blessed all my days at Acadia Divinity College;

Also to Rev. Dr. Karl Csaszar, a kind colleague, who served as an informal peer reviewer at my request.

My gratitude also goes out to my church family, Chester United Baptist Church and Canaan United Baptist Church. Their gift of time and finances along with their prayers, hospitality and words of encouragement, have helped carry me through this degree. Special thanks to: Mr. Whitman J. Giffin, Minister of Music and Rev. Dr. M. Allen Gibson, Minister Emeritus, mentor and friend.

I want to express my gratitude to God for the Christian heritage that is mine and that has helped shape my life: My father, Rev. Dr. Don Green; My mother, Winifred Alice Knowlton Green (died 1975) My step-mother, Faye Green.

I want to honour my sister, Mary Elisabeth (Green) Gray who died March 28, 2011. We give thanks to God for her life of faithful service in missions. She and her husband John, helped train hundreds to love and serve the Lord in Papua New Guinea over the last twenty-four years.

Finally, and most of all, to my loving wife Trishe; Her love and support cannot be measured. I thank my children, Joe, Tyler, Abi and Kathryn for their patience and love.

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to research the dynamics surrounding the arrival of a new minister who has followed another pastor, a practice that is quite common in most pastoral transitions.

The goal of this project is to bring understanding to the events that surround the arrival of a new minister and the transition that takes place on many levels. Each minister and ministry location is unique, and how one copes with this “changing of the guard” is vital to the health of the newly arrived ministry leader and the local church. From this writer’s experience and conversations with clergy and laity alike, there is a need for this kind of study.

Research has been gathered from questionnaires, interviews, and reading. The intention is to arrive at some conclusions as to what happens when a pastoral change takes place, especially in our Atlantic Baptist constituency. It is hoped as well that this thesis will contribute to the foundation of our ministers and churches. Recommendations to pastors who follow pastors will be highlighted to help them cope and make the transition as smooth as possible as well as glorifying to God. There will be some thoughts and reflections for exiting pastors as to their role and behaviour. The intended result of the research and discovery is that it will improve the theory of pastoral transition practice. Based upon the experiences of others, it is hoped that this study will provide a model for the purposes of application in ministry life.

Pastoral changes and moves take place in our Atlantic Baptist constituency every year. Everyday one can check the list of ministry openings on the Convention of Atlantic

Baptist Churches web site. One can subscribe to the CABC pastoral Changes RSS feed¹ and be notified when the list is updated. This list of open ministry positions is maintained by the Regional Ministers of the Convention. Position openings listed have been included at the request of a church. If a church is searching for pastoral or ministry staff and would like their opening listed on this page they may contact their Regional Minister. Today when this site was checked, it posted a need for seven solo pastors, four senior/lead pastors and one associate pastor.² Pastors move from one place of ministry to another as God leads in each pastor's heart.

Pastoral changes are listed by year as well. In 2009 there were fifteen pastors who completed and accepted a call to another ministry setting. There were three interim pastors who completed a ministry and accepted a call to another church as interim. There were thirteen pastors listed as completing a ministry without reference to receiving another call. Two of these completions included ministry couples. The changes also included twelve pastors who had accepted calls to new places of ministry. Three other pastors accepted calls to interim ministry while one other completed an interim ministry. Two pastors retired in 2009. In total there were 49 pastoral changes listed.³ Assuming there are approximately 500 churches, this could represent a 10% change in one year. These pastoral changes are part of the reality of ministry life in Atlantic Canada and beyond.

To give a snap shot of the Atlantic Baptist situation as of December 2010 this is what it looks like:

¹ RSS – Rich Site Summary, is a format for delivering regularly changing web content. www.whatisrss.com, February 28, 2011.

² CABC Web Site, http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/services/job_postings.

³ CABC Web Site, http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/news_events/pastoral_changes/2009.

- 510 churches
- 482 listed as “Active”
- 23 listed as “Meets Occasionally”
- 5 listed as “Closing”
- 25 listed as “Closed”.⁴

The number of pastors actively serving in a church looks like this:

- Senior Pastors – 351
- Associate Pastors – 109
- Note: 435 churches are listed as having a pastor (the difference between the number of churches and the number of senior pastors can be accounted for with churches that are a part of a field).
- It also seems that there are 82 churches without pastors (some of these would fall under “Meets occasionally” or “closing”).
- Retired pastors - 143 are listed.⁵

The number of pastors awaiting a call to begin ministry in a new church setting varies by accreditation type.

- The number of accredited and ordained but not currently engaged in ministry with the CABC is – 132; 106 male, 26 female
- Church Licenses to Minister – 121 with current licenses (94 male, 27 female); currently serving: 29 (25 male, 4 female); not serving: 92 (69 male, 23 female)
- Association Lay Licenses to Minister – 57 with current licenses (34 male, 23 female); currently serving: 19 (14 male, 5 female); not serving: 38 (20 male, 18 female).
- Association Licenses to Minister – 52 with current licenses (41 male, 11 female); currently serving: 30 (27 male, 3 female); not serving: 22 (14 male, 8 female).⁶

With 82 churches without a pastor, the question one might ask is, “how many are awaiting a call?” Andrew Myers, Communications Manager of CABC said, “this is difficult to answer because we don’t track this. Some may be accredited with us but no longer have interest in pursuing ministry opportunities. Some may have yet to find the

⁴ Andrew Myers, Communications Manager for CABC, emailed this data 8 December 2010.

⁵ Ibid.,

⁶ Ibid.,

right fit. And some may be volunteering in churches or providing occasional pulpit supply. Once a church/association license lapses and we can determine there is no intent to continue, according to the privacy laws, we can no longer hold their contact information so we close their record in the database. Also, not all churches submit annual reports or keep us up to date on changes.”⁷ Pastoral changes are a very real part of Atlantic Baptist life.

This thesis is seeking in part to address ministry transitions based upon a theological and biblical foundation which places Jesus Christ as the head of the Church. With Christ as the example this thesis and research seeks to discover how and to encourage pastors to be Spirit led leaders, shepherd leaders and selfless leaders.

Part of this theological and biblical underpinning is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This doctrinal stance in the making of decisions especially in the calling of a pastor and a pastor accepting a call is critical, vital and foundational to healthy pastoral transitions. This work also will be looking at the covenantal relationship of pastor and congregation and the call of God to serve in a particular place and time. Part of this discovery will include the importance of working with other Christian churches and organizations.

This thesis will also look at the impact of following a former pastor and the influence that lingers after the former pastor has left. Some biblical examples of leaders who followed leaders will also be explored. Since the early record of Scripture leaders chosen by God have followed in the footsteps of others. Leaders follow leaders in every walk of life, including the world of sport, business and politics to name a few. Michael Watkins of Harvard Business School says it plainly: “As long as there have been leaders,

⁷ Ibid.,

there have been leadership transitions. The changing of the guard and the challenges it poses for the new leader are as old as human society.”⁸

In the Preface to *Beyond the Boundary: meeting the challenge of the first years of ministry*, Gary L. Harbaugh, et al., state well the issue of new pastors arriving at a new setting, especially for the first time.

The transition from seminary culture to local parish culture is a difficult one for most seminary graduates. What the seminary values and rewards is often devalued in the local church. The seminary emphasizes academic education, biblical criticism, theoretical discussion, emphasis on relevant social issues, inclusivity, and acceptance of various personal lifestyles. These values sharply contrast with the expectations of clergy by the parish. Because of this contrast between the seminary context and the local parish situation, the potential for problems between clergy persons and local laity is present in any first call. It is heightened even more when the parish culture is a small, rural church –often the context for a first call. The result has not infrequently been short-term pastorates with a high degree of conflict.

The cost to the church has been great. Parishes have been distressed, clergy emotionally and professionally damaged, and the mission of the church at the local level weakened. There is a definite need for the church to assist those making transition from seminary to the local parish culture.⁹

Part of the scope or goal of this thesis is to be a help and an encouragement to new pastors who are engaging their first congregation. It is hoped as well that this thesis will be a benefit to anyone who is called to lead a congregation and who has newly arrived. Being aware of the issues surrounding the transition to a new church helps prepare a pastor when a change in ministry setting occurs.

Loren B. Mead, Founder and President Emeritus, of The Alban Institute, states in one of their publications titled, *The Pastor as Newcomer*:

⁸ Michael Watkins, *The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2003, xi.

⁹ Gary L. Harbaugh, et al., *Beyond the Boundary: meeting the challenge of the first years of ministry*, The Alban Institute, 1986, 1.

All too often when a pastor takes up a new assignment or call the same frustrating series of events occurs:

- everyone experiences a burst of enthusiasm and hope, with lay people and clergy finding that doors seem to open to new possibilities
- a few things go wrong, some hopes get dashed, personal differences emerge, old feuds erupt again, and a kind of disillusionment begins to take over
- gradually things get back to where they were, or worse, and the new pastor begins to have daydreams of greener pastures elsewhere.¹⁰

How do pastors and leaders keep from repeating history?

As this thesis goes forward it will consider the research of others in the field of pastoral transitions. Part of this discovery process will be through looking at seven kinds of pastoral transitions. In short, these seven kinds of pastoral changes are representative of the kinds of pastors newly arriving pastors will typically follow. This is not meant to be exhaustive. There are other pastoral situations that can and will occur. This research is focused on the Atlantic Baptist Convention Churches and the experience of some pastors in this region of God's vineyard.

This thesis will look at the realities discovered through interviews with ten Atlantic Baptist pastors. The survey and interviews will reflect the experience of these pastors in twenty-nine transition stories. Some trends and patterns will be discovered as well concerning the Atlantic Baptist experience.

From these interviews and revealed realities some suggestions for newly arriving pastors will be offered. These suggestions will include for example: the period before arriving, the time of arrival, the induction service, the honeymoon period and the establishment of a support system.

¹⁰ Roy M. Oswald, The Pastor As Newcomer, Washington: The Alban Institute, 2001, 4.

May the reader find encouragement and enlightenment for the journey God has called each to make in ministry.

Chapter 1

Theological and Biblical Foundation.

This thesis, in part, is looking at the arrival of a minister to a local church. Part of that arrival process is the call that is extended to a pastor seeking God's will for a change in ministry location. Another aspect concerns the former pastor's ministry and/or any interim pastoral leadership.

Today there are many misunderstandings concerning the Church. Some speak of it as an architectural structure. Others refer to it as a denomination, a group set apart by some distinctive, while others are referring to a particular body of believers in a certain place.

The Church was founded by Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke to the disciple who became a prime leader in the Church, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)¹¹. In reference to the Church, Paul claims, "and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22, 23 KJV). J.W. Shepard in his book, *The Life and Letters of St. Paul: An Exegetical Study*, writes: "Paul represents the relation between Christ and the church under the figure of that relationship in the human organism between the head and the body. The community of Christians is to be indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, as its real life

¹¹ W.E. Vine, et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984, 537. This writer is aware of the theological discussion regarding Christ, the rock, and Peter. The word *petra*, "a mass of rock," is used metaphorically of Christ and is distinct from *Petros*, the apostle Peter, and defined as "a detached stone or boulder."

principle....the body must be under control of the Head. The church must follow the direction of the Spirit of Christ.”¹²

In the same epistle Paul reminds us that the church is “subject to Christ” (Ephesians 5:24). Again in the hymn of Colossians 1:15-20 one reads, in verse 18, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” F.F. Bruce, in his book, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, says Christ... “is ‘head’ of his body the church, not simply in the sense of ruler or origin but in the sense that he is so vitally united with his people that the life which they now live is derived from the life which he lives as first-born from the dead.”¹³ Jesus Christ, the founder, is the head of the Church.

The understanding that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church is an important place to start. In John 15, Jesus said, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” And as one reads the next verse one is struck by the fact that Christ has “chosen” us and “ordained” us, “to go and bring forth fruit...” (v.16). It is the Lord’s idea and not ours. A believer is united with Christ by faith and at the same time enjoys union and fellowship with other believers.

Christ is also pictured as the Cornerstone of the Church. In Ephesians 2:19-22, Jesus is referred to as the “chief cornerstone.” Jesus said that that he would build his church (Mathew 16:18). Christ is the Chief Cornerstone and foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:6); and Christians, the living stones, as a whole become “the habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22). And in fact, Peter

¹² J.W. Shepard, *The Life and Letters of St. Paul*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950, 536.

¹³ F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977, 420.

speaks to the thought that individual believers are living stones in the construction of this building, the church (1 Peter 2:5). Jesus is the head of the church in all of its manifestations universally and locally, and believers are the body of Christ on earth.

Jesus is the Head of the Church but has also, through his Spirit called leaders in the local church. Early in Acts 6 we understand that the needs of some marginalized Christians were not being met. The church sought to help meet these needs. The church's primary criterion was that those who would be considered for this ministry would be Spirit filled and Spirit led people. This is the kind of leadership quality the church today needs to seek and should underpin all that the church does. The church needs leaders that are full of the inspiring, empowering, and enabling Spirit of God.

In the New Testament, the local church had leadership from elders, bishops and pastors. The term Elder appears the most (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Timothy 5:17,19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1). Emery Bancroft suggests the reason this term is used by far the most frequently is that it “probably grew out of the fact that it was already an established word among the Jews, and while it describes the same office as the other two, bishops and pastors, it has rather the idea of maturity and experience, thus describing the character of the office rather than the function of the office.”¹⁴ These words used to describe leaders in the church are words not of dominance but of spiritual guidance and care.

Another term for this office is bishop. This word appears in Acts 2:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1,2; and Titus 1:7. The word bishop from the Greek (episcopos) means literally an overseer. This title of overseer as applied to an officer in the church looks

¹⁴ Emery H. Bancroft, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: Systematic and Biblical, Second Revised Edition, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mi., 1976, 297.

rather to the functions of the office than to the character of the officer, describing the care and outlook upon those committed to the bishop's keeping, as a leader, guide and teacher. It carries with it more the idea of authority and rule than does elder.¹⁵

The third title given to this office is pastor. The word is only used once in Ephesians 4:11 where it is describing the gifts bestowed on the church by the ascended Lord. The apostle says in part that Christ "gave...some, pastors and teachers." This term seems to have in it the thought of shepherding which involves the personal care and spiritual concern which the bishop-elder should exercise over the flock to which they are called.¹⁶ Though the term is used only once in Scripture the Word of God is replete with passages that reflect God's loving care for his people. Christ is our example of a good shepherd who cares for and gives his life for the sheep (John 10:11-16).

This caring function was emphasized when the overseeing function of the elders (bishops) was expounded by Paul (1 Timothy 3:5). Further, Donald Guthrie, in his *New Testament Theology* says, "the pastoral function was therefore an activity of leadership rather than an office in its own right. It was essential for the well-being of the church that care should be extended to the members, and it is not surprising that pastoral qualities should be expected in overseers."¹⁷

Local manifestations of the Church have been gathering since its inception. In Acts 1 we see the disciples gathered in an upper room continuing "with one accord in prayer and supplications, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14), about 120 in number. When the day of Pentecost fully came and they were gathered once again, the Holy Spirit descended and Peter and the others

¹⁵ Ibid., 298.

¹⁶ Ibid., 298.

¹⁷ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downer's Grove, 1981, 771.

preached in the many languages of those visiting Jerusalem from all over the world. Three thousand believed and were baptized and were added to their number. “and they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). This passage sets the parameters for ministry: teaching, learning, loving, caring and worshiping.

Part of what impacts the arrival of a new pastor, is one’s view of ecclesiology: how one understands the biblical teaching of the local assembly, the church at large and ecumenically, the mission of the church and who is Lord of the Church.

If one arrives at a new congregational setting and one’s view is one that “self” is the center of the ministry, he/she is off to a rough start. Bishop Stephen Neill said it well, a half-century ago, when he addressed self ambition in the ministry:

You must often have encountered the ambitious type of minister. Such a man is always restless and never happy. All the time he has one eye on another church, with better pay and prospects or a more congenial atmosphere; therefore, it is impossible to be single-minded and contented in the work that he is doing. He tends to speak often in church meetings and synods in order to have the eyes of others on him as a coming man. His thoughts and actions tend to be determined not by the will of God but by what others are likely to think, and particularly by the current policies of the leaders of the Church. Well, it says in Scripture that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways and that such a man will receive nothing of the Lord. You can well see that the entering in of ambition spells disaster to the work of the minister.

For the Christian there is one place and only only -- the lowest place. That is the command of the Lord, and it is binding upon us all. As you enter on the work of ministry you must seek the place of hardest work, greatest sacrifice and least recognition, and there you must be content. Obviously in the Church some men must come to the top; the place of great influence and responsibility must be filled. But woe to the Church if they are filled by the ambitious who have sought them.¹⁸

¹⁸ Stephen Neill, On The Ministry, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1952, 41,42. The repeating of the word “only” in the quote above must have been for emphasis.

This sense that “self” is the center of ministry life is brought out in a very recent study by Hoge and Wenger. As part of their research, they interviewed a 50-year-old former pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, who spoke to the quality of seminary students today and revealed these sobering words:

I chaired the synod’s candidacy committee for seven years, I served on it for nine years. And I kept seeing what I considered to be the calibre of the candidates go down and down and down. I finally got so cynical I had to get off the committee. It was more and more being populated by people who had an extraordinary sense of entitlement. And by that I mean, for example, a candidate who lived in [a certain city] who wanted to go to the Presbyterian seminary there, get her degree there, do her internship somewhere within a 20-mile radius, and then get her call within that same radius, because her husband was a lawyer and couldn’t move his practice. That’s a far cry from, “Here am I, send me.” I understand that that person’s call to ministry came after she had already had a call as a partner and a mother. Oh, and there was an Olympic swimming pool in that mix too, because the candidate had a kid who was a swimmer. And she was a good candidate, intellectually and spiritually, but had some challenges with regard to being inconvenienced.¹⁹

Jesus Christ is not only head of the church but must take that place in the heart of a pastor as well. Putting Christ in the driver seat would help pastors whose understanding of ministry is more secular than spiritual. It would also help pastors who are more anxious about personal advantage than fulfilling God’s call.

People will let one know rather quickly that the minister is not in charge. On the other hand, if one’s view is so unbalanced as to believe that the local assembly’s wishes are the center of ministry it can be an equally rough start. If people and pastor are not working together, pointed in the same direction, reaching together for the prize of the high calling of Christ Jesus, God’s blessing can hardly rest on that ministry.

¹⁹ Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005, 204.

One's view of the mission of the church local or universal affects priorities. If one views the church as a place of employment and putting in time until one is 65, it is hard to imagine anything meaningful being accomplished for the kingdom of God. On the other hand, if together, priorities are based on the call of God to reach out in Jesus' name, to bless those in and outside of the local faith community, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to invite people into relationship with Jesus Christ, God's work can and will go forward.

One's view of the mission of Christ through the church affects one's loyalties. If one has a high view of the local church, the will of that church as expressed through lay leadership and a Spirit led vote, will mean that God has placed divine approval on one's coming and place of leadership in the local gathering. If indeed God has called one to a local church one's loyalty to God and the congregation are important. It helps pastors keep their vows of induction when they promise to look after the flock where God has placed them, and in turn, receive the care and concern of those with whom one is called to minister.

Bill Lawrence, in his book *Effective Pastoring*, speaks of the dreaded "Leaders Disease" when we pursue our own interests in God's name. He states, "we proclaim ourselves to be Christ's servants, but in reality we are self-serving. Each Sunday as we pray from the pulpit or preach from the Word we claim to be serving the sheep for the Saviour's interests, yet when our hearts are hardened, we use the sheep to serve ourselves."²⁰

²⁰ Bill Lawrence, *Effective Pastoring: Giving Vision, Direction, and Care to Your Church*, Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999, 34.

Lawrence recognises four symptoms of this leader's disease. First he speaks of careerism marked by selfish ambition and shameful competition. He asks us to think about the conversations pastors have at conferences when we talk about baptisms, buildings, budgets, books and broadcasts. Second, he speaks to the shameless use of power. Like the disciples, pastors seek to sit on "the right or left" of denominational organizations with selfish concern for their own advancement. Third, he speaks to Insensitive Arrogance. He illustrates this as the disciples sought to be the greatest rather than take a towel and wash feet as Jesus did. And last, he speaks to the blind self-confidence as shown in the life of Peter who said he would never deny the Lord.²¹ A newly arriving pastor needs to walk humbly before God and the people.

One's view of who the head of the Church is also affects ministry from the very beginning. Who is Lord of the Church? If an incumbent does not have a clear understanding that Jesus Christ is Lord of all, including the local assembly, there can be trouble. If a pastor believes that his/her will is ultimate and anyone who does not comply is not of God, ministry will be affected negatively. On the other hand, when pastor and people are pointed in the same direction, their eyes fixed upon Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of the faith and head of the church, ministry has opportunity for a healthy start. Jesus must be Lord of all that a local church and pastor attempt to do in Jesus' name.

To understand the Lordship of Christ a person must be a born again believer. Jesus is not only Saviour, He is Lord. A regenerate gathering of believers will seek the Lordship of Christ together in every aspect of ministry, including the calling of a pastor.

²¹ Ibid., 35-42.

Charles W. DeWeese, in his book, *A Community of Believers*, speaks to the importance of a regenerate church membership. He states:

Definitions of the church which have appeared in Baptist confessions of faith throughout the centuries clarify the perpetual Baptist stress on a regenerate church membership. In 1611, Thomas Helwys, soon to become the pastor of the first Baptist congregation in England, wrote a statement of faith, which became the first English Baptist confession, in which he described the church as a company of faithful Christians who have separated from the world, confessed their sins, acknowledged their faith in God, and knit themselves to God and one another by baptism. These same elements characterize descriptions of the church found in practically all Baptist confessions of faith. The combined thrust of these definitions of the church is that the regenerate can fulfill their response to God only within the context of the church, and the church can achieve its mission for God only if comprised of the regenerate.²²

The Lordship of Christ is vital to any local congregation in the calling of a pastor.

Maitland M. Lappin, in his book, *Baptists in the Protestant Tradition*, says it well, “The phrase (the Lordship of Christ) expresses an ideal rarely attained, and often not even sought.” Further he says:

The phrase – “The Lordship of Christ” – becomes meaningless and loses all significance if used merely as a slogan in which to take refuge from or to attempt to justify repudiation of all ecclesiastical authority. The Lordship of Christ obligates the individual to seek through prayer, thoughtful reading of Scripture, reflection, and whatever means at his disposal, to know the mind of Christ. If Jesus is Lord, He must be leader. Hence, in every situation, in every set of circumstances, seeking the solution of every problem, the guiding question is - What would Jesus do? So also is the Church: what the individual strives for as an individual, the group collectively strives for as a group – The mind of Christ. This necessitates pooling the mental, moral and spiritual resources within the group, the community of thought and action inspired by prayer and meditation. Thus the democratic principle and the freedom of the individual, with Christ as Lord, accentuates the responsibility of each member of the group. It presupposes a Church whose members value communal prayer and study of the Scriptures and, because desiring the greatest good of all, and of the community in which it ministers and

²² Charles W. DeWeese, *The Community of Believers: Making Church Membership More Meaningful*, Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1978, 12.

witnesses wherein each member strives to fulfill his or her responsibility in full, free, and prayerful co-operation with the others in the Spirit of Christ.²³

This is the kind of seriousness that congregations should engage in when calling a pastor. The desire should be not only with the lips but to fully practice the acknowledging of the Lordship of Christ and honestly seeking the mind of Christ.

Ernest A. Payne, in his book, *The Fellowship of Believers, Baptist Thought and Practice Yesterday and Today*, argues that from the days of John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, Baptists have understood the spiritual autonomy of each local company of believers, and jealously guarded the right of the local church “to appoint its own officers, and specifically rejected any suggestion that one church should have authority over another.”²⁴

Further, Payne, in appendix A, gives a doctrinal statement of the Particular Baptists Confession of 1677, Chap. XXVI, of the Church, part number 8. “A particular Church gathered, and completely organized, according to the mind of Christ, consists of Officers, and Members; And the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church...”²⁵ Notice the early Baptist understanding that first a pastor is called and appointed by Christ and then set apart by the church. This should be true in ordination of an individual as well as the calling of a person to a particular ministry in a local assembly.

Alan P.F. Sell, in his book, *Commemorations: Studies in Christian Thought & History*, speaks to the Lordship of Christ in church decisions, which would also apply to

²³ Maitland M. Lappin, *Baptists in The Protestant Tradition*, Toronto, The Ryerson Press, 1947, 63.

²⁴ Ernest A. Payne, *The Fellowship of Believers, Baptist Thought and Practice Yesterday and Today*, London, UK, The Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd., 1952, 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

the calling of a pastor. He writes, “I sometimes think that one of the worst things we have done is to persuade ourselves that our church order is democratic. If by democracy we mean “one person, one vote” and rule by majority, then it is quite anachronistic to suppose that our forebears espoused any such notion. At their best they sought to be Christocratic: they wished Christ to rule in his church; and in their decision-taking their quest was for unanimity in him.”²⁶ Further he rather pointedly asks, “How do we measure up to this ideal? Is Christ’s rule never impeded by our church-politicking? Do not some congregations so exalt their pastors as to put them in a position which only Christ should occupy – and do not some ministers rather enjoy such treatment? Do not some elders think that they have been called to run the affairs of the church as they think best?”²⁷

Sometimes pastors forget whose church it is. It is the Lord’s church, bought with his own precious blood. It is God’s call upon the pastor’s life and the church gathered together that places one in a certain ministry setting. This shared belief that God has called one at this time and place to minister together is a powerful source of strength and encouragement for ministry together. It places God’s stamp of approval on the calling of the pastor and confirms the expressed will of the congregation who has called one in particular to lead.

Still further, Alan Sell, when speaking of the sole headship of Christ being honoured in his Church historically concerning the call of a pastor and the sanctity of the relation between pastor and people, states, “That relation was so sacred that it could be

²⁶ Alan P.F. Sell, Commemorations: Studies in Christian Thought and History, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1993, 175.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

created only by Christ himself. The people in calling a pastor were supposed to be calling Christ's man."²⁸ Of course, this is easier said than done.

Again, Sell expresses his concern about the blurring of lines today between the calling of a pastor and the hiring of staff. He quotes from John Robinson, the pastor to the Pilgrims, who writes of the sacred bond between minister and people.

The bond between the minister, and people is the most strait, and near religious bond that may be, and therefore not to be entered but with mutual consent, any more than the civil bond of marriage between the husband and wife.

It makes much, both for the provocation of the minister unto all diligence and faithfulness: and also for his comfort in all the trials, and temptations which befall him in his ministry, when he considereth how the people unto whom he ministereth, have committed that most rich treasure of their souls, in the Lord, yea, I may say, of their very faith and joy, to be helped forward unto salvation, to his care, and charge, by their free and voluntary choice of him.²⁹

The importance of the Lordship of Christ in the call of pastor is further illustrated by Alan Sell as he shares an 'atrocious story' which floats down the years from A.J. Grieve. Grieve, "received a letter from the secretary of a vacant pastorate inviting him to send the names of three students who might be interested in the position. The secretary explained that he was also writing to three other college principals, and that when the church had heard all twelve candidates, a selection would be made. Grieve replied on a postcard, 'The ministry is a calling not a horse race. No students will be coming from this college.'" Sell continues to encourage churches today who are tempted, that they not succumb uncritically to the "corporate model" of calling a pastor.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., 175.

²⁹ Ibid., 176.

³⁰ Alan P.F. Sell, *Enlightenment, Ecumenism, Evangel: Theological Themes and Thinkers 1550-2000*, Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005, 237,238. Alexander James Grieve, M.A., D.D., 1874-1952.

Further, Sell, in his book, *Testimony and Tradition: Studies in Reformed and Dissenting Thought*, in his chapter, *Doctrine, Polity, Liberty: What Do Baptists Stand For?*, quotes Baptists of the past regarding the Lordship of Christ:

In the mid-twentieth century we find Arthur Dakin asserting the Lordship of Christ in no uncertain terms: 'The true head of the church is the Lord Jesus Himself, who through the Holy Spirit makes his will known as the members seek it.' Henry Cook concurred: 'The Church...is the holy society of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ which He founded. But its relationship to Him is more than historical; it is experimental, and he still is what he always was, the Church's Founder, Guide and Controller.'³¹

This high view of the Lordship of Jesus Christ will help any local church and pastor to seek the will of God for ministry together in a certain place. Seeking to be unified under the Lordship of Christ is an ideal the church has striven for since its early days. Paul wrote to the church at Rome, to "be of the same mind one toward another" (Romans 12:16). Again he writes, "Now I beseech you...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgement" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Further he says, "giving all diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). To the church at Philippi he exhorts that they "stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

The calling of a pastor, under the Lordship of Christ also is impacted by the covenantal relationship between the local church membership and their pastor. These voluntary pledges made by congregations to God and one another reflect biblically based guidelines by which church members intend to conduct themselves or practice their faith.

³¹ Alan P.F. Sell, *Testimony and Tradition: Studies in Reformed and Dissenting Thought*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005, 69,70. Sell is quoting A. Dakin, *The Baptist View of the Church and Ministry*, London: Baptist Union 1944 and Henry Cook, *What Baptists Stand For*, London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1964.

Charles DeWeese emphasizes the covenantal relationship of Baptist life. He notes its biblical basis as God's people, in both Testaments, frequently bound themselves to God and one another with covenants. Again he states that Covenanting is theologically sound. Biblical theology is saturated with covenants evolving from God's initiative. As a covenantal people, Baptists express their loyalty to God making it a continuing reality. Further he shares that covenanting has wide historical precedent among Baptists. This use of covenants among Baptists helps preserve a regenerate church membership. Born again believers who covenant to live in vital relationship with God through worship, bible study and serving ethically under the lordship of Christ will enhance the moral and spiritual progress and integrity of a congregation.³²

As God's people in a certain place are bound together in Christ and covenantal promise, under the lordship of Christ, seeking the perfect will of God in the calling of a pastor, there is divine hope that the result will be the person of God's choosing for that place and time. Each person in the congregation has as much voice and authority as any other individual within the church. The church members, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, vote to call the pastor they believe to be of God's choosing.³³

The understanding of one's own call to ministry and the affirmation of the same is important to the whole pastor for spiritual, mental and physical health. From the beginning of the biblical record men and women have been called and set apart by the Spirit of God for specific tasks and ministry. Moses, after attempting to do God's work in his own way and strength, was called by God as Exodus chapter 3 reveals. God pledges

³² DeWeese, A Community of Believers, 19-23.

³³ Gordon G. Johnson, My Church, The Baptist Faith and Lifestyle, Evanston, Ill.: Harvest Publications, 1979, 44.

and confirms the call of Moses saying, “Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain” (Exodus 3:12). The great “I AM” was sending and commissioning Moses. This same “I AM” is calling and confirming the ministries of pastors and people today. When David was called to lead as a youth the choice of God was not to be confused with any “outward appearance” for “the Lord looks upon the heart.” When David was finally set before Samuel he heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” And after Samuel obeyed, the “Spirit of the Lord came upon David...” (1 Samuel 16:13).

As churches and pastors today we are admonished to seek the mind of Christ as we call leaders. Certainly we want the Spirit to lead and empower all we do in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus chose disciples, calling them to follow and be like him. Luke tells us that Jesus spent the night in prayer the evening before he called the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12,13). As the disciples chose Judas’ successor the Scriptures tell us that after they had prayed to the Lord, ‘who knows the hearts of all men’ to reveal to them whom God had chosen (Acts 1:15-26). The early Church sought the mind of Christ as the believers set apart different people to specific roles and ministries.

When seven were chosen to serve, it was preceded by prayer for those who were people of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and full of faith. It resulted in the increase of the Word of God and people coming to faith in Jesus (Acts 6:1-7). As the Church at Antioch prayed and ministered the Holy Spirit told them to “separate Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:1,2). This is another illustration of a church listening to the voice of God and calling people in concert with the Spirit. Later

Paul had words of encouragement and affirmation for young Timothy. He reminded Timothy of God's calling upon his own life "putting him in the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12) and how God had ordained him a preacher...(2:7). He further instructed Timothy concerning this calling of God on any person (3:1-7).

To be called of God into ministry with the confirmation of God's Spirit and Church is certainly a source of strength and encouragement in every circumstance of ministry life. When one arrives in a new ministry setting, led by the Holy Spirit, with pure intentions, with the calling preceded by prayer and the seeking of God's will together and then the divine approval of God's people seeking unity in the Spirit, Christocratically, there is a sense of peace and source of strength and joy.

A healthy understanding of the Church universal and one's place in the wider church community helps a congregation as well. If one seeks to be a lone ranger, when there is much that can be accomplished together with other Christians of varying denominations, it is not a healthy start to a ministry as well. One can make a huge difference when working with other Christians in matters of justice, poverty, equality and other issues of life.

As pastors arrive in a new ministry place they are affected by those who have gone before them. If the former pastor was "the boss," the congregation may be looking for one who is less demanding. If the former pastor just gave in and went along with the status quo, the expectation for the incumbent may be the same or the congregants may feel the one who is leading should have more back bone. If the former pastor did not listen to anyone but forged ahead on a personal agenda, parishioners may be hoping that

the newly arrived minister will listen and be empathetic to their hopes and dreams for the future.

The attitude and actions of a former pastor concerning the mission of the local assembly impacts the new pastor as well. If the former pastor's loyalties were all about self and not the congregation's, reactive forces may be at work to make sure the new pastor knows his/her priorities or place. This is not all negative and people may recognize that the former leader did not make time for his/her own family, or did not make personal time, so the reaction for the new pastor is to be encouraging him/her to be more involved with family or to find ways of outlet for personal well being.

Biblical Examples of Ministry Transitions

The Bible has many examples of ministry transitions. For centuries, leaders have followed leaders in the work of the Lord. As pastors we are always following someone else who has led before us.

It is inevitable that we will follow another pastor as we begin in a new ministry setting. Biblical examples help in one's understanding of the dynamics that are happening when a leader follows the ministry of another. This theological perspective shows where God is at work in the transition process.

One of the first examples is in the life of Joshua as he followed one of the greatest leaders of all time, Moses. "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all signs and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel." (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). Joshua had huge shoes to fill. According to the KJV,

Moses “was in the church in the wilderness...” (Acts 7:38). Joshua followed one who had a long history of leadership. Moses also died while a leader. He was a successful leader who brought the assembly of Israel right to the very edge of the promised land before Joshua assumed full leadership responsibilities.

Moses knew he was relinquishing his place of leadership and had prepared Joshua to assume the reins. Moses was a great encourager to Joshua and had mentored him at different points along the way in preparation for Joshua to lead.

Another example from Scripture is in the life of Samuel. Samuel followed Eli who had served as priest and prophet for forty years. He had the privilege of being mentored by Eli, which would have aided in the change of leadership and the early approval of Samuel by the people. At least Samuel was not unknown to the people. They had watched him grow up in and around the tabernacle and had witnessed his growth in both physical and spiritual things. Eli died suddenly and Samuel assumed the spiritual leadership with great influence in political matters as well. It may have been understood that Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas would have been the ones to follow after Eli, but they also died at the same time just prior to Eli’s passing. Samuel followed a leader who died, one who was extraordinary and also one who had experienced moral crisis in his family. God’s judgment came upon Eli’s house because his sons “made themselves vile, and [Eli] restrained them not” (1 Samuel 3:13). These were big shoes to fill as he followed after the influential ministry of Eli.

More could be said about the Judges who followed one another. The Book of Judges is a series of narratives describing the rise and fall of leaders. Each one was raised to face a crisis. Some of their durations of leadership were longer or shorter than others.

Some of the leaders were more famous like Gideon and Deborah while others, one would be hard pressed to recall from memory.

Elisha followed a charismatic leader named Elijah. Though Elijah did not die in office he was transported by a fiery chariot in the sight of many witnesses. Elijah was influential in the “school of the prophets.” Elisha’s attitude was critical to the assumption of leadership when he followed Elijah. He was not presumptuous that people would automatically follow him. Elisha seems to have humbly stayed near to Elijah, learning from him and desiring that a “double portion of [Elijah’s] spirit be upon [him]” (2 Kings 2:9). Elisha’s humble following of his predecessor could be a good example of how to follow a dynamic leader. One might ask the question that if the newly arriving pastor follows a good leader and things go well, does that show God’s hand was in the choosing of the new leader?

In the New Testament record, Matthias was chosen to follow Judas who had betrayed Jesus. Judas was one of the twelve and had been a leader from the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. Judas had been involved with one of the greatest moral crises of all time, betraying our Lord. Matthias followed him. Little is said about the dynamics of this transition but one can relate to them when following a minister who was involved in some kind of moral crisis. The calling process was briefly mentioned in Acts 1 as “they appointed two.” After they prayed, they asked God “which knows the hearts of all men” to show them which of the two God had chosen. They cast lots and the Bible simply states that Matthias “was numbered with the eleven disciples” (Acts 1:26).

Further in the book of Acts one reads of Paul and Barnabas traveling together. Mark left them and later wanted to join them again. The dissension between Paul and

Barnabas was such that they parted company. Paul took Silas and Barnabas took Mark. Though tough at the start, with feelings raw with emotion, and maybe a little stubbornness, these transitions proved to be positive for the church and the spread of the gospel. Later Timothy followed the great apostle Paul. Even though he was mentored by Paul, Timothy must have felt some pressures that we don't hear in the narrative. What could they be? Could he have felt less of himself because his pedigree was not like Paul's who was a "Hebrew of Hebrews?" Maybe he was intimidated by the apostle who had met the Lord on the road to Damascus and was now the well known and dynamic Paul. When a pastor follows a dynamic pastor there may be pressures from within or without to be like or measure up to the former pastor.

Other leaders came along who followed Paul. Aquila and Priscilla were early leaders who did not always do things the way Paul had done them. They were likely compared to Paul, for people would claim they were of Paul or they were of Apollos. Again, Timothy the Greek did not observe all of the Pharisaical nuances that Paul practiced and could have been criticized for that.

New leaders are often compared to their predecessor(s). Every pastor follows another pastor one way or another. Even if you are starting a church you follow all of the former pastors of the people in your congregation. Each congregant has an idea of what a pastor should be like and what a pastor should do.

In every walk of life, leaders follow leaders. It may be in the sports world where famous coaches are followed by lesser known coaches. Or coaches who used certain systems of strategy and the new coach has different ideas as to how to make the team successful. It can happen in the board room with a new CEO who follows a world class

leader. Will the new person take the company where they want to go? The former CEO did not do it that way. Doubts and fears rise as the new leader tries to effect change from what has always been done.

In summary, Jesus Christ is the Founder of the Church. He is Lord and Head of the church. Under this Lordship, local churches, call pastors, elders, or bishops to serve as leaders and shepherds. The local church, made up of regenerate believers, calls individuals to serve with a Christocratic approach, covenanting together to serve one another and Christ's Kingdom. The Bible has many examples of ministry transitions which are instructive to the local church today. God has been at work throughout history in the calling and equipping of people to serve and follow others who have led.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Foundations for This Research

The theoretical foundations for this research come from a genuine concern for newly arriving pastors in a new ministry setting. This writer is especially concerned about young pastors in their first ministry location. This concern comes from thirty years of pastoral experience and many conversations with pastors and parishioners. All too often pastors survive their first ministry setting enough to go back to their former profession or simply to choose another way of making a living.

What is the cause of this kind of discouragement? Could it be the legacy left behind by the previous pastor? Could it be the calling process and unvoiced expectations that were never met by the local church or the incumbent? Could it be the age and experience of the freshly arriving minister? Could it be the lack of effective interim ministry that causes early frustrations from issues left unresolved? Could it be the comparison of the new pastor with the personality and ministry style of the former pastor? Could it be a lingering interference of the former pastor's influence on the congregation that impacts the new pastor? Could it stem from a lack of resources like a mentor and friend to air frustrations and find solutions?

Dean R. Hogue and Jacqueline E. Wenger, in the insightful book, *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*, share these thoughts from their research gleaned from five denominations in the United States from 2001-2002:

Why did ministers in the various denominations leave? Three summary statements are supported by the research. (1) Conflict was the main reason ministers left – conflict with parishioners, with other staff members, or with denominational officials. Many ministers felt blocked or frustrated in their efforts to bring new life to their congregations, and this led to disillusionment with their members and with their denominations.

(2) Women left local church ministry more often than men. Often this was due to family responsibilities, especially the needs of children. Women also left because of disillusionment with denominational systems and continuing resistance to women clergy in some local churches and among district superintendents. (3) More clergy left due to institutional or interpersonal problems due to loss of faith or financial need. The greatest interpersonal problems were feelings of loneliness, isolation and inadequate boundaries between ministry and family life.³⁴

These and other related queries are the kind of questions that this research is intending to address. Every pastor follows another pastor. This research is an attempt in part to look at seven types of pastors whom a new pastor would follow. This writer knows there are many other pastoral transition situations that could be considered but they will remain outside the scope of this research.

With every change in ministry life there are feelings that remain around the termination of one's predecessor. Roy M. Oswald warns pastors: "To assume that the mere passage of time between that termination and your arrival will adequately dispel those feelings is to make a serious mistake. Even if the majority of people did not like your predecessor, there will be unresolved feelings to deal with. Parishioners may have some unresolved feelings of anger toward the former pastor that remain unresolved or some feelings of guilt about how they treated him/her or concerning the circumstances of his/her leaving."³⁵

One may be required to listen to stories of former pastor(s) many times. It is important not to stifle those feelings or to be overcome with parishioners who compare

³⁴ Dean R. Hogue and Jacqueline E. Wenger, Pastors In Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005, 29. Hogue and Wenger's research involved five denominations: the Assemblies of God, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church.

³⁵ Roy M. Oswald, New Beginnings, 8.

one with former pastors. People are trying to work their way through the unresolved feelings so they can begin the new relationship with a new pastor. It is important to listen without participating in running down the former pastor. If the comments are positive one should try to affirm without being threatened or put down.³⁶

Oswald, quoting Richard Kirk, in his publication, *On the Calling and Care of Pastors* (Alban Institute, 1973), “postulates that a congregation will go through the same stages of grief that an individual goes through in dealing with the death or loss of a loved one. This would imply that your new congregation may be going through any of the following stages: denial, anger, guilt, or bargaining.”³⁷ This thought is following the classic study of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and we note that Richard Kirk left off acceptance.

Alan Chapman shares this thought in an article about the wider use of the Kübler-Ross model and change in one’s life:

Dr Elisabeth Kübler-Ross pioneered methods in the support and counseling of personal trauma, grief and grieving, associated with death and dying. She also dramatically improved the understanding and practices in relation to bereavement and hospice care.

Her ideas, notably the five stages of grief model (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance), are also transferable to personal change and emotional upset resulting from factors other than death and dying.

We can clearly observe similar reactions to those explained by Kübler-Ross's grief model in people confronted with far less serious traumas than death and bereavement, such as by work redundancy, enforced relocation, crime and punishment, disability and injury, relationship break-up, financial despair and bankruptcy, etc.

This makes the model worthy of study and reference far outside of death and bereavement. The 'grief cycle' is actually a 'change model' for helping to understand and deal with (and counsel) personal reaction to trauma. It's not just for death and dying.

This is because trauma and emotional shock are relative in terms of effect on people. While death and dying are for many people the ultimate trauma, people can experience similar emotional upsets when dealing with

³⁶ Ibid., 9.

³⁷ Ibid., 9.

many of life's challenges, especially if confronting something difficult for the first time, and/or if the challenge happens to threaten an area of psychological weakness, which we all possess in different ways. One person's despair (a job-change, or exposure to risk or phobia, etc) is to another person not threatening at all. Some people love snakes and climbing mountains, whereas to others these are intensely scary things. Emotional response, and trauma, must be seen in relative not absolute terms. The model helps remind us that the other person's perspective is different to our own, whether we are the one in shock, or the one helping another to deal with their upset.³⁸

Is there a possibility that these stages of grief dovetail with the frustrations of ministry or transition time? Congregations and pastors are affected by changes in leadership.

Roy Oswald and his research speaks of the “Shadow/Ghost” of the former pastor.

This extensive quote is highly instructive to every pastor.

One way congregations move through the grief process, it appears, is by talking about the previous pastor. The new pastor may have heard the same stories over and over again: it seems necessary that he/she continue to listen so people can work their feelings through. The ability to avoid being threatened by all the positive comments about the previous pastor and to avoid being judgmental about the negative information is the key to the newcomer's being able to facilitate the process (and finally be accepted as the new pastor). To view the praise of the former pastor as a sign that certain parishioners are rejecting the newcomer is to wrongly interpret what is taking place.

A real advantage of being in touch with the history of a congregation is that one knows which previous pastors are still considered the saints of the past. Quite possibly, a congregation is still grieving for a pastor who served them several pastorates ago. This complicates the picture when exploring congregational feelings about the immediate predecessor. The incoming pastor needs to walk slowly here, maybe in a slight crouch, to avoid the spider webs spun by former clergy. With careful research and time a new pastor knows exactly where these webs are—although occasionally he may still find web on his face.

³⁸ Alan Chapman, 2006-2010, Alan Chapman offers his interpretation of the Grief Cycle model first published “On Death & Dying,” Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, 1969.
http://www.businessballs.com/elisabeth_kubler_ross_five_stages_of_grief.htm.

The general consensus seems to be that it is easier to follow a good pastoral experience than a poor one. In our work with army chaplains, we came upon the term “borrowed credit.” Borrowed credit refers to the positive feelings parishioners naturally accrue to the new pastor because they have had positive experiences with past clergy. If the immediate past pastor was loved, trusted, and respected, once the congregation has worked out its grief in losing him/her, then these parishioners will expect to have the same feelings about the incoming pastor.

When experience with the past clergy has been negative, the new pastor may discover that he/she has unequivocal acceptance at the start-up—as one clergyman put it, “It was as though I could do no wrong,”—but in the long run these clergy need to contend with the “inherited debt” from former clergy. If, for example, the former pastor had his hand in the Sunday offering occasionally, parishioners will, for a long time, be watching out of the corners of their eyes to see whether the new pastor will try the same thing. Similarly, if parishioners have been betrayed, disappointed, let down, abused, or lied to by former clergy, the new pastor, no matter how popular, may have to contend with parishioners occasionally wondering whether all clergy are alike. Extra caution needs to be exercised in areas where laity have been abused or disappointed. Clergy may find they are being tested around these specific areas.³⁹

When a pastor follows a pastor these dynamics mentioned above are at play. As a pastor arrives in a new church setting to be aware that the impact of several former pastors can be influencing one’s beginning is important to starting well. How one reacts in a positive way as one strides through the early days of a new ministry is crucial.

Further Roy Oswald suggests that if you encounter anger in your new situation, it is important to evaluate carefully whether it legitimately belongs to you or is meant for your predecessor. Sometimes people feel guilty surrounding the circumstances of the former pastor’s departure and wonder if they had treated the pastor better the former pastor might have stayed or they feel guilty as to how the pastor was forced out. Others may bargain with you to stay if you are like the former pastor or to be sure you are not

³⁹ Oswald, Pastor As Newcomer, 16,17.

like the former pastor. Again he encourages pastors to be themselves and remain authentic as folks move through these stages of bargaining with your arrival.⁴⁰

This research, in part, is looking at seven kinds of pastoral transition: 1. a typical or normal transition; 2. a pastor who has died; 3. a pastor who retires and moves away; 4. a pastor who retires and stays in the community; 5. a pastor who was involved with some sort of moral crisis (moral, financial or ethical); 6. a pastor who was extraordinary; and 7. a pastor who split the church and stayed in the area to pastor part of his/her former congregation. This research will be based upon interviews with Atlantic Baptist pastors who have experienced arriving and serving in Atlantic Baptist churches.

Following a pastor in a normal or typical term of service.

The first category is regarding a normal or typical situation. A normal or typical pastorate would be one that does not raise any of the negative issues that are in the other situations. A normal or typical pastor serves faithfully and seeks a seamless transition and best of all possible futures for the incoming pastor. This may be influenced by the length of tenure: 1-3 years, 4-9 years, 10 and up, etc. How long a pastor serves could impact the depth of a church's feelings for her/him. The style of leadership and programs begun would be influenced over a longer period of service.

For some churches there seems to be a pattern of new ministers arriving every two or three years. Often the expectation is that the incoming pastor will follow the pattern. The folks in that church just assume that you will be leaving when you graduate. They will even tell you this up front in your initial conversations. It almost makes a pastor want to start looking for her/his next church, even before the pastor starts in this new ministry setting. There has been no crisis or moral issue. It has simply been the history of that

⁴⁰ Oswald, New Beginnings, 10.

church that student pastors or other leaders have left every few years. It could be the financial situation of a particular church as some churches find it hard to pay a full or part-time minister. It may be that every few years when their minister leaves the church saves money during the interim to call another pastor. And again in a few years, when the pastor leaves, because the church has no money to support them, the assembly will start the cycle all over again.

Even though a pastor only stays a few years, the incoming pastor will discover any unclaimed baggage the former pastor(s) left behind. Ministries are shaped by leadership and even the short term pastor leaves a shape for an incoming pastor. The little ways things were done are the new traditions which are verbalised as “the way it has always been done”

If a pastor stays four to nine years and if their leaving was not caused by any trouble, a new pastor will be wearing any pastoral habits of the previous pastor. Folks will inform the incoming pastor if the former pastor cut his/her own grass, or always got the mail, or if the pastor kept regular office hours. The church folks will soon remind the incumbent of the former pastor’s ways of doing things and the felt expectations of those statements will ring in the new pastor’s ears. One never knows what small thing will be part of the expectations of the new pastor. These expectations may be said out loud or not. They may or may not be the new pastor’s goals in ministry. They may not be the new pastor’s way of doing ministry. One will have to cope with these expectations and be prepared in one’s heart to be true to one’s calling in a loving way.

After a short time of doing something a certain way, people feel that this is the way it has always been done. In a Baptist church often something that is done for 2 weeks

is now a tradition. A new pastor may have someone take them aside and share candidly their own thoughts about the way the incoming pastor should lead. Their former pastor promised to stay until he/she retired. The congregation may feel cheated that the pastor did not stay longer. Others may announce that the former pastor stayed too long and so the incoming pastor should know up front to be ready to move on. The expectation may be to move in less than ten years, five years or whatever their constitution declares.

Following a pastor who has died.

When a pastor dies in office and in the midst of ministry, it is traumatic in the life of a congregation. There is a sense of great loss because their pastor, friend and mentor is unexpectedly gone. This may be different if the death occurs suddenly through an accident or cardiac arrest. It may be different again if the death is the result of a long illness that the church family has journeyed along with their beloved pastor and family. There is not only a sense of loss that their pastor is gone but the circumstances which caused the parting were painful and emotionally hard. If one follows a pastor who has died one should know that the former pastor seemingly has a special status. He/she did not move to another congregation but to their home in glory that they proclaimed and are now experiencing. Whatever their programs were, however successful or not these may have been, they seem to be judged in the light of heaven. The new pastor should be aware of this phenomenon to help him/her cope with his/her new church setting, the church's expectations and their own self awareness.

Following a pastor who retires and moves away.

As in other transitions the impact on the new minister may be influenced by the number of years served by the former pastor before retirement.

When a pastor retires the church usually has some sort of celebration and the high days of ministry are recalled. People from other places where the minister served are invited to bring greetings and reminisce of happy days and pleasant scenes. There is a healthy outpouring of love and respect for the work of ministry the retiring pastor attempted in the name of the Lord. The new pastor will be impacted by this in that expectations of the incoming pastor may be to continue in the tried and tested ways of the retired pastor. As mentioned already, little things may or may not have to do with ministry but were the habits of the beloved former pastor. These familiar habits may be transferred and expected of the new pastor/leader. It may be as small as always turning the lights on in the windows of the church during Advent because that is what the former pastor did.

Following a pastor who retires and stays in the community.

It used to be that a retiring pastor or resigning pastor would leave the community and some denominations required it. Today many clergy own their own homes and their spouses are still working which causes clergy to want to remain in the community where they served last. A pastor who retires and stays in the community is often a sore spot for the incoming minister. The retiring pastor has earned the respect of the church family and community and will often be the first one called in cases of emergency or to conduct a funeral. This may be from habit. People like what they know. It depends upon how the former pastor who stays, deals with these calls and requests that will alleviate the possible tensions that can arise.

Joseph L. Umidi, in his book, *Confirming the Pastoral Call: A Guide to Matching Candidates and Congregations*, speaks to the proximity of the predecessor and an issue that commonly affects the volatility of a leadership transition. He writes:

If the departing leader stays in the area (especially if he has retired), loyal parishioners may have difficulty “leaving” the old leader’s style and “cleaving” to the new leader’s style and personality.

During the first three months of one new pastor’s leadership, some of the charter members of the church began to complain to the former pastor, who still lived nearby. Feeling compassion for the disappointments of his close friends, he mistakenly intervened. He regrettably became involved in pressuring the elder board to remove the new pastor. If this former pastor had not been so accessible and visible to this church in transition, the congregation might have found a solution with much less dissention (sic) and pain.⁴¹

In *A Manual For Worship and Service*, a resource printed by Canadian Baptist Ministries, it clearly states under the section called: “Pastor-to-Church Ethics”: “I will, with my resignation, sever my pastoral relations with my former parishioners, and will not make pastoral contact in the field of my successors without their knowledge and consent.”⁴²

It is important to find ways the departing pastor can remain in the community in a way that makes the experience positive for all. While it is clear that a former pastor should in no way interfere in the affairs of the congregation he/she formerly served, it is important that pastors, and their families, not be isolated from friends and a church home they have loved.⁴³

⁴¹ Joseph L. Umidi, *Confirming the Pastoral Call: A Guide to Matching Candidates and Congregations*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2000, 23.

⁴² Robert G. Wilkins, Canadian Representative, CBM, *A Manual For Worship And Service*, Canadian Baptist Ministries, 1998, 158.

⁴³ Oswald, Heath and Heath, *Beginning Ministry Together*, 88.

This is hard to maintain without real discipline. In a world with telephone and e-mail, text messaging and who knows what methods of communication are yet undiscovered, people will contact the former pastor whom they love and respect and who lives in their community. Will this “code of ethics” be strictly adhered to? Is the responsibility on the former pastor to speak candidly with folks who call and request his/her services, counsel and guidance? This writer believes it is and will offer suggestions in formulating an agreement below.

Despite the farewell activities and liturgies at the end of a pastorate that help congregations end a pastoral relationship there are still ties of friendship with the departing pastor. If the pastor is staying in town, Oswald, Heath and Heath suggest that the “board and the departing pastor need to create clear guidelines for the departing pastor’s participation as a member of the congregation. This should also be included in the search committee’s presentation to candidates as part of the calling agreement.”⁴⁴

This “calling” agreement should include:

- an explanation of why the departing pastor wishes to stay in the community.
- a statement that the departing pastor and the new pastor will affirm one another’s ministry and not undermine it in any way.
- the departing pastor will not initiate contacts with members of the congregation for purposes of pastoral care.
- the pastor and spouse will absent themselves from the congregation for at least one year.
- If the clergy spouse is an employee of the congregation the spouse will resign that position.
- The former pastor may assist at the request of the family and at the invitation of the interim or the new pastor.
- Under no circumstances should the former pastor initiate contact upon bereavement or notice of a wedding.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 88.

- The interim or new pastor should meet with the departing pastor and a skilled third party to be sure they agree in their understanding of these obligations.
- It is the responsibility of the new pastor to initiate this meeting.
- The board should work with these parties so that each will feel free to identify any friction and major issues which can be resolved in a compassionate and constructive manner.

Pastors who remain in a community that they once served have to learn how to conduct themselves in a new role. Having a formal agreement helps both parties along with the congregation to realize that a new pastoral relationship exists with the former pastor.⁴⁵

If the former pastor who retires and stays around but was not all that popular or liked, it could still be a negative influence as people may associate his/her ministry and mannerisms with the incoming pastor. One cannot control all of these things.

Following a pastor who was involved with some sort of moral crisis (moral, financial, ethical).

This author heard as a young pastor that one should avoid, “money, maidens and modernism.” These three could lead one into a moral crisis. It is part of our fallen world and human nature to be tempted and turned aside from one’s heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. As an incoming pastor, one’s rules and boundaries are established in reaction to the faltering of the previous pastor. If money were the issue, the leadership will try to insure that the incoming pastor is never near where funds are counted, deposited or left to be dealt with and passed to the tellers. If there was a problem with the opposite sex the incoming pastor may be limited in how he/she relates to persons of the opposite gender. He/she may be forbidden to counsel alone or at all, and may also be told that all visits

⁴⁵ Ibid., 89.

have to be made with someone else present. If the former pastor had any moral issues the light of scrutiny will be upon the new minister to insure this does not happen again.

Roy Oswald states, “Whether we like it or not, we inherit the credit and debit parishioners have built up based on their past experiences. This fact should make us curious. For example, if clergy have lied to them in the past, they will watch you very closely in the beginning to see how honest you are with them.”⁴⁶

Following a pastor who was extraordinary.

Every once in a while one follows a pastor who was extraordinary. The church family will let one know the great qualities one’s predecessor possessed. It is probably quite innocent that this information is passed along. People are proud of their great pastoral leaders and like to share the blessing they have had by such phenomenal leaders. If he/she was a great preacher the new pastor may feel obligated to “out preach” the one before her/him. If the previous pastor was passionate about visitation and listed the number of visits made each year in the annual report, the chances are the new pastor will strive to excel in visitation. It is part of one’s person to try to be the best one can be in ministry and one may measure such by attempting to live up to the legend of the one who has gone before.

From the world of sport, following a great pastor may be like following a great coach. There is a sense of great expectation to be of the same calibre and to be as productive as one’s predecessor. There is a tried and tested coaching philosophy that is known by others and the expectations may be that the new pastor/coach will follow the same pattern. There seems to be an inertia in the leadership of a legendary predecessor that people assume you will want to be like them in order to be successful.

⁴⁶ Oswald, New Beginnings, 41.

It is not always easy to follow a great and influential pastor.

Following a pastor who splits the church and then stays and pastors in the community.

Church splits can be devastating to a faith community. The pain of feeling deserted by friends and family who have left is real. The pastor whom they trusted and even loved has been unfaithful to the call to serve and has breached his/her induction vows. Some may feel they don't blame the pastor for leaving but will stay true to the original congregation. As a new pastor comes to serve a divided congregation, with some church members having questionable loyalties, it will make leadership challenging.

Other factors impacting the seven types of former pastors and transitions.

These seven situations listed above are impacted as well by the size of the congregation one serves. Harbaugh, utilizing the Arlin Rothauge model of categorizing congregations into four basic types (patriarchal/matriarchal congregations: 0-50 active members; pastoral congregations: 50-150 active members; program congregations: 150-350 active members; and corporate congregations: 350 up), and states that "there are radical differences in beginning one's ministry in each of these four types of congregations. The difference between starting up as an assistant in a large corporate church and beginning as a pastor in a small rural parish is as great as foreign missions is to home missions."⁴⁷

The above seven situations may be impacted by the age of the incoming pastor. A pastor who is young and arriving at his/her first church may respond very differently to the challenges of following a former pastor than the older and experienced pastor who has lived through and survived more than one transition. The way a pastor copes with arriving may be influenced as well by the number of transitions in that pastor's career.

⁴⁷ Harbaugh, Beyond the Boundary, 6.

Part of this document's qualitative research is asking what has gone well in a pastor's arrival and what did not go well. With a negative response to this question this research is asking what a new pastor might have changed within him/her self that may have made things better. Further it is asked as to which party had the greater share of why things did not go well.

An answer this document is looking to find is if length of tenure of the former pastor has any impact upon ministry arrivals and how well they go. As churches may have a history of long or short terms of pastors, so too, pastors may have a history of long or short ministries in a particular setting.

Another question is if a pastor's arrival impacts or is the genesis of a pastor's departure. Does a pastor's first impression of a new ministry setting encourage the pastor to stay a long time or cause him/her to begin to keep an eye open for a new place to serve.

Impacting this research is the question of the former pastor's gifts and strengths and the incumbent's gifts and strengths. The same is asked concerning the weaknesses of the former pastor, as understood by the incumbent, and the weaknesses of the newly arriving pastor.

Another part of the equation is the interim period between the former pastor's departure and the new pastor's arrival. This is also influenced by the type of leadership during the interim period. Was there an intentional interim minister that bridged the space of time between pastors? Did a nearby retired minister provide some preaching and pastoral leadership? Was there some kind of pulpit supply by trained pastors or lay-

pastors? Was this interim period solely led by the leadership of the local church? Any one of these could have an impact upon the newly arriving pastor.

This paper is asking about relationships that arriving pastors may or may not have had with former pastors of the congregation which they serve. It will also consider what kind of contact a former pastor has maintained with the congregation the new pastor now serves.

Having a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon is considered as well. To have someone or a group to confide in or from which to seek counsel and advice is critical. The question is asked as to how helpful that is or would have been in a pastor's experience.

Chapter 3

The Reality Discovered Through Surveys

To help explore the question of the newly arrived minister to a field and to consider the effect of other variables, such as the pastor that one follows, a survey was designed. This survey was designed to discover the impact of various dynamics upon the incoming minister. With input from thesis supervisor, Dr. Andrew MacRae, D.Min. ministry supervisor, Rev. Norman Hovland and conversations with D.Min. colleagues and Atlantic Baptist pastors, the questions below were employed to help discover insights into the dynamics of a pastor who follows a pastor under different situations.

In consultation with thesis supervisor, Dr. Andrew MacRae, a short list of possible interviewees was made. It was agreed that ten different pastors would be interviewed. The list was intended to be representative of the Atlantic Baptist pastoral environment. Of the ten persons interviewed, two were women and one is from a visible minority. Every church that was discussed in the interviews is an Atlantic Baptist church. Even though some pastors had ministered in other places only their Atlantic Baptist experience is reflected in this research. This writer makes no pretence that these ten pastors are a random sample.

Those who were on this list were telephoned and asked for their permission to participate in the survey. The survey questions were then e-mailed or sent by Canada Post to those participating pastors with a time interval between the e-mail and the interview. This was to allow the pastor who was to be interviewed, the opportunity to review the questions and give opportunity for reflection before receiving the call for the initial interview.

Here is the actual e-mail that was sent to pastors to review:

Dear Friend, thank you for helping me with this research.

I will be phoning you to talk through this survey and this gives you the opportunity to see the questions ahead of time.

I will be following up again with a face to face conversation to explore these questions and see if there are any more thoughts that come to mind after our initial conversation.

The purpose of the thesis is to research the dynamics surrounding the arrival of a new minister who has followed another pastor.

Please answer the following questions for as many ministry transitions as you wish to share.

Ethical research and confidentiality is also important and will be strictly observed.

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career?
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?
 - B. A pastor who has died.
 - C. A pastor who retires.
How many years did the retiring pastor serve before your arrival?
 - D. A pastor who retires and stays in the community.
 - E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis. (moral, financial, ethical).
 - F. A pastor who was extraordinary.
 - G. One who split the church and stayed in the area as pastor.
3. What was your age when you arrived?
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this survey?
1st, 2nd, 3rd, ...?

5. Was it a rural or city church?
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could?
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
10. How long was your former pastorate?
11. How long did this term of pastoring last?
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How?
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths?
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses?
15. How long between the former pastor's departure and the new pastor's arrival?
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?
(i.e. pulpit supply, interim pastor, intentional-interim pastor or something else.)
17. Has the new pastor had any contact with the former pastor, before or after his arrival?
And, what type of relationship do they have, if any?
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
19. How is the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year after arrival?

All but one of the personal interviews were conducted by phone. The other one was a face to face interview. All interviews took place during the summer of 2010. Confidentiality was strictly observed.

What is the number of transitions in your career?

The first question in this research was concerning the number of transitions the pastor had experienced. The pastors interviewed had gone through a combined total of 41 transitions which makes for an average of four transitions per pastor. Not all of their transitions were discussed in these interviews. Freedom was given so that only the new arrivals that each participant felt comfortable discussing were talked about. The other transitions that are not included are those which took place in another part of Canada. The focus is on the Atlantic Baptist situation.

This research is looking at twenty-nine pastoral transitions into a new ministry setting in an Atlantic Baptist Church. Of the twenty-nine transitions in this study only three took place in New Brunswick and none in Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland-Labrador. Of the twenty-nine churches considered in this study only one pastorate was involved in the story of two different pastors.

The reason for asking how many transitions a pastor had experienced was that it seemed obvious to this writer that as a pastor matured and had moved a few times that the process would be better each time. The research tends to say that each church and each pastor are individually unique.

The question concerning the type of pastor each new arrival follows fell into five categories. The majority followed a typical or normal pastor. Fifteen, just over half, of the twenty nine pastors interviewed said they followed a pastor who was typical, normal or stable. Seven newly arriving pastors followed a minister who was retiring. Some of these retiring pastors stayed in the community while others moved away. Five pastors shared that they followed a pastor who was in some kind of moral crisis that involved the former

pastor being asked to leave. One followed a pastor who died and one followed an extraordinary pastor who was very outgoing but also split the church and stayed in the community to pastor the new congregation.

The length of tenure of the former pastor and newly arriving minister who follows was considered. Twenty-one responses, regarding the length of the preceding pastor's ministry were given. These answers were derived from information received from church members upon arrival. They are also based upon what each pastor remembers from those early days of ministry in a new location. The eight that were not given were simply because the new pastor did not remember or was not informed by the church he/she came to serve. This turned out to be an average of seven years of service by the preceding pastor. The shortest pastorate that was followed was ten months and the longest was fifteen years.

The age of the newly arriving minister was also considered. The average age this study reveals is that 29 years of age is when those interviewed were entering his/her first ministry setting. The youngest pastors were 25 while the oldest pastor entering a first pastorate was age 43. Not all of the persons interviewed chose to speak about their first ministry setting. This study did reveal that the length of first ministry settings lasted on average nine years. The shortest first time pastorate was 20 months and the longest twenty four years. One other pastor served eighteen years in a first ministry setting. This reveals an average of five years in a first church excluding the two long terms of eighteen and twenty-four years.

The churches that were part of this study where pastors were moving into new ministry settings involved thirteen rural multi-church fields; nine rural single-church

pastorates; three town churches and four city churches. Part of the Atlantic Baptist context is the multi-church field. When a pastor is called to a multi-church field the pastor arrives at different churches all at the same time. Arriving at one church can be challenging enough but when a pastor comes into two, three and sometimes four different churches in the same field it is challenging indeed. It is challenging because sometimes pastors arrive in multi-church settings that are both suburban and rural. A pastor has to minister to different challenges with cultural dynamics from different communities. Sometimes congregations can be rivals for the minister's time and energy instead of working together.

Part of this study asked questions concerning the interim ministry before a new pastor's arrival. Of the twenty-nine pastoral situations in this study eight had interim pastors before the new pastor arrived. Nineteen of the persons interviewed shared that the churches had pulpit supply for worship service leadership preceding the new pastor's arrival. Two shared that he/she arrived the Sunday after the preceding pastor finished ministry in that place. Interim ministry ranged from six months to two years with an average interim pastorate being fourteen months. Pulpit supply between pastoral ministries ranged from one week to two years. The average length of pulpit supply between ministers lasted seven months.

These questions and the answers from the interviews will be considered as this paper moves from the statistical framework to an assessment of what has been heard in the interview process. It is hoped that the reader will find some help through this research and can identify with situations that arose from the interviews that will be instructive or

at least cause the reader to realize he/she is not alone in what pastoral ministry has brought into his/her own experience.

What type of pastor did you follow?

In this survey the pastors who were interviewed and expressed that they followed a typical pastor had very little, if any, negative things to say about the experience. One pastor was told how the people loved the former pastor and in time the new pastor enjoyed a good relationship with the leaving pastor as well. In one typical transition it was expressed that health issues had caused a premature leaving of the former pastor. Another pastor left for a denominational position. The only negative comments regarding a typical transition were that the people in one place expressed relief that the former pastor had left. And in another situation it was a multi-point rural church where in one church it was a normal transition but in the other church they were frustrated with the leaving pastor. This reveals how two churches on a field can have very different view points regarding a pastor who is leaving.

Only a couple of pastors spoke of following pastors who were exceptional or extraordinary. One felt threatened because he/she was following a “legend.” The congregation often would compare the ages of the older former pastor with the younger new pastor. The other pastoral change story involved a very charismatic and extraordinary pastor who when he left split the church. Extraordinary leaders can be hard to follow because it seems that the new pastor has to deal with the comparisons made. Comparisons are made concerning age, style of leadership, musical abilities, preaching skills or just how a former pastor connected with people in a big way.

Seven of the pastors who were interviewed followed a minister who retired. Five of them mentioned that the minister who retired moved away. It was noticed that none of these pastors spoke of this kind of transition with any negative tone. One mentioned that the retiring pastor was “not liked by many.” For this to be known by the incoming pastor would make a new minister wonder what the church thought about him/her or what that feeling might look like in a few years once pastor and people got to know each other better.

The most negative word revealed was concerning a pastor who retired and stayed in the community. Not only did the minister stay in the community but was involved with funerals without first speaking to the incumbent pastor. The issue came to a head and the leadership of the church had to put a policy in place to insure the new pastor would be consulted first when a funeral or wedding arose. This writer has heard of similar situations in other parts of the Atlantic Provinces where retiring pastors have caused some frustration and hurt through not allowing the new pastor to take the lead in all parts of ministry.

Some pastors shared that in ministry transitions they followed a pastor who left with some sort of crisis: moral, financial or ethical. One pastor shared that the minister was asked to leave regarding trust issues. As a result the incoming pastor felt the congregation had mistrust for him/her as well. Together with that, there was a culture of mistrust in the church as a faith community as well. Another former pastor was asked to leave which resulted in a divided leadership group. To add to this it was a multi-point charge and the two churches were not getting along and communication was very low.

Another former pastor was asked to leave because of emotional health issues. Another pastor left over constitutional issues which led to the former pastor only being in that particular place for a couple of years. People left the church during this time of conflicting constitutional views and have not returned. Another former pastor finished ministry in a particular setting due to a moral failure. The new pastor felt that this led to a general mistrust of the men in general for him. The pastor felt alienated by the men. The men had been betrayed by their former pastor whom they felt had been “eyeing their wives.”

Every pastor follows another pastor. The ministry of the former pastor and how that pastor conducted him/her self in personal life and ministry affects the pastor who follows.

What went well?

For the most part pastors had positive responses to this question. In an early interview it was mentioned that, as a newly arriving pastor, the new person was met with positive comments about the former pastor. Eventually this new pastor came to enjoy a good relationship with the former pastor as well. The reader must remember that these experiences happened many years ago and still the incidents and impressions are remembered and stand out as part of a pastor’s life and ministry experience.

A common theme in the interviews was that of the good help the arriving pastor enjoyed in the moving experience itself. Kind people from the church where the pastor and family had served helped to load and pack the moving truck. On the other end of that move the story is repeated that the new church family helped the pastor and family get

unpacked and settled. More than one pastor related that the arrival and moving process included a hot meal that was awaiting the pastor and family.

Many pastors commented that the people in the place of arrival were warm and friendly and appreciative. Some related that the pastor and family were met with welcoming baskets. These baskets included helpful information about the new community(s) in which the pastor and family would live and serve. This information included the names of local doctors, dentists and other service providers that the pastor and family would at some time need. One pastor mentioned that the three churches in the new parish worked together and functioned well. The pastor also mentioned how affirming and encouraging the new congregations were.

Along with this thought of help at a time of arrival was that which was received from family and friends. The support a pastor and family receive from friends they have made in the former church where they have served, and the constant love and encouragement from family, is a positive force. Ministry life at times is lonely for a pastor and family.

Hoge and Wenger, in their book that speaks to ministry transitions from their research in five denominations in the United States, speak of the factor of loneliness. In a chapter that reveals their results concerning why pastors were burned out or discouraged which led to them leaving the ministry, they said this:

In our research we encountered numerous ministers who told us they left because of strain, weariness, burnout, and frustration. They did not attribute the problem to specific conflicts within the congregation or with denominational officers; their complaints were more general, more coloured by self-doubt, and more typical of individuals who are depressed....These persons usually felt blocked in some way, either by external conditions or by personal inadequacy. Therefore they were frustrated and saw no solution to their malaise except to leave parish

ministry. They expressed feelings of hopelessness and isolation, stating that other people did not help them or even want them in ministry. Many felt lonely and unsupported....Twelve percent of the former pastors we studied fell into this category.⁴⁸

Moving into a new setting has some anxious moments. The love and help of family and friends is a blessing. Every bit of love and support a pastor and family receive as they arrive helps ease the feelings of loneliness and isolation.

This writer knows that the role of the parsonage in parish life is changing. Still, in the interviews pastors related their arrival to a parsonage in a positive way. One pastor mentioned it was his/her first place of service so a parsonage was a good thing. With a large student debt load and the subsequent years of paying off a student loan, a parsonage is welcomed. Not having another payment in the life of a pastor is a positive thing. In another case of a first transition the pastor and family moved into a brand new parsonage which was appreciated. Another pastor said that the parsonage had been refurbished and new appliances were in place. The reader must remember that the question is “what went well” in the arrival. The parsonages that needed repairs, painting and new appliances were not mentioned to this point.

Another comment that was raised more than once concerned a 100% vote by the church or churches the pastor was coming to serve. These pastors felt encouraged, and rightfully so, that the people whom the pastor is seeking to serve have voted together in an overwhelmingly positive way. One pastor mentioned that this vote was preceded by prayer, time spent in God’s Word and a real sense that the Holy Spirit was calling this particular pastor to this new place of service. May this be the norm in the churches of Atlantic Canada. It is also noted that no one mentioned a vote less than 100% as a part of

⁴⁸ Hoge and Wenger, Pastors in Transition, 115, 116.

the arrival process that went well. On a critical note one could ask from whom the new pastor received this news of a 100% vote. Another question might be as to the circumstances of the vote. Was it declared unanimous for unity's sake?

Another factor that was mentioned was the timing of the arrival. A couple of pastors related that they arrived in the summer. This arriving at a time of year when ministry life may be at a slower pace was remembered as something that went well. It may serve pastors well when considering a move to a new place to seek God's will about the timing of an arrival. Another point raised in these interviews which may be related to timing is that early upon arrival it seems that a funeral takes place. For all of the downside of the funeral event in the life of a family and church, in a positive way a funeral introduces a new pastor to the larger community. Funerals are attended by and large by a cross section of a community and a new pastor has an opportunity to meet and to be heard by this new and diverse group of people. It also instructs the new pastor as to who is related to whom in the congregation or community. It also tells who is connected to the church through a former association such as Sunday School, Youth Group or some other setting in church life.

It was telling that the number of transitions in a pastor's ministry career impacted their arrival. One pastor shared that he felt the arrival went well because it was his fourth transition. Another said it was his second transition and so he felt he had a better sense of how to engage the new community. A first time pastor said that the experience was all new and so did not know what to expect. It is hoped by this writer that the things learned from this research will be instructive and helpful for future ministers as they begin ministry in a new setting.

The positive impact by leadership and staff persons in the new setting was helpful. Existing staff people were mentioned as those who helped the newly arriving pastor to integrate into the new ministry placement. One spoke of the good deacons, leaders, retired pastors, team ministry and a generally well organized church that made a huge difference for a positive arrival. Another pastor arrived while the senior staff person was on vacation. This new pastor was helped immensely by the office administration in settling into this new ministry position. The guidance and mentoring from secretaries and key leaders is essential in a good beginning.

Following a good interim ministry was found to be of benefit. One pastor said that a core group in the church was ready to move forward in ministry and felt it was due to a solid interim ministry that this was possible. Another testified of how quickly a sense of bonding happened with the new congregation. The new pastor said that this was likely due to the good interim ministry that preceded the pastor's arrival. More has been and will be said about the importance of good interim leadership before a pastor arrives.

Many pastors when speaking of the numerous transitions in their careers, when asked, "What went well?" said, that it was "all good." Another said, "it was seamless." Another said that it all went well and the people were gracious and loving. The pastor also mentioned how important it is for pastors to allow the people of their congregation(s) to love them. Another interview, speaking to a pastor's first ministry setting, arriving at a church that was now venturing out on its own, spoke of how positive an experience it was. The people were willing to learn together, with their pastor, how this new ministry would unfold.

Still when asked, “what went well?,” there were some negative comments. One pastor said plainly, “nothing went well –I walked into a big mess.” Another said just one word, “nothing.” Another said two words which may speak volumes, “no comment.” Some arrivals, and one prays they are few in the life of a pastor, are unpleasant. Some arrivals are such that a pastor would rather choose to forget or leave in the past without comment. In difficult transitions pastors need encouragement and support from a variety of sources. These will be explored later in this survey. The next question concerns what did not go well. Pastors were asked to share a not so easy arrival.

What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.

To begin this section in a positive way, out of the twenty-nine transition stories shared in interviews, three responses were that this did not apply to their pastoral arrival. The pastor felt the whole arrival experience, from calling process to moving in, went well.

Early on it was learned that new ministers, especially those experiencing their first transition, did not find the process all that easy. The question could be asked at this point as to how our denomination can prepare our newly minted pastors such that this new and first time experience could be met with greater confidence. Further on in this thesis suggestions for new arrivals will be addressed.

Dishonesty surrounding the calling process was a theme that kept recurring. One pastor related that he/she walked into a messy situation. The pastor felt that the pulpit committee was not totally honest for not mentioning that there were issues that needed to be addressed. Another pastor said that the pulpit committee misrepresented themselves. The pulpit committee had promised they would do anything to attract younger families.

When the new pastor attempted to tailor the worship service such that it would attract younger families it started a worship war.

This is consistent with the research of Hoge and Wenger of five denominations in the United States. When speaking of younger pastors who are a source of innovation and new inspiration said:

...not every local church is interested in that kind of innovation and inspiration – in spite of what they might say when searching for a new pastor. This leaves thousands of new pastors frustrated at how immovable and resistant their parishioners turn out to be. We found many cases where new pastors committed to turning around small dying churches found their ideas blocked and their inspiration wrung dry.⁴⁹

In another transition the pulpit committee was not forthright in how small of a window of time the new pastor had to revive the smaller of the two churches on the field. A pastor arriving where the former pastor had split the church and stayed to pastor the split said, “the pulpit committee did not reveal the split.” The new pastor only learned of it after his/her arrival and felt that the calling process had been dishonest.

Again, Hoge and Wenger, speaking to recommendations for improving the call process found that: “Many pastors criticized the lack of honesty and forthrightness in the call process. While some thought the process itself needed to be revamped, others asked solely for more forthrightness about problems in churches and better effort to match ministers to churches.”⁵⁰

Further, though from another tradition than Atlantic Baptist practice, a quote from a United Methodist pastor speaks to forthrightness in the denominational part of the transition and calling process. The pastor said:

⁴⁹ Hoge and Wenger, 13.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 205.

When they appoint you to a church, they tell you all these wonderful things about where you are going. So we don't listen any more; after the first couple, you know better. But I wish they would treat us like professionals. If you're a doctor, you tell what's wrong with the patient. I wish they could say, "Look, this is a church in trouble. This is what it needs. We know you can't levitate it. We recognize that nobody is going to turn this thing around in four years. But try to make it a little better. We understand that you cannot work miracles, but see if you can keep it from getting worse."⁵¹

This could be said to pulpit committees as well. Forthrightness in the calling process could be a powerful source of inspiration and challenge to the new pastor. Of course, pastors who expect forthrightness from a pulpit committee, could be more forthcoming about their own selves when questions are asked regarding any weaknesses that a pastoral candidate is presently working on. It is a two way street. Sometimes candidates misplace themselves when seeking a new place in which to serve.

Joseph L. Umidi's research discovered four key reasons why ministry candidates misplace themselves in new positions:

1. Unrealistic Assessment of Their Gifts (24%). New graduates going into ministry often display immaturity and ignorance as they try to move from the ideals of the classroom to the realities of a ministerial position that requires maturity and gifts they may not yet possess. This may be due to a lack of reflection on their strengths and weaknesses. It may also be due to a lack of practical experience in the area in which they wish to minister.
2. Unrealistic Assessment of the Church (22%). This is due in part to the candidate's inability or unwillingness to properly assess the organization to which he or she is seeking a call. It may also be due to the failure of the church to clearly define its values, expectations, history, and mission.
3. Unrealistic Assessment of Their Call (22%). Instead of seeking God's will, candidates too often are influenced by family and friends. Many new candidates are unclear about what God is calling them to do, and they may accept unsuitable positions. They have not done a sufficient spiritual assessment to sense where the Spirit of God is moving in their lives.

⁵¹ Ibid., 205.

4. Selfish Motivations (20%). The following motivations seemed to appear in equal numbers in both new candidates and experienced ones seeking a new position.

- a. Tired of present position. Many will seek new positions simply because they are tired of their present ministry problems and want to get away to “greener pastures.”
- b. Desire for more salary/benefits. These candidates approach a new ministry position from the same perspective as their neighbours in secular work.
- c. Stepping-stone positions. Some candidates choose positions based on their personal ambitions and view new opportunities in terms of prestige or prominence.

On behalf of the wounded pastors and staff members, and the church committees that called them, we must work harder to avoid ministry mismatches. Churches and candidates alike can strive to eliminate the pitfalls that have resulted in disillusionment for too many leaders. It begins with a healthier way of relating to one another in the matching process. There’s no better time to start than now, when we are seeking the kind of people who can lead us into the twenty-first century.⁵²

A pastoral candidate needs to be honest with God and themselves before they come before a pulpit committee. This honesty before God and within will help one to be honest with a church calling committee.

Another pastor when speaking about the calling process said that the existing staff at the church were not included. The pastor never had any contact with the existing staff before becoming the senior pastor. It was suggested that even a social time which included the existing staff would have been helpful.

In another interview the pastor described the calling process as “not handled well.” The pastor related that the whole calling process as described by the pulpit committee did not happen as they said it would. Instead of voting, on another night, after the candidate had returned home, they voted while the candidate-pastor waited in another

⁵² Joseph L. Umidi, Confirming the Pastoral Call, 79.

room. They told the pastor the results immediately following the vote. The vote was that all but two were in favour of the pastor coming. To conclude this story, the pulpit committee shared with the candidate who the two people were who voted against the incoming pastor.

Another story that did not go well concerned an incoming pastor who was the junior part of a team ministry church. The senior pastor who had encouraged the candidate to apply promised he would remain if the young pastor would apply. No sooner had the young pastor arrived than the senior pastor resigned. To make matters worse the young pastor heard of the senior pastor's intentions via "the grape vine" first. This changed the role of the new incoming pastor who had interviewed for one position only to have the job description change and a former colleague on this team ministry becoming the new senior pastor. Other factors that made this transition stressful were in part the lack of office space and that staff meetings were rare. Moving to a new place with your family to take on a position only to realize that the expectations are now different than planned for is upsetting. To think that you are coming as youth pastor only to be morphed into an Associate/Youth pastor role makes a huge difference.

Hoge and Wenger found in their research that the experiences and conflict in the lives of associate pastors is unique. They discovered:

Associate pastors have less autonomy and authority than senior pastors. When dealing with other clergy or staff they must negotiate with other staff for power, whereas senior pastors wielded power by virtue of their position. In our interviews, many associate pastors reported difficulties with their senior pastors. Some of them told us that their senior pastors were controlling or micromanaging; while others said the senior pastors were unaccustomed to having an associate and did not welcome them; still others told of staff members whose personal issues affected their

colleagues. Associates told us they often felt unable to control their lives because they were too much subject to the whims of the senior pastor.⁵³

The situation above ended, after two and one half years, when the new senior pastor told the Associate/Youth pastor that their gift mix did not complement one another.

On a positive note, one pastor said that the pulpit committee understated the church's size and potential to the candidate. The pastor was pleasantly surprised at the opportunity in the community for growth. Another pastor, during the calling process, said that he/she "had to tell themselves not to listen to the people" (friends and colleagues) from off the field, who questioned the pastor's call to this particular place.

Other comments as to what did not go well included the burden of a mortgage from a previous ministry setting. Pastors often have debt from their education that lingers far too long and then to add to the mix a mortgage brings added stress to any household. Other family stress included getting children settled into a new school. Another comment along this line was concerning the parsonage that needed some work. The pastor felt that remarks made to the pulpit committee about the state of the parsonage were too blunt. In the end the pulpit committee heard the concern and made sure the parsonage was improved. A further comment that impacts the life of a pastor concerned the church's lack of attention regarding the payment of pension premiums on behalf of the pastor. The pastor was unaware that this oversight went on for over a year. Another interview brought out that the pastor and family found, when they arrived with their belongings on a truck, that no one was there to help them. No one was there to greet them.

⁵³ Hoge and Wenger, 81.

Another pastor described that the pulpit committee was hesitant to call a female pastor. This is in harmony with Hoge and Wenger in their research regarding the impact of gender on pastors leaving the ministry. They said:

...past research indicates that women ministers leave the pastorate more often than do men. This is partly because of the traditional preference of many laity to have men as ministers in their churches. The preference for men seems to be strongest in the large affluent churches, thus creating what is sometimes referred to as a “stained glass ceiling” for women ministers aspiring to those desirable positions.

Another Presbyterian woman, who left parish ministry at age 32, argued that women need to be better than men:

I do feel, when you are starting off, your playing field is not level to begin with. You might have heard it already: women have to be better than a man from the get-go, because people are really watching them and looking for excuses not to like them. Whereas a man can get away with some mediocre performances on certain things, I think it's harder for a woman.⁵⁴

George Barna in his research noted how opportunity for women in ministry is limited. He discovered that:

Women who make it to the top in a local church tend to be older than their male counterparts, have spent fewer years in full-time ministry and probably entered the professional ministry later in life, serve in older churches and are more likely to lead congregations that have fewer than 100 people. They also preach shorter sermons, on average, than their male counterparts. They are every bit as likely as male pastors, however, to have attended seminary and to be the only full-time professional on the church staff.⁵⁵

Even though seminaries graduate many qualified women with Master of Divinity degrees the reality is that many churches are unwilling to call female pastors for various reasons.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 173,174.

⁵⁵ George Barna, Today's Pastors: A Revealing Look at What Pastors Are Saying About Themselves, Their Peers and the Pressures They Face, Ventura, California, Regal Books, 1993, 32.

The theme of other interviews regarding what did not go well pertained to leadership issues in the local church(s). When one pastor arrived there was a divided deacon's board and the two church fields did not get along. Another pastor said the church was "controlled by a few leaders." Two weeks into another transition a pastor noted that "strong leaders, who ran the church, ran down people in the church by name." Another spoke to the fact that the leaders in the new congregation ran down the former pastor. This newly arriving pastor felt complicit just for listening. In another situation the leadership was "shaky" about moving forward. Some congregants on the periphery wanted to exert power. Unofficial leaders, on the other hand, felt their opinions were not heard.

Other pastors said that their arrival was impacted by the pastor they followed. One said that the people who had left over the previous pastor's controversy were not interested in returning to the congregation. Another pastor arriving said that there was a lot of "congregational baggage" and mistrust. This impacted the trust that the congregation was willing to give their new pastor. One arriving pastor shared that the interim pastor felt that he/she was indispensable and interfered with funerals without seeking the new pastor's blessing. Again, the earlier mentioned retired pastor who stayed in the community, was mentioned as part of what did not go well for the new pastor. Another said that the church was hesitant to make any long term plans as former pastors had only stayed a short time as a rule. Another pastor, who felt impacted by the former pastor, told of a person who was very close to the former pastor and was hurt by his leaving. Eventually this person shared this with the new pastor and in time warmed to the incumbent's leadership.

What would you change within yourself, if you could, that may have made things better?

This question was designed to allow the pastor who was being interviewed an opportunity to reflect upon their own participation in pastoral arrivals that did not go particularly well. This writer knows that when things do not go well the reasons why are not always with the church or only with the incoming pastor.

In fifteen, just over half, of the twenty-nine pastoral arrivals the pastors interviewed responded with “unsure, all good, nothing or inapplicable.” These pastors felt that they had nothing to say about any change in themselves that would have made any difference in the outcome.

For the pastor who felt overwhelmed with twenty-seven funerals in twenty months in a first pastoral charge a suggestion for seminary preparation was discussed. It was thought that if seminary students could participate in an actual burial service which included a service and sermon it would be instructive. It was hoped that if a funeral home would cooperate with the Divinity College to have a grave opened so that a pastor in training could get a feel for all that a funeral entails it would not be so overwhelming the first time.

There were issues concerning the calling process that pastors addressed. One pastor, who was interviewed for a senior pastor position but was not introduced or had any contact with the existing staff said: “I would have requested a meeting or at least something informal for fellowship and an opportunity to get acquainted a little.” Looking back this seemed like a way of improving the questions about those with whom the new pastor would be serving. Another interviewing pastor who felt that the pulpit committee was hesitant to call her as pastor because of her gender said she would have addressed her

feelings more openly. She also would have encouraged them to make some long term plans despite their feelings of uncertainty about the future of their church.

In another situation, where it was felt that a pulpit committee had misrepresented itself, a pastor said the change would have been to not accept the call. It was felt that a little patience and a better attending to the inner voice would have made the experience different and better for both parties.

In *The Power of the Call*, Henry Blackaby and Henry Brandt exhort pastors who are in the process of being considered by a church to:

1. Bring our lives before the Lord – as His servants. To deny ourselves and take up our cross is to have God-given motivation to help these precious saints from where the Lord has taken them with another leader to where he wants to take them with us. It is important that we appreciate how God had been working in this church long before our name was considered as a potential leader. If we think that we have to clean house in order to do God’s work, we may be cleaning out the work God has already done.

2. Pray! Pray! Pray! Pray for integrity of heart that has no personal agenda, no self-willed schemes, no self-centered goals. As we release our will to Him, before He has made it clear, we are able to receive clear assignments that might totally surprise us. Our goal is to join God in what He is already doing. Therefore, we need to discern what He is about and ask Him whether this is the time that we should join Him in His work. “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13).⁵⁶

Every pastor, if honest, wrestles with a call to a new place of service. Wanting to be in the center of God’s will is paramount. Putting self completely aside to see the way of God’s leading is the desire of every Spirit led pastor.

A young pastor, in a first church, said that being more intentional in leadership would have helped. Even though it was a good beginning it would have been better if the pastor had not been so reactionary to situations but rather proactive in leadership.

⁵⁶ Henry T. Blackaby and Henry Brandt, *The Power of the Call*, Nashville: Broadman, 1997, 17-18.

Again a first time pastor mentioned the lack of experience. This same pastor spoke of the sense of feeling threatened somehow because the pastor before was such a legend. Another young pastor who walked into a messy situation where the pulpit committee was silent about issues said that the change within would have involved being more outgoing in the early days of ministry.

In another church, a pastor upon arrival was met by a couple who were strong leaders in the congregation but were critical of other members by name. The new pastor confronted them. In hind sight the pastor said his/her response would have been less blunt and would have taken the criticism more in stride. The confrontation created a feeling of enmity for the next five years. The pastor said, "If I had been less confrontational and more gracious it would have made a difference." The pastor then added, "It's better to find things out about people yourself."

Another pastoral change involved a first time pastor whose pension premiums were overlooked for longer than a year. Reflecting upon this frustrating memory the pastor simply stated that he/she would not assume that the pension premiums were being paid. There are so many things that a pastor assumes are being looked after by others. Being proactive in every part of one's life as a pastor is needful.

Another situation that did not go well concerned the moral failure of the former pastor. The men were suspicious of the incoming pastor and so were not very friendly. The change for this pastor would have been to seek out friendships in general. There were other people in the community. There were other men with whom to build relationships that were not part of the church family that had been hurt by the indiscretion of the former pastor.

Another topic was the interim minister who interfered with the pastoral responsibilities of the new pastor. The new pastor thought that when this occurs a pastor should go to the Regional Minister. In this pastor's own case he/she would have applied more pressure on the Regional Minister to speak into the situation.

The sensitivities of a pastoral leader were brought to light in further interviews. This involved a retired pastor who continued to interfere to the point that a policy had to be adopted to prevent its recurrence. For the change that was needed in the pastor it was said that: "I would try not to be so sensitive to the negative stuff." It is hard for a pastor sometimes to be open and caring and not get hurt. When this writer moved into a new community a non-church goer said, "If you are going to live in this place you need a soft heart and thick hide." This is true in ministry as well.

In another church a pastor inherited a "big mess" with a divided deacon's board and a multi-church pastorate that were not getting along. Part of this pastor's reflection included an over sensitivity on the part of him/her self as the new pastor. Also the pastor mentioned the perfectionism expected by the pastor him/her self. This self-inflicted perfectionism impacted emotions and how the pastor tried to stay sane through all of the confusion. Again a lack of friendships outside the church family was a factor.

Who had the greater share of why an arrival did not go well? And why?

This question is not about blame and shame but is intended for the arriving pastor to continue to think through the previous question. What would you change within your self that would have made things better in an arrival that did not go so well? If a pastor is going to learn from the history of his/her own life a pastor should consider his/her part in transitions that did not go well. It is equally important that a pastor be afforded the

opportunity to say that they did their part to arrive well but other people and factors made it less possible.

For some the difference would have been a matter of truthfulness. In one situation it involved a senior pastor who promised not to leave when the junior partner on the team arrived. For this young pastor the whole two and one half years would have been much better had the senior pastor kept the promise and stayed. For another pastor again the difference would have been for the pulpit committee to be honest about the readiness of the church for change, especially in the area of worship. In another situation there was the pulpit committee that was not forthright in telling the candidate about the split that led to the calling process. There was no mention that the former pastor was still in the community. This pastor felt that the deacons' board, that had three strong leaders and two weak leaders, was where the greater responsibility for the "not so good" arrival rested. Their dominance in not allowing the church to change led to this pastor's resignation. It was noted that later one of the deacons apologized to the pastor for his part in the short and frustrating time in the life of a pastor.

In another transition a pastor felt the biggest share of why things did not go well was because of the couple who were critical of people by name in the congregation. The husband was the same deacon who was responsible for the former pastor leaving. Even though this pastor acknowledged a share of why things did not go well this key couple in the church made things difficult for at least two pastors in a row.

In another story it was said that immature leaders had a big share in why things did not go well. This was followed by the comment that the congregation was weak doctrinally and that they had experienced too many young pastors in succession. One can

see how this could happen, when a church has a number of young pastors in a row, that are just learning their way in ministry. The new and young pastor does not want to step on any toes, or focuses only on one part of ministry. To avoid being too dogmatic the new pastor does not preach and teach doctrine as well. Not wanting to hurt anyone else's feelings the young pastor avoids any confrontation with the leadership. When trouble does arise, the young pastor moves on and the cycle begins again.

In another place where things did not go well it concerned previous pastoral leadership. The large share of why things did not go well was placed first on the former pastor who had a moral crisis which led to the church's overall distrust of the incoming pastor. This was followed by an interim minister who did not let go of a place in the lives of the congregation especially with funerals. Another story was similar in that the retired pastor who stayed in the community did not cease offering pastoral care and ministry especially concerning funerals. Even though the former pastor, who had retired, said that this interfering without approval from the new pastor would cease, it did not. The new and frustrated pastor questioned the ethics and motives of the former pastor.

Other pastoral change discussions included the role of administration. In the story where the young pastor, in a first church, did not know pension premiums were not being paid, it was felt the large share of why things did not go well rested upon the church leadership and the treasurer. This was the same church that did not follow the calling process they had laid out for the candidate. Sometimes it seems that the whole ethos of a church is relaxed about protocol and procedure and it affects more than just one element of ministry life. Being young and inexperienced also affected this pastor's memory of the story.

Some remembrances of arrivals which did not go well included an honest pointing of the finger at self as pastor and person. One pastor said a lot in a one word answer to this question of why things did not go well, by replying, “me.” Even though this pastor walked into a messy situation and the church was not totally honest, this pastor took on some of the share of responsibility. Another young pastor in a first church said that inexperience had a greater share of why things did not go as well as they could have. This young pastor, following an older and experienced pastor felt constantly that comparisons were being made between the new and former minister. It seemed that everything people did not like about the former pastor they appreciated in the new pastor.

Another pastor who had been out of ministry fulltime for a year said that this was the reason things did not go as well as hoped. This pastor felt out of practice and things had to be learned all over again concerning pastoral ministry. This pastor felt the stress of dealing with some shaky leadership and power struggles. This pastor had forgotten about the dynamics of pastoral leadership and feelings of the pressures of church family life again.

It should be said that the responses in sixteen of the twenty-nine cases in this study felt that this question did not apply to them. Two others felt unsure of where the responsibility rested with why things did not go as well as they could have.

Did your arrival impact your departure?

In twelve of the 29 transitions discussed through these interviews the pastors plainly said “no” to this question. Nine others said it did not apply as they are still serving in their present church. One said it did not apply to him/her as he/she retired after that ministry position. One said “not really” when asked this question. This was the case

where moral failure had preceded this pastor, and feelings of distrust prevailed from the men in the church.

There were some “yes” answers. One pastor had been called to serve in a junior position with the promise the senior pastor would not leave. The pastor did leave and another person on this ministry team became the senior pastor. This time of serving which had a disappointing start ended when the new senior pastor said to the now associate/youth pastor, “our gift mix does not work.”

Another pastor who had walked into a messy situation and where the calling committee were not totally honest, said that this start impacted his/her leaving. The same people who had run down the previous pastor were those who ran this pastor down to the point of leaving. In a similar transition story a pastor said that the people “chewed up” the former pastor and the new pastor felt complicit for listening. This story of how the arrival impacted the departure included that the best reception this pastor experienced was from people outside of the church family. This was followed with that fact that the community people were more upset the pastor was leaving than the folks in the church. Pastors who are reaching out to the community in witness and benevolent help often build strong relationships with people in the area. These people are very upset when a pastor leaves, especially if the pastor is asked to leave or feels forced out of a church.

In another story where the pulpit committee misrepresented the church and its goals the leaving pastor said it impacted why he/she left. The pastor said, “we got off on a wrong foot. I thought I could produce change.” In another similar story, the smaller of two churches was not forthright in how small of a window of time the new pastor had to revive the church. The smaller church eventually was closed and upon leaving this

pastorate the minister suggested the remaining church join with another congregation. This worked out well with the calling of a new pastor and two fields were amalgamated.

In another story, where the arrival impacted the departure, the church was not forthcoming in the interview process in informing the candidate that a split had occurred and the former pastor was now pastoring the offshoot. The leadership and the church were not willing to change and so this pastor quit without a call. The pastor said, “it was a bad start with no improvement.” In this church there was a conflict with the control of a few strong leaders.

This is consistent with the findings of Hoge and Wenger regarding pastors who had conflict in congregations. They found that:

One of two main reasons why ministers left parish ministry was the stress of dealing with conflict. Our research agrees with all earlier studies in finding that conflict distresses many Protestant ministers and ultimately drives some of them away.

Conflict is part of life; psychologists consistently remind us that it should not be seen as something inherently bad. It is an inevitable part of any close relationship, especially relationships in which people have strong personal investment. Marriage, the quintessential example, brings together two people with different, often unvoiced, expectations regarding living life together. Church members and their pastors make a similar emotional commitment to their church, bringing sometimes radically different, unacknowledged ideas of just how the church should function and what its goals should be. In both cases, conflict is a strong indicator that people are invested –that they really care about their marriage or their church. Where conflict is present, apathy is not a problem.⁵⁷

The late, Dr. David Cook, former pastor and leader in the CABC, said at a local Association presentation years ago that “conflict can be good. It shows that people care and the local church is still alive.”

⁵⁷ Hoge and Wenger, 76, 77. In this quote, “earlier studies” are mentioned. In appendix A of this book, the authors summarize nine important studies on pastors who left local church ministry in pages 221-226.

What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths?

What were the former pastors weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses?

In this section the gifts and weaknesses of the former and incoming pastor will be considered. How does a former pastor's gift mix impact the incoming pastor? Are there trends when one enters a church that is troubled? How do the strengths and weaknesses of an outgoing and incoming pastor affect the state of affairs when one arrives? These and other questions will be explored in this part of this study.

This paper will now examine the responses of first time pastors, and then consider pastoral changes from second, third, and fourth through seventh transitions, attempting to answer such questions as: Does one's age and experience help in the arrival process? As a pastor encounters a few church transitions does it make the process any easier? This paper will also attempt to form a synopsis of strengths and weaknesses of both former and newly arriving pastors.

The responses to these questions are the thoughts of the pastor interviewed. Not every incoming pastor knew the former pastor in a personal way. Some of their responses were the things that the congregation shared with them about their predecessor. The goal of this section is to help young pastors who may be found coping with the strengths and weaknesses of a predecessor.

First Transitions

In this first transition for a young pastor, in mid twenties, where things went well, the strengths of the former pastor were that he was part of the community, a people person and a good visitor. The former pastor's weaknesses were said to be none.

The new pastor's strengths were also that of being a people person, one who got along well and one gifted for restoring relationships. This first time pastor felt that insecurity and inexperience were weaknesses and this was expressed to the congregation.

As things turned out, this new pastor enjoyed a good relationship with the former pastor. The former pastor and his wife would visit from time to time, which forced the young pastor to deal with some insecurities. The results of this were positive. One can sense that this relationship was one of encouragement and blessing.

The next first time arrival is of a young pastor in late twenties. This pastor followed a former pastor whose strengths were in music. The former pastor and family were especially good singers. Also the former pastor was an evangelistic style preacher. The weakness of the former pastor was that he had a temper which caused hurt. This was expressed by the congregation as they were relieved when he left.

The new pastor's strengths were gifts of being a preacher/teacher and one who helped the congregation move forward and heal. This is an important ministry when following a pastor who has caused some pain which prompted a transition. The new pastor's weaknesses included being shy, one who avoided conflict and not strong in visitation. The new pastor in reflection felt that visits had only been made as needed. The result of this healing ministry in a hurting church seems to be positive as the young pastor remained in this church for eighteen years.

Another first time pastor, in mid twenties, said that the former pastor's gifts were that he was willing to go to a rural setting and that he did connect with some of the people. The weaknesses were that the former pastor ordered people around and his

spouse was a liability in the community which brought about alienation. It should be mentioned that this preceding ministry only lasted ten months.

The first time pastor's strengths were those of being young, energetic and "just wanting to share Christ." The weaknesses shared were those of possessing very little finesse, being too rigid and standing one's ground too often. Following a pastor who has been tough on a congregation can be a challenge. Youth and energy will carry one for a while but a congregation who are hurting need lots of love and consolation. Hopefully experience and grace teach a pastor how to choose his/her battles.

Another first time pastor, in mid-twenties, shared the former pastor's strengths as one who was strong doctrinally. The weaknesses of the former pastor were those of not being diplomatic and being too dogmatic. It should be noted that this former pastor retired after seven years of ministry in this place. It was also mentioned earlier in this interview that the former pastor was not liked by many. Could it be that a pastor who knows he/she is retiring can be more forthright in saying what needs to be said without fear of not being invited to another church?

This young, first time pastor's strengths, were in the area of worship, conducting funerals and in diplomacy. The weakness mentioned was the lack of administrative skills. Diplomacy is a needful quality when dealing with any congregation. It is especially important when following a pastor who may have been brutally honest at the close of a life of ministry. Most Atlantic Baptist churches are rural. In these, often aging, congregations there are many funerals. Increasing one's strengths in the area of conducting funerals is a worthy goal.

Another first time pastor, in mid-twenties, said that the former pastor's gift/strength was being visionary. The weakness mentioned was that of having no ministry plan. This young pastor followed an "older" pastor who had ministered in this place for twelve years. The congregation often compared the age difference between the former and the new pastor. This provoked some feelings of insecurity as the former pastor was looked to as a "legend."

The new pastor's strength was that of being goal oriented. The weakness mentioned was a lack of patience and not understanding the process of how things happen in church and ministry life. Lack of experience was mentioned earlier in this conversation. Experience was something that would have helped. Figuring out how to move things forward in any congregation can be a challenge. Learning the process and the agents for change in an assembly of believers comes from experience. At the same time it is a challenge to exercise patience when a new pastor would like to see some quick and positive results in ministry.

Another first time pastor, who was thirty, was not sure of the former pastor's gifts/strengths. All that was remembered was that the former pastor was not healthy and had only ministered for a year or two in that place before his death. The weakness mentioned, besides the former pastor's ill health, was that his widow stayed in the community and tried to tell the new pastor how to do things.

The new pastor's strengths/gifts were that of being agreeable, wanting to love people and willing to learn this new role as a pastor. The weakness that this first time pastor expressed was simply inexperience. Loving the people that one is called to minister with is vital. This loving way was met with a people who were loving and

gracious in return. The fact that this young, first time, pastor was inexperienced and willing to learn may have prompted the widow of the deceased pastor to offer some words of wisdom and instruction from her years in the parsonage. The question might be asked as to when this offering of advice and instruction is appropriate.

Our last first time pastorate that was shared is of one who was thirty-seven when beginning ministry. This new pastor followed a pastor who retired after two years of ministry in this particular place. The former pastor's strength/gift was that of being a great preacher. The weakness mentioned was that the retiring pastor left ministry and retired to withdraw from a crisis or confrontation.

The strengths/gifts of the new, first time, pastor were teaching and preaching along with good pastoral care. The weaknesses mentioned were lack of administrative skills, the aversion to confrontation, and struggles from within, i.e., insecurities.

Again, Hoge and Wenger, from their research in five denominations in the US found that:

...conflict in the congregation can have devastating effects on pastors. We identified the five topics on which it is most destructive – both to former and current pastors: pastoral leadership style, finances, changes in worship style, interpersonal conflicts, and issues about new building or renovation.

Conflicts arise in the lives of all pastors, and they will not be going away. Possibly what is unique in the lives of pastors who resigned due to conflict is that these pastors lacked support and understanding from denominational leaders that might have sustained them.⁵⁸

This writer is not sure that any pastor enjoys crisis or confrontation that follows.

⁵⁸ Hoge and Wenger, 96,97.

Summary of First Transition Interviews

When considering these seven first transition interviews there are a few similarities but they seem to be as different as pastors and churches are different. The strengths of the former pastors included being:

- A people person
- A good visitor
- Musical; good singers
- Evangelistic preachers
- A willingness to come to a rural church
- Strong in doctrine
- Visionary
- A great preacher

The weaknesses of the former pastor included:

- Bad temper
- Bossiness
- Indiscrete spousal input
- Lack of diplomacy
- Dogmatism
- Lack of ministry plan
- Health
- Avoidance of conflict

What can we learn from these weaknesses so that they might not be repeated?

What are the strengths that a pastor, especially a first time pastor, should seek to emulate?

Next, these first time pastors shared their own assessment of strengths and weaknesses as they arrived in their first ministry setting. The strengths shared included:

- People persons (2 said this)
- Gift of restoring relationships (2 said this)
- Preaching/teaching ministry (2 said this)
- Energy and youth
- Passion for evangelism
- Leading of worship
- Conducting of funerals

- Strong sense of goals
- Capacity to be taught
- Pastoral care

The weaknesses of these first time pastors included:

- Insecurity (2 said this)
- Avoidance of conflict (2 said this)
- Administration (2 said this)
- Inexperience
- Shyness
- Visitation, lack of regularity
- Impatience
- Naivety concerning the process to make changes

What does a pastor/leader notice regarding the strengths listed above that would aid and enable a healthy arrival in a new or first time ministry setting? In the list of weaknesses are their attributes that sound familiar and strike a chord with the reader? Every pastor has weaknesses that need a work of God's grace.

There were some similarities in the strengths of both the former and experienced pastor to the first time pastor. Both had common ground in the areas of:

- People persons
- Visitation/pastoral care
- Preaching/teaching ministry

The common ground in the area of weakness was avoiding conflict. Every pastor experiences conflict of one sort or another during a career.

Hoge and Wenger conducted research in the area of pastors who had conflict in their congregations and left the ministry. The conflicts resulted from:

- Lacking agreement with parishioners over what the role of a pastor is
- Feeling stress due to challenges from the congregation
- Feeling stress because of criticism from congregation
- Feeling drained by demands placed on pastor
- The demands of laity were unreasonable

- Feeling pressure by lay leaders to leave⁵⁹

Every pastor who is feeling these kinds of pressures needs support from others. A pastor needs the courage to express the feelings of stress to friends, mentors, colleagues and denominational pastors such as a Regional Minister. No pastor has to be alone when dealing with conflict.

Second Transitions

This study continues with the view into second transition pastorates regarding strengths and weaknesses of former and current pastors. As stated earlier not all pastors shared every transition in their career. The question could be asked as to how experience helps after one has had a first pastorate and now enters his/her second place of ministry.

In this particular interview the second place of ministry was in a multi-staff church. The young pastor was called to be the youth minister but upon arrival learned that things had changed and that the new role was that of youth/associate pastor. The strengths of the former associate pastor who is now senior pastor were that of an organized administrator and good preacher. The weaknesses mentioned were those of being non-relational and having too few staff meetings.

The new youth/associate pastor's strengths/gifts were those of being relational and a people person. The weakness mentioned was some insecurity. This had much to do with the quick change of roles from what had been expected in the calling process.

This is consistent with what Hoge and Wenger found in their study. They discovered that "many associate pastors enter ministry as youth pastors, charged with

⁵⁹ Hoge and Wenger, 78.

developing a youth ministry, but find themselves slowly being burdened with responsibilities unrelated to their call.”⁶⁰

Another second transition interview concerned a multi-point rural setting. The former pastor entered semi-retirement upon leaving. The former pastor’s gifts were those of visitation, especially of older members. The former pastor was a good preacher and strong witness. The weakness mentioned was that the former pastor was rigid with strong convictions that created tensions. “The former pastor was sincere but...” was a closing comment. It should be noted that one congregation was extremely appreciative of the former pastor’s ministry while the other was frustrated.

The new pastor’s strengths/gifts were those of preaching and teaching, many years of experience and a developed concept of leadership. The new pastor’s weaknesses mentioned were that confrontation was not enjoyed and having less energy, having reached the late forties in age.

Following a pastor where some feelings of tension are lingering it is helpful that an experienced pastor, with a developed sense of leadership, bring those gifts to bear to encourage harmony and unity and love. This is especially true when two different churches, on the same field, see their pastor in two different ways. Each church has its own opinion of the former and current pastor’s ministry.

Another second church transition interviewee spoke of the former pastor’s strengths/gifts as one who cared about people. The weaknesses mentioned were that the former pastor was not a good preacher and that visitation had slowed down because of ill health. It makes one wonder if the former pastor’s health also affected the pulpit ministry.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 82.

The new pastor's strengths/gifts were energy, commitment, wanting to engage the community and being more self aware. The weaknesses mentioned in this interview were the pushing for more benefits including vacation time which caused a negative response. Another set of weaknesses cited by the new pastor was being too open and too trusting.

How does a pastor approach a congregation for better benefits, i.e., salary, allowances, vacation time, etc. without causing a negative reaction? Could our denomination be more proactive in making recommendations to congregations? Most correspondence on this subject is limited to treasurers, clerks and clergy. How does one find a balance between being too transparent and having adequate boundaries?

Another second church arrival interviewee described the former pastor as one who was strong in administration and intentional about developing leadership. The weakness mentioned was that the former pastor did not live in the community therefore, to a degree, lacked presence in the community. In today's increasing mobile society, with more and more pastors' spouses working outside of the home, it may be that it is more practical to live outside one's the community one serves. It is also true that parsonages are not the norm in every pastorate.

The new pastor's strengths/gifts were in the areas of worship, conducting of funerals and in pastoral visitation. The weaknesses mentioned were in the areas of administration and time management. It could be that when one follows a pastor who is strong in any area, such as, administrative skills, that one feels inadequate. It may also prove to be an inspiration to improve one's skills in administration or leadership training.

Another second transition interviewee did not know of any strengths or weaknesses of the former pastor. This new pastor followed a pastor who retired and moved out of the area after having served the congregation for six years.

The new pastor's strengths/gifts were those of being relational and friendly. The weakness shared was that the new pastor did not fully understand the condition of poverty in the area before arriving.

As this pastor had no contact with the former pastor, might there have been a way of sharing general and helpful information about a community? This writer believes it would be helpful in normal or typical situations for leaving pastors to share meaningful insights about a community or even dreams of unrealized projects that would prove to be a blessing to a community.

Peter Lohnes has offered the sample contents of a file to be left for a successor. He calls these items "things that a departing pastor might leave in a file or a box for the new pastor." Here is his comprehensive and helpful list:

- Constitution and By-Laws.
- Policy Statements.
- Vision and Goal Statements.
- Church Covenant.
- Annual Reports.
- Membership List (Street and Mailing Address, Phone Numbers).
- Adherents Lists (Street and Mailing Address, Phone Numbers).
- Pictorial Directory.
- Boards and Committee Lists.
- List of Church Ministries and Leaders.
- One year of bulletins.
- Calendar of Normal Church Events for Next Year.
- List of Practices and Traditions Peculiar to Congregation. (e.g. Method of Communion, Where keys are kept, Annual Fundraisers).
- Local Wedding, Funeral, Baptism Traditions.
- Map of Community.
- Community Events Calendar.

- Contact Information for Local churches, Clergy, Ministerial.
- Information for Hospitals, Schools, Police, Community Agencies.
- List of Shut-ins, Recent Serious Illness, Bereavements.
- List of People with Untapped Potential.
- Recent Changes in the Church.
- List of Good Restaurants.
- Personal History with the Church.
- Former Pastor's New Contact Information.
- Offer to Meet if Desired.
- Other Appropriate Information.⁶¹

Another second church ministry was clouded by the former pastor having split the church and stayed in the area to pastor the new congregation that split. The former pastor's strengths/gifts were said to be that he was outgoing, a good preacher and a dynamic leader. The weakness mentioned was that the former pastor went overboard on the charismatic side.

The new pastor's strengths/gifts were optimism and a real desire to have a ministry go as well as this pastor's first experience had gone. The weakness that was revealed was that of being too accommodating and naive. As mentioned earlier, this new pastor was blindsided by this situation. The split and the former pastor staying in the community were not mentioned during the call process. This lack of forthrightness coloured the entire two years of this pastor's ministry. This was a great source of discouragement in the life of this pastor, who was in his/her thirties, and resulted in a resignation without a call to another church.

⁶¹ Peter Lohnes, Leading While Leaving: The Role of a Departing Pastor in Preparing a Church for a Healthy Pastoral Transition, 2008, <http://baptist-atlantic.ca/resources/theses>, This list came from a hand out from a presentation Peter Lohnes gave at the Lunenburg/Queens Association of Baptist Churches gathering on Saturday, May 15, 2010, at Liverpool Baptist Church.

Crisis and conflict can discourage anyone. This is true in the life of a pastor as well. Hoge and Wenger in their research concerning why clergy leave local church ministry, had these main findings:

1. Pastors who left local church ministry did so for many reasons. The seven most common were
 - Preference for another kind of ministry
 - Need to care for children and family
 - Conflict in the congregation
 - Conflict with denominational leaders
 - Feelings of burnout or frustration
 - Sexual misconduct
 - Divorce or marital problems
2. About 15 to 25 percent left voluntarily, 30 to 40 percent were forced out, and the remaining cases are the result of a combination of motives.
3. Preferences for specialized ministry and frustrations from dealing with conflict were the most common reasons for leaving parish ministry.
4. Institutional and interpersonal problems were more significant factors than loss of faith, health problems, or financial difficulties.⁶²

Further to these findings, Roy Oswald addresses the issue of a newly arriving pastor's first conflict. He argues that:

The new pastor should, if possible, check out whether the new parish has an immediate conflict that will need to be resolved upon arrival. It is very easy to get sucked into a major conflict when starting up a new ministry as parishioners often hold off on a resolution of differences until the new pastor arrives. Judicatory officials [Regional Ministers] or persons assisting in the call process may be helpful here. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

If a conflict does exist and tensions are running high, the new pastor will need a careful plan for dealing with the internal strife, and will need to be aware that siding with one faction over another will reduce credibility.

Hopefully, there will be an opportunity to develop some trust and credibility with the entire congregation before moving into resolution. If

⁶² Hoge and Wenger, 49.

that is not possible, the pastor's credibility will ride on how she/he deals with that first conflict situation.

The kinds of norms that get set at the time of dealing with the first conflict are of great importance. People watch closely how the new pastor deals with the first conflict. This is not to say that the pastor sets the norms, but that, from his/her example, the congregation establishes their expectations for how the pastor will deal with future conflicts. This determines, to some extent, the risks they will take and the kinds of expectations they will have about changing the conflict norm in the parish.

Once again, the new pastor can be more intentional about changing the conflict norms within the parish when he/she is aware of the importance of how the first conflict is dealt with.⁶³

These findings are instructive to anyone serving in pastoral ministry. May all who are contemplating leaving a church without a call find all of the support they need in such a decision.

Summary of Second Transition Interviews

Considering these six "second transition" interviews there are a few similarities but once again they seem to be as different as pastors and churches are different. The strengths of the former pastors included being:

- An organized administrator (2 said this)
- A good preacher (3 said this)
- Consistent in Visitation
- A strong witness
- Caring
- One who developed leaders
- A dynamic leader

The Weaknesses of the former pastor included:

- Not relating well
- Having too few staff meetings
- Having rigid convictions which led to tensions

⁶³ Oswald, Pastor As Newcomer, 19,20.

- Being a poor preacher
- Lacking consistent visitation (because of health issues)
- Not living in the community
- Being overly charismatic

What can pastors learn from these weaknesses so that they might not be repeated?

What are the strengths that any pastor should seek to emulate?

Next, these more experienced pastors shared their own assessment of strengths and weaknesses as they arrived in their second ministry setting. The strengths shared included:

- Being a people person – more relational (2 said this)
- Preaching/teaching
- Experience, which led to stronger leadership
- Being energized and committed to engage community
- Being more self aware
- Becoming a better worship leader
- Conducting funerals
- Being consistent in Visitation
- Being optimistic

The weaknesses of these pastors in their second church included:

- Insecurity – due to role change upon arrival
- Avoidance of confrontation
- Age – less energy in late 40's
- Pressure for more benefits and time off
- Lack of administration skills
- Poor time management
- Unawareness of poverty issues in the community upon arrival

Comparing this list from these pastors' first church stories, it is encouraging to see that they have not regressed in the strengths and gifts that they bring to ministry. The positive energy and commitment to reaching out in Christ's name is constant.

The weaknesses mentioned by these pastors in their second church have changed a little. There is still a degree of insecurity, naivety, lack of administrative skills and an

avoidance of confrontation. While inexperience is not mentioned it was said that there was an over assertiveness for benefits. It was also mentioned by one that age and depleting energy levels were beginning to be noticed.

Third Transitions

In a third transition interview the former pastor's strengths/gifts were said to be, "a solid pastor, well rounded, good visitor and leader." The weaknesses of the former pastor were said to be that the pastor stayed too long and that the congregation's personal issues became public through the preaching ministry. This former pastor had stayed nine years. The question for pastors always seems to be, "how long is too long?"

The strengths/gifts of the incoming pastor were that relationships are important. The age of the new pastor helped because of many young couples attending. Another important note is that this pastor spoke of the realization of his/her own ministering style. This is probably different for each pastor, but for this pastor, in a third ministering setting, a milestone was reached. On the other hand, at age thirty-one, this pastor was dealing with departure issues from the last church. The pain of how things ended in the second church of this pastor's career still lingered. The mortgage payments lasted for a year from the former ministry setting likely served as a constant reminder.

The Alban Institute and their work in this area of clergy "getting settled in" is instructive:

Getting settled in a new home and finding one's way around a new congregation can be exhausting and frustrating. Congregations vary in their involvement here. For the most part, we have discovered that congregational leaders are fairly conscientious in seeing to it that the pastor and his family's physical needs are met in this transitional period. Helping the family move in—stocking the refrigerator with food, showing the family around—may all be part of the welcome mat. In the questionnaires we have had laity fill out on this aspect of settling in, most

feel their job is done when the new pastor is settled into the new house. There is usually very little awareness that he/she may have some emotional needs during this transition period, and that the family may have such needs. Grief work will probably have to be done outside the new congregation. References to the former parish will probably be tolerated only for a short while.

One item we discovered in our survey is how ill prepared clergy are for the process of moving from a parsonage to a house that they themselves have purchased. Most clergy had very little experience buying houses; some have found that was somewhat traumatic. There is need for a guide to be written for clergy in this regard, especially since the norm seems to be shifting from parsonages to clergy-owned residences.⁶⁴

The question might be asked as to how the Regional Minister, Association Moderators, or local pastors are aware of these dynamics and their impact upon a newly arriving minister and his/her family. In what ways can these fellow labourers assist and encourage clergy who are settling in?

Another third church interviewee described the former pastor's strengths/gifts as "relates well and has dramatic abilities." The weaknesses of the former pastor were that irregular office hours were kept and therefore contact was unpredictable.

The arriving pastor's strength's were such that specialized training that had been acquired was now able to be utilized. Also this pastor's people skills were better. The weakness that was shared was that this pastor was still looking for a little approval. Once again a pastor in a third ministry setting feels that accumulated skills from training and experience are making a difference in ministry.

Another third transition interviewee described the former pastor's strengths as preaching and teaching. The weakness of the former pastor was visitation and this was likely due to health issues. This former pastor had served this particular church for four

⁶⁴ Roy Oswald, Pastor As Newcomer, 10.

years and ill health was the cause of leaving. The ill health may have been coupled with a deacon who was very critical of the former pastor and (according to the interview) the difficult deacon was in part responsible for the former pastor's leaving.

The arriving pastor's strengths/gifts were preaching, teaching, visitation, relationships and prayer. This pastor was in his/her early forties and had turned down this call three times before hearing God's call through prayer and the Scriptures. The arriving pastor's weaknesses included being impulsive and outspoken. Could it be that as one matures in the ministry and gains experience one is more bold and assertive to speak into situations and the lives of people?

Another third transition described the leaving pastor's gifts/strengths as, "very relational and a grand-father figure." The weakness of the former pastor was a lack of vision as he was looking to retire. How does a pastor keep his/her focus and fire as he/she approaches retirement? Why does he/she now and then lose a passion for ministry?

The arriving pastor's gifts/strengths were preaching and worship. This is what the pulpit committee was looking for, a young pastor to lead in a new worship strategy that would attract younger families. The new pastor's weaknesses were a lack of patience and knowing the process of change. This pastorate lasted three years. The lack of a willingness and determination to make needed changes caused frustration and discouragement. The promise to do anything it would take to change was not kept by the congregation as a whole.

The need and timing of change are significant issues. The research of the Alban Institute speaks to this thought of change early upon arrival. Oswald argues:

To say categorically that no changes should be made within the first year would also be wrong. There are some changes that need to be made that a

clear majority within the congregation will support. In fact, in some call situations the new minister is given the mandate to make bold changes right from the start.

The job of the new minister is to be clear that the change is needed, wanted, and supported—to avoid being taken in by one faction of the congregation that pushes for change when the majority resists. The minister needs also to distinguish between those changes which affect program or worship and those changes which affect the norms and practices within the parish that are crucial to its continued health and life.⁶⁵

The timing and type of change are common issues in a church. In Chapter four, among the suggestions to newly arriving pastors, this topic of change will be addressed.

In the last of third transition stories the interviewee described the former pastor as, “a people person, equitable and having a good reputation in the community.” The new pastor could not think of any weaknesses in the former pastor. They are still friends to this day. These are very positive statements and could be why the transition was described as, “seamless.”

The incoming pastor’s gifts/strengths were such that this new pastor did not feel threatened or intimidated by the former pastor. This pastor could not think of any weaknesses at this time. Once again it seems that a pastor in mid-thirties with good experience, has confidence and self awareness that helps in the transition process. This pastorate lasted seven years. It may be as well that the change from a very difficult situation to one of less turbulence makes a transition and settling in to a new church setting a pleasant and rewarding experience.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 15.

Summary of Third Transition Interviews

Looking at the third transition interviews we see some continuing similarities in both former and new pastors regarding strengths and weaknesses. Concerning the strengths of the former pastor we have already mentioned the attributes of being a good preacher/teacher, relates well with others, a good visitor and leader. Some of the strengths not mentioned earlier include:

- Being a solid pastor – well rounded
- Having dramatic abilities
- Being a grand-father figure
- Having a good reputation in the community.

The weaknesses not mentioned in earlier summaries include:

- Staying too long (9 years)
- Publicizing congregational personal issues through pulpit ministry
- Having irregular office hours
- Having lack of vision
- Coasting to retirement

The strengths mentioned in the interviews that former pastors possessed are instructive to all pastors. To take note of these strengths according to our own giftedness would enhance any ministry.

These weaknesses along with others previously mentioned are also a help as to behaviours and practices to avoid. One that stands out is using personal issues as illustrations or using the pulpit as a means to settle issues in the church.

Further, these more experienced pastors shared their own assessment of strengths and weaknesses as they arrived in their third ministry setting. The strengths not previously mentioned include:

- Age (positively, as it helped attract younger couples)
- Realizing one's own ministry style

- Matching ministry setting with ministry skills.
- Having a stronger prayer life
- Being less threatened by former pastors

The weaknesses of these pastors in their third church not mentioned in earlier lists included:

- Having departure issues lingering from the previous church
- Facing mortgage payments from previous ministry setting
- Still looking for approval
- Being impulsively outspoken
- Having a lack of patience, partially due to not knowing process for change in a church

These experienced pastors now in their third church are still growing and changing. They are still young enough in some instances to attract younger couples and yet they are maturing within as they figure out their own style of ministry that is emerging. The skills they learned in Seminary are still fresh and vital as they assume new roles in ministry. Age and experience also factor into how they cope with a former pastor's reputation or ministry.

No matter how old or experienced a pastor may be, a pastor is still human and is subject to weaknesses. The memory of the way things ended in a previous ministry setting may cause pain for years. The extra stress from a mortgage for which a pastor is still responsible is very real. If a pastor is honest a pastor would likely agree that in some ways a pastor is still looking for a little approval from others. Impulsiveness and impatience can negatively affect the good that pastors achieve for the Lord. May these feelings and behaviours that are listed as weaknesses continue to be warning signs to all clergy.

Fourth Transitions

In a fourth transition the former pastor's gifts/strengths were that of being a good preacher and strong leader. The former pastor's weaknesses were noted as being abrasive and non-confidential. This former pastor was asked to leave. Being a good preacher and strong leader is not the whole story in pastoral ministry. If one is abrasive and cannot keep confidences there are going to be problems.

The incoming pastor's strengths were mentioned as being relational, preaching has improved and a sense of greater confidence. Still, in the midst of that confidence a weakness given was some unstated and ongoing insecurities. The new pastor's arrival was a fourth transition and experience made a difference. In the interview it was said that former pastorates had helped prepare this pastor to face the issues that came from a church in crisis and that had asked its minister to leave.

In another fourth transition the former pastor's gifts/strengths were said to be "a warm and loving pastor." The new pastor could not think of any weaknesses in the former pastor's ministry. The former pastor retired and left the community with a good send off. What a contrast to the previous ministry above. This pastor is known for being warm and loving and received the congregation's blessing in retirement.

The new pastor's gifts/strengths were teaching, preaching, visiting and a strong prayer life. A weakness noted was wishing that, as pastor, he/she would have begun a stronger teaching ministry sooner. This pastor felt that, in hindsight, the people were ready for a focused teaching ministry sooner than it was delivered. This pastor stayed for four and one half years before beginning another kind of ministry.

In another fourth transition interview the former pastor's gifts/strengths were said to be that of being a good teacher and well liked. The one weakness was said to be in the area of preaching. This was a two point charge during the former pastor's ministry.

The new pastor's gift/strength was that of preaching. The weakness shared was that this pastor would have picked the battles better and not accepted the bait for arguments. This pastor stayed for four years. Near the end of that ministry the smaller church in the pastorate was closed and the larger church joined with a neighbouring pastorate under new pastoral leadership.

When change occurs in congregations regarding buildings and realignment of a field, conflict is bound to arise. Strong feelings and emotions are part of those discussions and final negotiations. As a pastor it is hard to pick the right battles and be objective when there are strong opposing opinions. When does a pastor just resolve to offer advice and leadership and let the people decide the future of their own congregation and their building?

In another fourth transition the former pastor's gifts/strengths were said to be minimal because of ill health. The weaknesses shared were said to be emotional issues and bad judgement that had impacted the former pastor's ministry in that parish. The former pastor was asked to leave after three years of ministry.

The new pastor's gifts/strengths were experience, this being the fourth place of ministry. The pastor said that ministry was seen in clearer light and this pastor had a love for the people. The weakness shared was that of not being assertive enough. This pastorate lasted for sixteen years. In the end of this time of ministry this parish joined

with another parish and this pastor stepped aside as the other pastor led the new amalgamated church.

Fifth Transitions

In a fifth transition the former pastor's strengths/gifts were noted as visitation and preaching. The weaknesses of the former pastor were that the pastor was very defensive, was hurt easily and made presumptions without the full knowledge of a situation. This former pastor only stayed for around two years and left over some controversy concerning constitutional issues. Folks left this church because of these controversies.

The new pastor's strengths/gifts were those of being a preacher/teacher, visitation ministry and relationships with others were better than ever. The weakness given was that this was now a part time pastorate which limited the possibility for ministry. This new pastor wanted to give more time to relationships and the healing of hurts through visitation. Teaching and preaching along the lines of love and encouragement was also a focus.

In another fifth transition the former pastor's gifts/strengths were those of having a reputation or facade for being very godly and very personable. Conversely the weaknesses of the former pastor were a lack of morals, lack of friends and being too much "a part of the gang." This pastor concluded this ministry as a result of moral failure.

The gifts/strengths of the new pastor were the ability to listen, build trust and community. The weaknesses mentioned were loneliness and lack of friends outside the church. Following a pastor who has left as a result of moral failure is not easy. The men of the church felt betrayed by the former pastor. This was followed by feelings of mistrust for the new pastor. The men asked, "Could a male minister be trusted around our

wives?” This kept the men at arms length from the new pastor and hindered relationships from being formed and the sense of loneliness and isolation increased.

This is consistent with the findings of Hoge and Wenger. They asked pastors who left ministry from five denominations in the United States, why they left pastoral ministry. The top two reasons why pastors left local church ministry were first that they felt drained by the demands placed on them and second they felt lonely and isolated.⁶⁶

In another fifth transition the former pastor’s gifts/strengths were said that he/she conducted good funerals and preached short sermons. The weaknesses given were age and health related issues. The former pastor retired and moved away after five or six years of ministry.

The new pastor’s gifts/strengths were those of having a clear ministry plan, ministry goals and better preaching skills. In this transition it was felt it was too early to tell if any weaknesses had affected things. This new pastor, now in mid-forties, has ministered in four previous places. Experience and a sense of a ministry plan with clear goals in mind bring a healthy confidence to a new pastoral setting.

In the last interview regarding fifth transitions the former pastor’s gifts/strengths were those of being a good preacher/teacher and pastor. The weaknesses mentioned were those of being “shy and non-aggressive” as in not outgoing. This pastor ministered in this church for fifteen years before taking another church. This was a long, steady pastorate without controversy. The transition was described as typical.

The new pastor’s gifts/strengths were those of being outgoing and confident. The weakness shared was “not being used to keeping my nose out of different committees’

⁶⁶ Hoge and Wenger, 37, 237. Hoge and Wenger give a partial table of six responses on page 37 and complete table of twelve responses in an appendix on page 237.

business.” Time will tell how this change from a former pastor who was shy and non-aggressive to a new pastor that is outgoing and confident will go.

Sixth Transitions

In this first interview regarding sixth transitions the former pastor’s gifts/strengths were those of being very dogmatic, having lots of energy, and having his/her own way which included a strong and pushy personality. The former pastor’s weaknesses were that in the pulpit the former pastor used too many personal illustrations and was the only one who could do things right. It was also said that the former minister had not listened to the hurts and issues of the congregation. This was a pastor who retired and stayed in the community. This former pastor was also one who interfered with funerals and still carried a lot of influence in the congregation. This former pastor had served this church for ten years.

The new pastor’s gifts/strengths were listed as caring, a good listener, teacher, preacher and living the faith. The weakness noted was being too much of a perfectionist. Also it was felt that the parsonage not being in the community was a liability. This pastor, nearing fifty years of age and now in a sixth church had accumulated experience. A plan was formulated for a process and protocol to be followed when a parishioner was seeking pastoral care regarding weddings and funerals.

In the other sixth transition interview the former pastor’s gifts/strengths were said to be that he was a good pastor in relationships, a good preacher and community person. The former pastor’s weaknesses included a lack of self esteem, not being self confident, and had a child who caused some embarrassment. The former pastor had served for eight years.

The new pastor's gifts/strengths were those of being a good administrator, a good preacher who offered consistent pastoral care. This pastor felt that weaknesses were few due to years of experience. The new pastor stayed for nine years. A pastor would hope that as a pastor experienced in different congregations and communities that a pastor would gain a healthy confidence and consistency in ministry.

Seventh Transition

In the only seventh transition interview it was said that the former pastor's gifts/strengths were that the pastor was down to earth, related well with others and reached into the community. The weaknesses of the former pastor included inexperience, lack of time management and a tendency to be overly charismatic. The former pastor served for around five years and was asked to leave. This former pastor still lives in the area and interferes to some degree by way of visits and meeting with former parishioners on the street or in restaurants.

The new pastor's gifts/strengths included experience with dealing with trouble in former churches. Other positive attributes mentioned were the ability to listen and to encourage healing and love. Weaknesses that were shared included not knowing when or when not to clash with the "power brokers" of the parish. This particular pastor's experiences shared were all troublesome. This pastor had learned from other situations that were difficult and found strength to cope with yet another trial.

Summary of Fourth through Seventh Transitions

There were eleven interviews which covered the fourth through seventh transitions. These incoming pastors are now more experienced and it is reflected in the strengths and weaknesses they shared.

Looking at these transition interviews one sees some continuing similarities in both former and new pastors regarding strengths and weaknesses. Concerning the strengths of the former pastor those that have been already mentioned are the attributes of being a good preacher/teacher, relating well with others, a good visitor and strong leader.

Some of the strengths not mentioned earlier include:

- Being a warm and loving pastor
- Being a well liked community person
- Being godly
- Conducting good funerals
- Preaching short messages or sermons

Some of the weaknesses not mentioned in earlier summaries include:

- Having emotional issues which led to bad judgement
- Being defensive and easily hurt
- Making presumptions without the full knowledge of a situation
- Exhibiting lack of good morals
- Being too much a “part of the gang”
- Not listening to parishioner’s hurts
- Lacking experience (young pastor)
- Having poor time management

All of these strengths/gifts mentioned throughout these summaries are points to note. Certainly to be a godly, warm and loving pastor who is well liked in the community is something to strive for. It also helps a pastor to strengthen skills in the ministry surrounding a death.

The weaknesses mentioned just above are things a pastor should seek to avoid. Paying attention to one’s inner self and seeking professional help with issues that are too big to handle on one’s own are essential. Being attentive to the hurts of a congregation as well as good time management skills are important disciplines in a pastor’s life.

Further, these more experienced pastors, now in their fourth through seventh ministry settings, shared their own assessment of strengths and weaknesses as they arrived in these later pastoral placements. The strengths/gifts shared but not previously mentioned by these seasoned pastors include:

- Possessing a sense of confidence
- Being more experienced
- Seeing ministry in a clearer light
- Having a clear ministry plan
- Living the faith

It should be noted as well that these experienced pastors mentioned some strengths over and over in these interviews. These included:

- Relationships – more love for the people in congregation(s)
- Improved preaching and teaching
- Visitation ministry
- Listening skills
- Healing of hurts

As a pastor, strengthening relational abilities, listening to the hurting people in the pew and having a genuine love for people are always assets. When a pastor improves the pulpit ministry in better delivery of sermons and teaching content it is always beneficial to the church.

These experienced pastors, now in their fourth through seventh ministry settings shared honestly concerning weaknesses that are still a part of being a pastor. These weaknesses included:

- Not picking battles well – falling for the bait for arguments
- Being in a part-time church impacted possibilities for ministry
- Intruding into committee business.
- Trying to be perfect
- Not living in the community (rented out of town)

Three of these five weaknesses speak to conflict that can arise between the clergy and the congregation. Battling with staff or laity, arguing, and not keeping out of committee work certainly has potential for conflict. Hoge and Wenger in their research discovered that of the five main reasons for leaving local church ministry involuntarily or partly involuntarily resulted from conflict in a congregation with staff or laity. 21% of the women and 16% of the men who left local church ministry said it was because of conflict. The next four categories for leaving local church ministry were:

- Conflict with denominational officials or disillusionment with denomination
- Burnout; frustration, feeling of constraint; sense of inadequacy
- Allegations of sexual misconduct
- Problems in family; divorce⁶⁷

The many weaknesses listed above in various transitions have pointed out things that could contribute to the kind of discouragement, allegations and problems that would encourage a pastor to leave parish ministry. As pastors, recognizing weaknesses and areas of personal and professional growth is important. It is crucial for a greater, long term and positive impact for Christ and the Church. It is significant in every relationship as a pastor to understand areas of weakness so that a pastor's inner life, home life and life in the parish can be as strong as possible for God and for good.

How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?

What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?

The interim period between pastors in the life of a church can be a critical time. If there was a moral crisis of some kind the interval between ministers can provide space for healing and congregational counselling. Congregations can experience pain from

⁶⁷ Ibid., 38.

these traumatic events in a faith community. Time can help heal wounds and the bitter aftertaste of a pastoral leader who has betrayed the congregation somehow. This interim period helps bring congregational factions closer together. One faction is those who loved the former pastor and would stand by him/her no matter what. Another faction is those who were troubled by the behaviour or teaching of the former pastor and are intent on his/her removal. The other faction is those who just want to come to church regardless of who the minister is. This group is often confused as to what the fuss is all about and may drop out of attending church as a result.

In the interviews conducted eight transition stories included an interim pastor. Two of the situations were such that the staff members of the church conducted the interim ministry between senior pastors. In another interview the incoming pastor was first the interim pastor before being called as senior pastor. This happens from time to time in the Atlantic Baptist context.

In another interview the interim pastor was a nearby retired pastor who ended up being a part of the calling process and pulpit committee. This interim period was for approximately seven months. Another constructive interim ministry was one that lasted for six months. This interim travelled to these churches and provided ministry in such a positive way that the incoming pastor felt that as a result it made the transition better. Another interim pastor whose gentle way and helpful ministry was so well received that he was described affectionately as an “old gentleman.” This kind and loving ministry that preceded this pastor lasted for six or seven months. Another two year interim ministry was conducted by a retired pastor who was described as “well loved.”

This kind and loving interim ministry can soothe a troubled congregation. It can bridge divides that come between people who really care about the work of the Lord but have been distracted for a while. It can be a time for instruction and preparation for a new pastoral leader. It can be a time for refocusing on Christ and His call upon a church to extend the Kingdom of God.

Not every interim ministry is positive. A recurring downside is the retired pastor, who stayed in the community and became the interim pastor. For the incoming pastor this had negative outcomes. This interim period ended the week before the new pastor arrived so there was no gap between the long serving pastor and the incumbent. The loyalties in the congregation were still strong for the retired pastor. The church family's habits were to call upon their beloved pastor in times of funerals or weddings. Eventually a policy was drafted to deal with this ethical dilemma.

Another negative interview regarding interim ministry was concerning an interim pastor who continued having contact with the congregation after the new pastor had arrived. The incumbent felt that this interim pastor's self assessment was that the interim pastor was indispensable. The interim minister continued to interfere with funerals and felt that it was alright to do so. How should a newly arriving pastor deal with this situation? Should the new pastor insist upon the Regional Minister to speak to the interim pastor whose ministry is over? Should the new pastor share these concerns with the board or church leadership? Could the Moderator of an Association speak into this kind of situation? This pastor was not sure how long the interim pastor was in place but his/her influence was still strong upon the new pastor's arrival and early ministry.

Nineteen of the interviews related that the interim period was covered by pulpit supply. This ministry called “pulpit supply” was not defined. This pulpit supply on Sundays ranged from one week to two years. In multiple point churches not every church had their pulpit filled every Sunday. The pulpit supply person was arranged in some cases by a solo deacon. Some churches had different pastors who were available to cover worship services each week. Another church had a retired pastor from within the congregation that preached each Sunday. Another parish had a local retired pastor who ministered each Sunday. Each church or pastorate seemed to handle this kind of interim ministry in their own way. As mentioned earlier, two churches had no interim ministry as the former pastor left one week and the new pastor preached the following week.

Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

As this paper continues to look at the impact of the former pastor upon the arriving pastor these questions above were asked in the interviews. A variety of answers were given from those who knew the former pastor prior to their arrival and those who became acquainted after their arrival.

One interview revealed that this question did not apply to them as the position they were arriving to commence was a new position. Three others said plainly “no.” They did not know the former pastor before or after their arrival.

Some of the pastors interviewed did have contact with the preceding pastor before his arrival. A couple of pastors said concerning the former pastor, “I knew of him.” This was followed by one pastor saying there was very little contact after their arrival. One pastor who followed a pastor who died said, “I vaguely knew him.” Another had met the

former pastor once prior to arrival. This pastor had no contact with the former pastor after arriving. Another pastor spoke of being an acquaintance of the former pastor in another Association. The pastor knew the family but it was not a close relationship.

Other pastors followed friends. One pastor followed a personal friend and former colleague but they did not have much fellowship after this arrival. Another pastor followed a former pastor who had been this incumbent's minister and mentor in this same church. One new pastor followed a former pastor who was known to him and had a well respected reputation. Another arriving pastor said concerning the former pastor, "we were friends before and after arriving."

Not all comments were of a positive nature. The pastor who followed the retiring pastor who interfered with ministry said the former pastor was unknown before, "but I got to know the former pastor plenty after arriving." Another interview revealed that the new pastor did not know the former pastor before but was approached by the former pastor after arriving.

Some pastors made a connection with the former pastor after arriving. One pastor said that the former pastor came by the very day the new pastor moved in to the church. Four pastors said that a connection was made when the former pastor visited in the area after their arrival. Another spoke of how this relationship grew over time. Two pastors shared that they met the former pastor when he/she returned to help with a funeral.

Some pastors met through ministerial gatherings or through working on denominational committees together. One commented that the former pastor stops in from time to time to visit in the pastor's study. Another pastor mentioned that the former pastor's children live in the community and through this a good relationship has been

formed. Another pastor mentioned that the former pastor and spouse had dropped by the new pastor's dwelling and that they have enjoyed each other's fellowship at Convention Assembly. Another former pastor was invited back from time to time and through these visits the new pastor said, "we became good friends." Another positive note was how a former pastor met with the new pastor and did his best to make the transition easier. One former pastor, who was asked to leave, was invited back to participate in a communion service to promote reconciliation and congregational healing.

For the most part these answers were of an encouraging nature. Relationships were formed and some grew into real friendships beyond being colleagues. The negative answers came where arriving pastors walked into troubled situations. The trouble stemmed from a former pastor who was still around, causing conflict, usually in the form of not ceasing to meddle in the church's affairs and lives of former parishioners.

Has the former pastor maintained any contact with the members of the congregation?

This question received a variety of answers. Interestingly there were only three interviews that said that a former pastor had no contact to their knowledge. Three others said that contact was limited, sporadic or minimal. It should be noted that the majority of responses were of a positive nature.

The contact with the congregation by a former pastor mentioned most was that of occasionally returning to attend a worship service. A couple of interviews mentioned that the contact was unsolicited by the former pastor and usually with the smaller congregations of a multi-point field. One interviewee spoke of the former pastor returning to take part in a mortgage burning celebration. Another pair of interviews spoke of former pastor's contact being in the form of returning to help with funerals.

These funeral arrangements are sometimes pre-requested by the family before the pastor has left the church and moved to another parish. The former pastor stayed in contact with these families through to the time of the funeral. It would be helpful for leaving pastors to add to their “departing pastor’s list” the names of any persons that have requested their assistance in a funeral or wedding.

Some pastors mentioned that the former pastor returns to visit family that lives in the area. Another pastor said the former pastor stays next door to the parsonage with the neighbours. In both of these instances the former pastor has been very supportive of the incoming pastor and the relationship was generally a good thing. Both of these former pastors communicate with the resident pastor when in the area.

Some of the contact from former pastors was in the area of correspondence, especially through Christmas cards and a few phone calls. It was said in a couple of interviews that it was the former pastor’s spouse that wrote to folks in the congregation. In the ever changing world of communications staying in contact with former parishioners will be easier than before. How can pastors and spouses ensure that communicating with former congregants will be healthy and affirming of the ministry of the new pastor and the pastor’s family?

It was mentioned in one interview that the pastor preceding the former pastor who still lives in the community is still very friendly and engaging. The previous pastor still cares about the church and the deterioration of the congregation. This prior pastor conducted funerals during the former pastor’s time and visits people occasionally. It is a very positive relationship.

In three different interviews it was mentioned that the contact the former pastor had with the congregation was “all good and unthreatening.” Does this mentioning of the word “unthreatening” by three different pastors mean that there is a possibility of a former pastor being a threat? In what ways would a former pastor pose a threat to an incoming pastor?

There were three negative responses to the question concerning the contact of a former pastor with a congregation. Once again it was brought up that the retired pastor who lived in the community and attended the same church interfered with funerals, etc. Another interview, involved a former pastor, who was asked to leave, but still lived in the general area, and had contact with the congregation. This former pastor still visits in the homes of this church family and discusses issues along with having the occasional lunch with the leaders in the church. Another former pastor had lots of contact with a previous congregation and encouraged former parishioners to come to the new church where this former pastor now ministers.

How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

The answers to this question were divided equally with positive and negative responses. Some answers were a blend of a positive initial response and then a comment that restated the positive reply.

Six interviewees responded to this question of whether the calling was similar or different by using phrases such as: no difference, no surprises, everything as agreed to, pretty accurate and very close. Another said, “basically as described,” but, the church had a history of short term pastors and the congregation just wanted a minister to be a friend

and a peace maker. This pastor also commented that it took time to learn the unspoken expectations and how realistic the expectations were as well.

Another pastor said the calling process was very truthful but they under-stated what inner-city ministry was like. Another pastor said it was pretty accurate but the expectations were that this incoming pastor would be the reincarnation of the two preceding pastors. Other pastors were pleasantly surprised upon arrival. One said that everything was bigger than expected, i.e., the town and area. This pastor said that the pulpit committee understated the potential of the churches on the field. Another expected a slow reception to the new pastor's teaching ministry: instead the opposite was true. Another said, that as a pastor and family, they had not expected to be treated so well. The new pastor expected controversy, immaturity and bad meetings. Instead the opposite was true upon arriving at a difficult church. Another interview brought out that a pastor found the pulpit committee very thorough and felt they were fair. It was also mentioned that the financial arrangements were agreeable.

Another pastor said that the church was close to expectations but the calling process was stressful. The candidacy visit unfolded very differently from what the pulpit committee had described. Another pastor said that the church was close to what had been expected and that the pulpit committee did not lie much. In another interview, the pastor said the church was very close to what was expected, excepting that finances were tight. Another pastor said there was not much difference from expectations but the attendance was lower than the impression given by the calling committee. It was also noted that people were more related to each other than the pastor originally thought in this rural church.

Other pastors expressed that things were different to what had been expected. One pastor said the church did not match the glowing picture described by the pulpit committee. The pulpit committee never mentioned the split and spoke highly of the former pastor until the arrival of the new minister. Another pastor stated that he did not realize how disillusioned a congregation would be with a former pastor who had failed morally. Another said, "I was not aware of the depths of division, the spiritual immaturity and how deep problems ran." Another expressed disappointment as the newly arriving pastor's expectation was that the people would be more engaged in the life of the church. Another said that the church was not close to what had been expected. This was the interview that concerned the role change of one called as a youth pastor and upon arrival soon learned of the senior pastor's resignation and everything had changed with new responsibilities added.

Another pastor said that those who had voiced their support during the calling process did not follow through upon arrival. Another said everything was completely different. The pulpit committee misrepresented themselves regarding goals for reaching younger families. Along this same thought, was a pastor who described that between the calling process and early after arrival, two key couples left the area. This created a dynamic change from what had been expected. In a rural church one or two couples can make a huge difference in ministry. Another pastor said, "I knew it was a troubled church so expectations were accordingly." Lastly, a pastor shared that the people expressed how they wanted things to happen, but really they had left it up to the new pastor. This interview question ended with this statement: "Pulpit committees are warm and energetic and by the time you unpack the last box you really know."

This thesis has addressed some of the issues surrounding pulpit committees and expectations. Truth telling and forthrightness is something that is expected from both the pulpit committee and the interviewing candidate. It may also be that candidates are blindly full of hope that a new ministry setting will go well. Young pastors, especially first time pastors, seem to be so excited about entering their first ministry setting, that they may not be listening as closely as they should to what the pulpit committee is saying. On the other hand, pulpit committees may be remiss in sharing the true picture of a church or pastoral charge.

Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?

This question was designed to understand the kind of mentoring support pastors have in the Atlantic Baptist context. The results from this question show the importance of having someone or a group of persons with which to have contact for support and encouragement in ministry.

This question was answered negatively in a few instances. Those pastors who answered “no” to these questions, expressed that it would have been very helpful to have a mentor or colleague to call upon. One pastor said that there was very little fellowship, and even informal “get togethers” with other pastors, would have been nice. One pastor in the first year of a transition had no one to be a mentor. Another pastor had no need of a mentor as all went very well. This was not the case in every transition this pastor encountered. It was more of the exception than the rule. One pastor said that they did not have a formal mentor, but a retired pastor “from away,” and not part of the Atlantic

Baptist context, provided some fellowship and support. Another answer was “no support,” but the Regional Minister checked in from time to time.

The number one resource for support in all of these interviews was the Regional Minister. More than any other means of encouragement, the ministry of the Regional Minister was most appreciated. This begs the question: With the changing role of Regional Ministry in our Atlantic Baptist churches how might this impact this vital mentoring ministry? Where will a pastor go when there seems to be no one else to call upon?

Regional Ministers were not the only resource for mentoring. Most pastors had sought out more than one means of mentoring and collegiality. Six out of the seven interviews of pastors, who were in their first church, said they had an Atlantic Baptist Convention appointed supervisor directed to mentor them in their first year of ministry. Some of these supervisors lived forty-five minutes away but were acknowledged as being a great help.

In seven different interviews pastors said they had a friend or colleague to call upon for advice and fellowship. Some of these were over an hour away. This encouragement was important enough to travel a distance, as they had no one else, from whom to find this kind of support.

In five interviews, it was mentioned how the local ministerial in the immediate area served as a means of support and fellowship. One youth pastor even had a “youth pastors” ministerial to attend. Others found mentors through neighbouring pastors and non-denominational clergy groups. Another pastor found fellowship and support through a Baptist Association pastors’ prayer group. Some pastors mentioned an Atlantic Baptist

“pastors’ cluster” that proved to be a valuable resource of encouragement. Two pastors found help in this regard through serving on a Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches committee.

The Atlantic Baptist Convention institutions of higher learning were also a vital resource. Through the staff of the Seminary of Atlantic Baptist Churches, Acadia Divinity College, pastors found mentoring relationships that were very helpful. One pastor spoke of how he called upon the president of Atlantic Baptist College (now Crandall University) for advice and guidance through a difficult pastorate.

The two female pastors interviewed found support from other female clergy who were pastoring nearby. One of these female pastors was part of a female clergy ministerial group. This is important for female clergy and supported by research done by Zikmund, Lummis, and Chang from 1993-94. They found that: “clergy in small towns and rural settings were often unhappy due to lack of contact with other clergy. Single women suffered the most in such settings, feeling as if they lived in a fishbowl. The strongest determinant for leaving the ministry for both sexes was not having been a member of a clergy support group.”⁶⁸

Other pastors mentioned that they found mentoring opportunities with a recent interim who was a retired pastor and who lived in the area. This interim knew the church well after serving for seven months prior to this pastor’s arrival. Another pastor mentioned that a retired pastor served as a mentor and friend.

Two pastors spoke to how existing pastoral staff served to minister in a mentoring way. The question that arose from this interview was: “If this is your only means of

⁶⁸ Hoge and Wenger, *Pastors in Transition*, 223, 224. Zikmund, Lummis, and Chang made a major contribution in their study of men and women ministers in 15 denominations. In 1993-94 they surveyed almost 5,000 men and women clergy and interviewed 248 by phone.

support how are internal conflicts between staff persons handled?” Another source within a church setting could be the role of a Minister Emeritus in mentoring.

All of these answers reveal that there are many creative ways that a pastor can find support and mentoring. Many pastors had more than one form of relationship with other clergy for fellowship, encouragement and role models. The need for a spiritual companion in ministry is vital to the spiritual maturity and growth of a pastor. More will be said about this later.

In conclusion some trends have been discovered along the way. As mentioned earlier not all pastors shared every pastoral change in their career. A few did. From those pastors who shared more than one transition some patterns were noticed. Some pastors seemed to follow one difficult church after another. They followed some sort of trouble, crisis or ethical/moral issue more than once. Other pastors seemed to have a repeated ministry of love and healing to congregations who were hurting.

Pain resides in congregations in many ways. Some are in pain because their beloved pastor has left. The pastor may have retired or left for various other reasons. The pain may come from broken trusts, promises not kept, or immorality. But still the pain is real. Some have likened this pain to a broken bone. Things are not the same. The bone has to be set and time given for healing. The ministry of healing a hurting congregation is vital and needed.

Some of the new and younger pastors followed older and experienced pastors. They were new ministers and comparisons were made to the older and wiser former pastors. As these young pastors increased in experience and self awareness, they matured

and were encouraged. These pastors' transitions became more positive and smoother with each pastoral change.

A few of these pastors experienced calling committees that were not totally transparent and forthcoming with the state of affairs in a local congregation or parish. It could be that pulpit committees may not want to put all of their dirty laundry on the line in an initial conversation. But if a candidate is being seriously considered for a call transparency and truthfulness should be the order of the day. Once again the question could be asked with the changing role of regional ministry, where will pulpit committees get guidance?

As noted already, some of these pastors had wonderful relationships that grew out of their encounter with a former pastor. Others had quite the opposite. Former pastors were said to have interfered with the new pastor's ministry. Even an interim was mentioned to have over stayed his/her influence in a congregation.

One theme that occurs with each move is that of living accommodations. A parsonage or place of residence for the pastor is a part of every move. The moving experiences were predominately positive. People in the congregations were helpful with the physical aspect of moving furniture and household items. Food and welcome baskets were given to the new clergy family. Friends and family worked together to make this part of the transition a good thing.

There was a mix of good and bad experiences in stories from pastoral changes. Each pastor and each church is unique. Both created and called by God to be instruments of grace and beacons of light in this dark world. May these insights shared, from real pastors in real churches in the Atlantic Baptist context, challenge the reader to consider

the former things, written for our learning. May the reader discover from these interviews genuine insights and may they prove to be examples to the wise.

Chapter 4

Suggestions for New Arrivals

The understanding of transitions continues as suggestions for new arrivals are offered in response to what has been shared through interviews and discovered in research of the topic of clergy transitions.

Just before a pastor arrives.

The time between departure from a former ministry position and arrival of pastors in a new pastoral setting varies in each situation.

Roy M. Oswald, James M. Heath and Ann W. Heath, in their book, *Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions*, have a series of helpful chapters covering every aspect of the departure of a pastor from a former church to arrival as pastor in a new parish.

As a new pastor is selected by the search or pastoral call committee, and there is much excitement and anticipation, the tendency is to think the task of the committee is over, but there is still more to do. A good negotiation process and fair contract will do much to start the new pastorate in a positive atmosphere. Any assumptions on each side, pastor and congregation, need to be brought out into the open, and differences in those assumptions addressed.⁶⁹

The major expectations of the congregation usually appear in the parish profile or other materials the candidate receives. Any non-negotiable items should be made clear to the incoming pastoral candidate. These terms usually include housing or housing allowance, health insurance and vacations. The agreement should include the date the

⁶⁹ Oswald, Heath and Heath, *Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions*, The Alban Institute. 2003, 57. This book, though written in an American context, applies in very practical ways to Canadian life and ministry.

pastor will assume the position of congregational leadership, who will pay for the move and decide on the moving company. The expectations of the pastor's time should be included as well. Time off is easier to specify, including day(s) off per week, national holidays, weeks of vacation, continuing education and even the accrual of sabbatical leave. Also sickness and disability days if extended illness arises, along with how the pastor's family will be looked after in the event of an untimely death, should be considered.

In conclusion, this helpful section states, "a well-drafted agreement will free pastor and lay leaders to work together without constant attention to details. Spelling out the conditions of the pastor's work, will free the pastor for spiritual leadership in the congregation. The process of thinking about the relationship of pastor and congregation before the pastorate begins lays a foundation for the growth of the relationship."⁷⁰

Part of the Atlantic Baptist Regional Ministers' role is to serve as consultants to churches that are seeking to call a new member for their pastoral staff. Regional Ministers have prepared a downloadable (pdf) document entitled Guidelines for Search Committees. A church may wish to have members of a Search Committee read this document through and then call their Regional Minister for assistance with a search for an accredited minister.⁷¹

Take a break between ministry places

As a new arrival in a church as pastor, hopefully some time should be taken for a break or holiday. All too often pastors, out of a sense of duty or the opportunity for a

⁷⁰ Ibid., 61.

⁷¹ http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/documents/search_committee_guidelines_2009.pdf. This is a 46 page document that methodically gives the process and guidelines for search committees seeking to call a new pastor.

change move too quickly into the next ministry setting. Allowing yourself a little extra time in between will be beneficial to the pastor, the church and also one's family.

Roy M. Oswald, in his book, *New Beginnings: A Pastorate Start Up Workbook*, tells of a clergyman who, not only took his regular month's transition time for himself and his family, getting settled into a new home and community, but took a second month at a lakeside cottage. The newly arrived clergyman talked about how important that interim period was for him and his family: "We had a lot of things to talk about—what it was like saying goodbye to the congregation ---what our stay there had meant to us--- some of the hopes and dreams that we had to let go. We also discussed the future as a family in a new place --what things we wanted to do differently this time --what things would be important for us to continue as a family. The month went very quickly. When it was over, we were ready to begin ministry in the new parish."⁷²

One of the pastors interviewed above said very succinctly, "pastors just need a break." May this word encourage the reader to take some time between ministry positions.

Just as one arrives

When a pastor arrives in a new ministry location there are a lot of things that can take one's attention. There is a tendency to run madly off in all directions to get things going and to have a positive start up in the new church placement. One part of the complete pastoral change is to remember to look within as part of the beginning process.

Roy Oswald suggests first looking at the feelings within yourself. Are there things and people you miss from your last place? Was anything left unresolved? Do you feel any guilt for having left your last place? Any anger? At whom? And why? In deciding to

⁷² Roy M. Oswald, *New Beginnings, A Pastorate Start Up Workbook*, The Alban Institute, 1989. 1, 2.

move did you make any bargains with yourself, with your family, with God? What will it take to gain resolution on some of these issues?⁷³

Seeking professional counsel

Roy Oswald recommends as well that a pastor seeks out some other person that you, as pastor, can trust and talk through some of the things you are feeling. The CABC, through its health plan has provided coverage for this kind of counsel from professionals as well. Oswald continues, “If you take time to deal with those feelings directly, you will be clearing the deck for a fresh start in a new place. You owe it to yourself, your family and your new parish.”⁷⁴

For clergy with family, it is important also to take care of your family and help them adjust. Clergy generally adjust to a new situation far more quickly than their families. Pastors get immersed in the work of ministry and are establishing relationships daily but spouses and children must find support through more subtle and less direct ways. Oswald says, “While you are revelling in the new situation, you may come home to persons who are hiding their tears or stifling resentment about having to leave the old place.”⁷⁵

Just as a pastor seeks outside help for him or herself, so too it may be necessary to seek a counsellor for the family as individuals or as a whole unit. As a pastor takes care of one’s self and one’s family a pastor begins in a healthy way the new ministry together.

Michael Watkins speaks to this as stabilizing the home front. “It is a fundamental rule of warfare to avoid fighting on too many fronts. For new leaders, this means stabilizing the home front so you can devote the necessary attention to work. You cannot

⁷³ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 7.

hope to create value at work if you are destroying value at home.”⁷⁶ Watkins offers some practical advice that can help smooth a family’s transition:

- Analyze your family’s existing support system. Moving severs your ties with the people who provide essential services to your family: doctors, lawyers, dentists, baby sitters, tutors, coaches and more. Do an inventory, identify priorities, and invest in finding replacements quickly.
- Get your spouse on track. Your spouse may quit his or her job with the intention of finding a new one after relocating. Unhappiness can fester if the search is slow. To accelerate it, negotiate up front with your company for job-search support or find such support shortly after moving.
- Time the family move carefully. For children, it is substantially more difficult to move in the middle of a school year. Consider waiting until the end of the school year to move your family. The price, of course, is separation from your loved ones and the wear and tear of commuting. If you do this, however, be sure that your spouse has the extra support to help ease the burden. Being a single parent is hard work.
- Preserve the familiar. Re-establish familiar family rituals as quickly as possible and maintain them throughout the transition. Help from favourite relatives, such as grand parents, also makes a difference.

There is no avoiding pain if you decide to move your family. But there is much more pastors can do to minimize it and to accelerate everyone’s transitions.⁷⁷

The Commissioning of a Pastor or the Induction Service

Depending upon the time of year one arrives as pastor one of the first major celebrations will be a service of commissioning or induction. Canadian Baptist Ministries’ Manual for Worship and Service, has a section dedicated to this service of induction. It is suggested that this “service be arranged and conducted as soon as possible following the arrival of a new pastor.”⁷⁸ It is an event that not only involves the local

⁷⁶ Michael Watkins, The First 90 Days, 217.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 218.

⁷⁸ A Manual for Worship and Service, Canadian Baptist Ministries, 1998, 129.

church and community but also the Association, usually the Moderator, Regional Minister, and could also include other local clergy.

These services of induction or commissioning vary from church to church. A few options are offered in the Manual for Worship and Service. Practice varies from area to area and the service is shaped according to local custom. The manual suggests that this service should include, as a minimum, readings from scriptures (suggested readings are listed), the introduction of the new pastor, an exchange of commitments, and the act of commissioning or induction, a commissioning prayer and a blessing or benediction by the new pastor.⁷⁹

The local congregation, as a covenant people, have sought God's will in the choosing of a pastor. The process has been bathed in prayer and spiritual discernment. God has placed divine approval on the calling process and the new pastor has been called and has accepted that call from God and God's people. This service of commissioning or induction is a way of celebrating that work of the Spirit. It affords the congregation and new pastor the opportunity to publicly covenant together to minister in a united way for the glory of God.

The service itself may set a tone for the new ministry and the goals the congregation and pastor hope to accomplish together for the glory of God. The service may focus on the servant leadership model. Another example is the theme of a shepherd caring for the sheep. The new pastor's ministry may be in the area of youth or seniors and that could be the focus of the address or sermon. This may vary with each church and the movement of the Spirit in the heart of the guest speaker.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 129.

Part of the service of Commissioning or Induction is the hymns and music selected. The congregational songs and special music by a choir or solo add to this special occasion in the life of a pastor and people. The former Manual for Worship and Service, first printed in 1976 and edited in 1984, has a suggested order of service that includes hymns as part of this celebration.⁸⁰ Many of our Atlantic Baptist pastors in the past, used The Minister's Service Book: For Pulpit and Parish Use. This book also includes an order of service with music as part of the worship.⁸¹ A non-denominational worship service manual also has suggested hymns:

God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand
Lead On, O King Eternal
A Charge to Keep I Have
O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee
O Jesus, I Have Promised⁸²

Nelson's Minister's Manual has a sample order of service for an Installation Service which includes preludes, hymns and special music.

Prelude Music: (The musicians should play appropriate music dealing with Christian commitment and service). I'd Rather Have Jesus; If Jesus Goes With Me; Wherever He Leads, I'll Go; and Now I Belong to Jesus.

Hymns: A Call for Reapers; I Love to Tell the Story; I Am Happy in the Service of the King; and Trust and Obey.

Special Music: I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go; All for Jesus; Great Is Thy Faithfulness; and Until Then.⁸³

⁸⁰ Larry Matthews, Project Coordinator, A Manual For Worship and Service: Prepared for Canadian Baptist Churches, All-Canada Baptist Publications, 1984, 136.

⁸¹ James Dalton Morrison, Editor, Minister's Service Book: For Pulpit and Parish Use, New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1937, 146.

⁸² Samuel Ward Hutton, Minister's Service Manual, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958, 188-191.

⁸³ Joshua Rowe, Editor, Nelson's Minister's Manual, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003, 136.

The Hymnal of the Baptist Federation of Canada has an index referring to hymns for INDUCTION, ORDINATION and INSTALLATION of CHURCH OFFICERS (407-453).⁸⁴ Other hymns like Be Thou My Vision, Christ Be My Leader, and a host of modern choruses and praise and worship songs can enhance a service of induction by challenging God's people to a unified walk with God.

Sometimes hymns or songs have been written for the occasion. Rev. Dr. M. Allen Gibson, Minister Emeritus at Chester United Baptist Church, once wrote a hymn for a friend's induction service.

Hymn for a Friend's Induction

Once, in the days of long ago,
A plea that Macedon might know
The Truth brought, from across the sea,
Men strong in faith to speak for Thee.
And still Thy Spirit's guiding hand
Leads men to answer need's demand.

This Church and people are a part
Of Christendom's redeeming heart;
Their Macedonian cry now met
May their great works be greater yet!
God bless this Church that it may be
A place where men are won to Thee!

Bless this Thy servant who today
We speed upon his sacred way.
Sustain his spirit; grant him grace
For every trial he must face,
And as he speaks and lives Thy Word
Give him the joy of being heard.

As this our prayer of trust ascends
We ask Thy blessing for our friends.
O may they ever be aware
That Thou art with them everywhere!
Lord we are few, our strength is small,

⁸⁴ Carol M. Giesbrecht, Editor, The Hymnal, The Baptist Federation of Canada, 1973, 624.

Be Thou the keeper of us all.⁸⁵

[Suggested tune: MELITA (Eternal Father Strong to Save)]

Like Dr. M. Allen Gibson, a native of Nova Scotia, other Canadian writers have penned hymns that would fit the occasion of an induction or commissioning service.

Margaret Clarkson is one such person. She is a native of Canada, but she has been equally recognized and claimed by the evangelical community in the United States. One of her hymns that would fit such an occasion is titled, Lord of our Dawning. This is based upon Luke 22:28, “I am among you as one who serves.”

Lord of our Dawning

Lord of our dawning, who brought us to birth,
Gave us your Word for this sin-shattered earth,
Clothed us with promise of strength for our days –
God of beginning, we sing to your praise!

Lord of our morning, who taught us to pray,
Taught us to trust you through joy or dismay,
Taught us that freedom is serving our King –
Glad with thanksgiving, our worship we bring.

Lord of our noonday, in Christ make us strong,
Wise to prevail in the war that is wrong,
Steadfast to trust you, and swift to obey –
Serving your will in our world of today!

Lord of our evening, Provider and Guide,
Lead us in triumph through paths yet untried,
Trusting, rejoicing, till rest shall be won –
Serving while waiting our soon-coming Sun.

Then, in the light of his glory and grace,
We shall adore you and look on your face;
Then, in the wonder of faith crowned in sight,
Serve you forever in endless delight!⁸⁶

⁸⁵ M. Allen Gibson, *Idle Rhymes*, Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1987, 31.

⁸⁶ Margaret Clarkson, *A Singing Heart*, Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1987, 103. Margaret Clarkson’s most well known tune is a mission hymn that has appeared in many hymnals since it was first

[Suggested tune: SLANE

Meter: 10.10.10.10.]

Another hymn by Margaret Clarkson written for such an occasion is:

O Living Word of God

O living Word of God,
Strong Lord of heaven and earth,
Whose mighty voice rang out
And light and life had birth,
One Source alone our being knows –
From you our soul and substance flows.

O sovereign Word of power,
O all-creating might,
Invade our inmost souls,
Transform our nature's night,
Till all we are and all we do
Affirms our Saviour's claims are true.

O holy Word of truth,
All wisdom's crown and sum,
To you with all our quests,
Our hopes, our fears, we come;
In you alone true answer find,
And rest of soul and peace of mind.

O matchless Word of love
Who sought us when we strayed,
In whom we call our God
Our Father, undismayed,
Where sin and woe despoil their prey
Make us your word of love today!

O Lord of life and power,
O God of love and truth,
To you we bring our hearts,
Our freedom, strength and youth,
Your life to know, your will to do,
To serve your world for love of you!⁸⁷

published in 1954. The hymn: *So Send I You*, based upon John 20:21, has challenged congregations for over half a century.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 114, 115. This hymn was written in Toronto in 1983-4.

[Suggested tunes: DARWALL, LOVE UNKNOWN Meter: 6.6.6.6.8.8.]

Whatever hymns or praise/worship songs a church and incoming pastor choose for this service, they can be a rich source of praise and celebration and renewal for this new beginning in the life of a pastor and people.

A church and pastor could also consider from time to time, such as an anniversary of the pastor's arrival, to have a service where the renewal of the covenant vows takes place. When one attends a wedding one is reminded of the vows made to spouse, so too in a service of renewal of covenantal vows pastor and people would be reminded of the promises made. This kind of service would be an encouragement to faithful action in the ministry pastor and people are called to engage together.

First Impressions

First impressions take place for both people and pastor. The interviews above revealed the first impressions pastors felt from those who met them as they arrived. There were those who helped them unpack and the parishioners who had food prepared. The pastors mentioned existing staff people who helped organize the chaos a newly arriving pastor may feel. The people in the pew and community also have a first impression of the new minister.

For twenty-five years and counting the Alban Institute has been conducting research into life in ministry. Much of this research has been in the area of ministry transitions. In one of their projects it was noted:

One of our basic assumptions in the project is that “the start-up period” (the first 12–18 months of a new pastorate) will determine to some degree the entire ministry of that clergy person in that congregation.” We hypothesize that within this start-up period, the patterns of interaction between clergy and congregation are set, the norms for how they are to live out their life together are established, and first impressions are

solidified into lasting attitudes towards one another. In short, the marriage between clergy and congregation settles into predictable patterns of behavior and interaction. To date, we have not uncovered anything that would disprove this hypothesis.⁸⁸

It is said you only get one chance to make a first impression. It is true. It is a good idea to be aware of this in beginning a new ministry placement. Maybe past blunders or poor first impressions come to mind even now. This is an opportunity to do one's best to make a first impression on which one can build relationships. People will take note of how genuine you are, if you care about them or show signs that you like them. Oswald suggests they will take notice of how you shake their hands, listen to them with eye contact along with any non-verbal signs that you are willing and open to engage them personally.⁸⁹

This will be true in the community as one meets new people and forms relationships at the school where one's children may attend, the bank, recreation facilities, service station or any other place which is frequented while serving in that particular church. This is especially true in small communities where everybody knows everyone. It is news when a new minister arrives. People will announce after they have met him/her for the first time, "I met the new minister, he/she is really nice" or is "pleasant" or "dresses weird." People will add some kind of description of a first impression with them.

This will also be the case as one enters the pulpit for the first time, not as a candidate but as pastor. Authenticity is crucial in one's pulpit ministry. One needs to be faithful to God's Word, one's core beliefs and lifting up the Lord. One could hardly know

⁸⁸ Oswald, *The Pastor As Newcomer*, 6.

⁸⁹ Oswald, *New Beginnings*, 26, 27.

all of the sub-groups of a new church so one should be careful not to promise anything publicly that one cannot deliver.

People will soon learn whether the pastor likes them or cares about them. People are quick to say, “he/she is not much of a preacher but he/she really loves us and cares about us.” Or the opposite is true, “the pastor is very organized but seems very distant personally.” Or the in between comment, “the pastor is very friendly but spends a lot of time in front of the computer.” What kind of impression does a new pastor want to make with those to whom she/he is called to minister? As Dr. Ohsberg used to say in class, “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”⁹⁰

Concerning first impressions during the start up period of a new ministry the Alban Institute has found the following to be true:

In the start-up period, some persons on the periphery of the congregation will probably be making snap judgments about the new pastor. How he is perceived may make the difference between these people sticking around to engage the pastor further or simply leaving, never to return. As impossible or frightening as this may seem, it is important to keep several things clear:

- a. People are looking hard to see whether their new clergyperson is genuinely interested in them. They look for clues that communicate caring on the part of clergy.
- b. People are looking for authenticity: Is this new pastor a fully authentic human being? Has he/she got it together personally and theologically?

“Are you authentic?” and “Do you care?” are the two basic questions people ask. For some, a specific kind of theological orientation is called for—charismatic, liberal, conservative, fundamentalist. These folks will carefully watch the words clergy use in sermons and prayers, and on informal occasions. Clergy who are aware of being judged on a first impression may draw on the portions of their own religious experience that most closely approximate that of certain groups of people. They need

⁹⁰ Dr. Ohsberg, was a former professor of courses in Christian Education and practical ministry at Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, NS. This writer has learned a great deal from Dr. Ohsberg and his lessons have proved very practical in ministry.

to be careful, however, not to go outside their own core beliefs or value system. The danger here is in trying to please everyone. This practice carries the risk of coming across as inauthentic or as having no personal convictions. This approach would, in the long run, be self-defeating in the first impressions game.⁹¹

Being real, genuine, authentic and caring is not only a great way to start in a ministry placement it is also a good way to continue. Many pastors strive to be faithful in these four things to the last day of service in this life and into the next.

Roy Oswald suggests that one take the first six to nine months and be little more than an historian and a lover. He also speaks of the “natural selection process” where the new pastor naturally is drawn to some and repelled from others in the congregation. It is important that pastors know themselves as these dynamics are going on in their heart. Oswald says plainly, “remember you are called to be pastor to all these people, whether you like them or not.” How you respond to folks initially will determine their first impression of you, the pastor.⁹²

Inherited Psychological Contracts

Oswald, Heath and Heath, speak to a reality concerning psychological contracts between pastor and congregants. “As people develop relationships, they form unspoken, non-rational, and often unconscious expectations of each other.” This sense of how things should be can be described as a psychological contract because it is evaluated in the minds of the participants and a contract because there is an agreement (even if unspoken) that things will happen in a certain way.⁹³

⁹¹ Oswald, Pastor As Newcomer, 13,14.

⁹² Oswald, New Beginnings, 29.

⁹³ Oswald, Heath and Heath, Beginning Ministry Together, 123.

When members are upset with either the congregation or the pastor, it is usually because the unspoken, often unconscious psychological contract has been broken. This creates a particular challenge for a new pastor, who may have inherited the contracts members had with a predecessor. Clergy should realize that much of this contract will surface in their first substantial meeting with a member and role negotiation of the contract may be going on at the first meeting, whether conscious or not.⁹⁴

Oswald, Heath and Heath conclude by stating, “Gaining information about different members’ psychological contracts will help the pastor become a better spiritual guide to each one. It will help the pastor identify the type of relationship that each member expects, negotiate a set of expectations that both can accept, and help empower members to perform the ministries to which they are called.”⁹⁵

Capitalizing on the excitement of transition

When a pastor and his/her family arrive in a new ministry setting there is a lot of excitement and enthusiasm. The church and community is all energized with hope and positive plans to move the congregation forward.

Oswald and his research team speak of positive forces that are at work when one arrives as a pastor in a new setting.

Among all the other things we have said about start-up, there are some very powerful positive forces at work. The professional in ministry knows how to capitalize on the extra energy that is available at this juncture for use in the most crucial areas of that parish’s life. For example, the new minister usually has one or two “yesses” from everyone in the parish; when asked to do something, each member will probably say “yes” at least once. The key is to apply this extra “transition” energy and the carte blanche that is given during this period to the areas that are crucial to a viable future ministry in that congregation. This positive energy can be well applied to one or two of the destructive norms within that parish’s life. The mistake

⁹⁴ Ibid., 124.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 125.

clergy often make here is to use up this energy and their political “vouchers” on some of their favorite programs to create an environment in their new parish that they are more comfortable with. It would, from our perspective, be a mistake for a new minister to use his “vouchers” on a change in the liturgy, for example, when it is clear the congregation has had a history of being in poor straits financially and will be in financial difficulty in the near future. (We don’t recommend making changes in the worship within the first six months.)⁹⁶

May this time of excitement combined with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit be a great source for a powerful new beginning in the life of a local assembly.

Know the history

It is important for a new minister to have a working knowledge of the history of the church where one serves. Every church’s history affects the present situation. One part of this history is oral. As Oswald states, this oral history “becomes valuable because what people think happened is more important than what actually did happen.”⁹⁷

Each parish has its own sense of history. Each church has historical events connected to it which shape what is a norm, custom or habit. People wish to perpetuate this memory and their way of doing things. People will want to share their version of history. They will talk of former ministers, key decisions, critical incidents, days of celebrations, building programs, good times and bad. Oswald refers to this as the parish’s myth about themselves. He speaks of the importance of being well grounded in the parish myth and to listen carefully as people put you in touch with this myth.⁹⁸

In the beginning it is helpful for the newly arrived pastor to respect where people are and what they value. Roy M. Oswald stresses that clergy should take church histories seriously:

⁹⁶ Oswald, Pastor As Newcomer, 14.

⁹⁷ Oswald, New Beginnings, 30.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

Normally, a parish profile consists of a lot of sociological and statistical data about a congregation. This information is helpful, but it does not tell the deeper story. There is a sense in which the history of the congregation will more accurately paint the picture for the present. In starting up a ministry in a new parish, it is our experience that paying attention to those portions of history that people remember and pass on is very important. In the first place, it gets clergy beyond the arrogant assumption that nothing of significance has happened in this parish until they arrived. Secondly, it puts them in touch with the hopes and expectations of the congregation. What we hope we will become usually grows out of where we have been.⁹⁹

Knowing about a congregation's past successes and failures helps the incoming pastor know what kind of ministry is likely to be effective. Knowing the story about the congregation's heroes and villains gives the pastor an idea about the types of people the congregation looks for and the kind it avoids. Hearing about the leadership styles of the congregation's favourite former pastors shows the new pastor what kind of leader the congregation is looking for. Knowing about the congregation's past history can help the pastor identify areas where the congregation welcomes change and areas in which tradition seems deeply entrenched.¹⁰⁰

As one enters a new church ministry setting one needs to listen and take mental notes of the stories people share. Think about what this history means to the local assembly. The new pastor should ask questions for clarification and people will know that he/she genuinely cares about people and events which have brought them to this place and time. Oswald suggests the following peg-hooks as useful in writing down the important events in the life of a congregation:

1. The congregation's beginnings
2. The leaders or "heroes" that are remembered
3. "Days of Glory" that are recalled

⁹⁹ Oswald, *Pastor As Newcomer*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Oswald, Heath and Heath, *Beginning Ministry Together*, 64.

4. Remembrances of crisis or turmoil
5. The hopes and dreams that have accumulated over the years, usually associated with the church buildings
6. Families or individuals who were key to this history, some of whom may still be around.

In working with these items, the new pastor may discover that he/she knows more than previously thought or that there are significant gaps in the information previously learned. This may serve to equip the new pastor with information required in future encounters with parishioners.¹⁰¹

Further, Oswald encourages doing a congregational exercise with suggested questions to gain a greater sense of the church's attachment to the past to gauge their openness to working towards the future. This formal setting gives the pastor the congregation's perception of itself, with a broader look than individual stories and view points of the past. He also suggests pastors do the same exercise on themselves to gauge one's own sense of who one is with the past, facing the future.¹⁰²

It is also helpful to learn the history of the community. Sometimes the community story has helped shape the congregational story. One should read the history of the village or city and also the county (e.g. DesBrisay's History of the County of Lunenburg). If one is new to the region, such as the Atlantic Provinces, it would be helpful to read the background and story of what shaped that region. The Baptist story in Atlantic Canada has been documented well in works penned by Robert Wilson, Dan Goodwin, George Levy and Jarold Zeman. And if one is new to a country, such as Canada, it would be a benefit to read a brief history to be able to engage in conversation

¹⁰¹ Oswald, *New Beginnings*, 31.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 32, 33.

but more importantly to have an understanding of how a nation was born and people and events that shaped the culture.

Personal history is important too. One pastor in the Maritimes when he arrives at a new ministry setting gives each person a card that is to be filled out with their name, birthday, anniversary, favourite hobby and other family information about children, grand children, where they work or retired from, etc. This gives some important background material to help a new pastor learn a little bit about each person in the flock. This particular clergy person is faithful in sending birthday and anniversary cards. This shows each member how much their pastor cares enough to take the time to acknowledge their special day. Reading the annual reports of the church will also give great insight about people, potential and power brokers and personalities.

Taking history seriously will not only make a good entry but will also aid the pastor in developing a plan of ministry during the early months in that community.

The Honeymoon Period

There is a period of time of a new pastorate when everything seems to be going right. It appears that pastor and people have a great respect for each other, communication is working well and things are moving forward successfully. When this period of time ends it is important how the new pastor handles this natural change in the dynamics of ministry life.

When the first disappointment arises for either the congregation or the pastor both parties can positively work through and reach a healthy relationship. Congregations and pastors go through a phase of losing illusions about their own qualities and those of the other party. This can result in a negative outcome if the parties magnify each other's

faults. Both parties can also decide to accept themselves and each other with all of their faults and limitations as well as their virtues and build a relationship on the basis of this acceptance. The first crisis in the pastor and congregational relationship is an opportunity for both parties to bring an uncertain relationship into one that more truly reflects the potential of both pastor and congregation.¹⁰³

Oswald defines and speaks further of two phases to the honeymoon period.

Are people talking about the time in which parish and pastor live together harmoniously because they are living out of their projections and hopes? Or are they talking about the time in which each withholds honest feedback from the other? It is almost as though there are two phases to the honeymoon period. The first is a relatively short period of time, one to four weeks, in which each functions out of unreal data about the other. There is a sense in which new objects are overvalued (ministers, babies, a new spouse). We project onto the other our hopes and dreams of what we would like him/her to be. In pastorate start-ups, the clay feet of both the pastor and parish are exposed very quickly. We discovered, in our research with the Army Chaplain's Board, that people need a minimum of two contacts to arrive at a realistic assessment of the new chaplain.

During the second honeymoon period, people withhold their candor from the new clergyperson. It is as though parishioners contract with one another to suspend judgment until the new minister is given a fair chance, or until they have an opportunity to get to know him/her better. On the surface it seems as though everything is going well. Clergy can fall into the trap and construe this seeming harmony as approval for what they are doing. In this sense, congregations give new clergy enough rope to hang themselves. Some clergy continue to "do their thing," assuming the parish will tell them if they disapprove. They alienate themselves from some and lose the confidence of others. When the period of testing is over, they have come up with a poor grade.

There are two sides to every relationship, and clergy do their own testing of the congregations they serve. They, too, will soon discover that the new congregation is not everything it was cracked up to be. Some clergy may seek opportunities to talk about their sense of being deceived or disappointed. They often need to wait until the congregation is ready to hear. As one Disciples of Christ minister put it, "it was almost as though I had to wait until a prescribed period of time was over before people would

¹⁰³ Oswald, Heath and Heath, Beginning Ministry Together, 128.

listen to my frustration and disappointment. They could only hear me when they were ready to talk about my shortcomings as well.” It is as though there is an unwritten agreement as to a period of time within which clergy and congregation withhold their honesty from each other.¹⁰⁴

When the “Honeymoon” is over

All honeymoons’ of whatever type in time come to an end.

Oswald speaks further to the conclusion of what seems to be an initial pleasant beginning.

Even though this period of testing can hardly be called a honeymoon, we use the term because that is what it has been called traditionally. When, by some internal calendar, parishioners feel the honeymoon has ended and it is time to get down to the business of living together in reality and in truth, a creative opportunity is present. When people and pastor begin to unload their deeper feelings towards each other, it is a frightening time, to say the least. Clergy who find this too threatening to deal with either take refuge in their role as pastor or avoid the confrontation by launching into new success-oriented programs. Hopefully, pastor and people can hang in there with each other to renegotiate the conditions under which they will begin again to live out their corporate life. An attempt on the part of either clergy or congregation to force the other back into the original contract, set at the time of the call, is to be avoided. That contract was probably made on the basis of much misinformation about each other.¹⁰⁵

If the relationship between pastor and church is like a marriage there is a time to move into a new phase of working together in creative ways for the glory of God.

Change can wait.

In some of the interviews above the new pastor was excited about making a difference. Even some calling committees were on board with a plan for needed change.

Part of the very initial conversations with the pastoral candidate was the formulation and

¹⁰⁴ Oswald, *Pastor As Newcomer*, 17,18.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 18. Oswald notes: Based on our experience with this process we do not recommend that congregations attempt to establish a contract with their new pastor at the time of the call. At most, there should be a contract that they will, together, write a contract sometime after the first 12 months of ministry together.

implementation of a different way of worship to reach younger families as a congregation. Part of the church wanted change. Was the church ready for it?

When a new minister arrives he/she has a way of doing things that may be different to what the congregation is used to and comfortable with. The new pastor may have had success in a former pastorate with doing things a certain way or may have done something that did not work. When he/she arrives and notices this activity which did not work for him/her before, he/she may like to put a stop to it. If the new minister arrives and changes things too quickly it may imply that the local church does not know how to do ministry properly. This approach sends a message that you, the clergy person, have all the answers. This is doubly true if the clergy person is not from Atlantic Canada. Often, the author has heard from church people how their new pastor, who is “from away,” (e.g. Ontario or the United States), began to change what the local church had been doing for a long time and often too quickly.

Roy Oswald, “recommends that new pastors initiate no changes for at least the first six months. Instead, clergy should move about, listening and watching intently what is going on and how people get things done. Clergy should take careful note of those activities and programs which work well, are helpful, and are worth preserving. It is especially important to affirm and support such activities. But don’t just affirm and move on.”¹⁰⁶

Further, Oswald speaks to the first big change one makes. In this “honeymoon” period of ministry the church family wants to encourage and bless their new minister. They are expecting some new ideas and so will support their pastor with some initial change. He says, “One of the mistakes clergy frequently make most often is using up this

¹⁰⁶ Oswald, *New Beginnings*, 37.

initial energy on one of their favourite programs or customs. Instead some serious thought should go into the best change to make first.”¹⁰⁷

Oswald suggests asking one’s self a few questions before your first major change:

- Where is this parish in difficulty?
- What are the things that will block this parish from having a viable future?
- Are their destructive norms existing in the parish? What are they?
- Does the parish have a solid financial base?
- Are people’s needs being met by what the parish currently offers?
- Is the parish living up to its leadership potential?
- Is a good percentage of the parish involved in weekly worship?

Oswald encourages the clergy along with local church leadership to look at the answers to these questions closely analyzing and prioritizing the needs and issues that need addressing first. Your first change effort should be a significant one, forming the foundation upon which the future health and vitality of the parish will rest.¹⁰⁸

The biggest challenge for a new pastor, is to control the desire to make changes during the first few months. Almost everyone will say “yes” to a new pastor at least once; that moment of agreement should be saved for something that is really important to the congregation. Oswald, Heath and Heath state, “Many clergy in new pastorates rush to make cosmetic changes, rather than changes of real substance. Most often, these changes are in the corporate worship of a congregation – probably the worst place to make changes since they affect the greatest number of people most quickly and in the least rational feature of congregational life.”¹⁰⁹

Further, Oswald, Heath and Heath state, “When a pastor makes changes before getting to know the congregation, people feel that the pastor is rejecting not only their

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰⁹ Oswald, Heath and Heath, Beginning Ministry Together, 129.

way of worshiping God and their programs, but also them personally.” Once again, a new pastor should spend the first 9-12 months being a lover and historian.¹¹⁰

Again, Oswald, Heath and Heath, suggest that the size of a congregation determines those whom the clergy need to work the hardest at finding something to love. If people don’t feel that the new pastor loves them, change will be hard to accomplish with success.

In a family-size congregation (Sunday attendance of 50 or fewer), the pastor usually has little influence with the “patriarchs” and “matriarchs.” In such a congregation, the pastor will of necessity come to know all members and should try to develop the role of lover with each of them.

In a pastoral size congregation (Sunday attendance of 50-150, much of the spiritual development of people comes through the relationship they have with their pastor. In such a congregation the new pastor should try to visit every member in their home at least once during the first 9-12 months, and work at finding something to love in each of them. After that, any proposed changes in the congregational life are much more likely to be received with openness and trust.

In a program size congregation (attendance of 150-350), the new pastor should develop the role of lover with the core leaders of the congregation, the people who run the programs that meet people’s spiritual needs. Building rapport with the movers and shakers of the congregation will win their support when the first major change is proposed.

In a corporate size congregation (attendance of 350 and higher), the role of lover relates to members of the parish staff and to the power people in the congregation, without whose endorsement changes in programs or mission outreach will falter.¹¹¹

Statistics below show the sizes of congregations within the CABC that correspond with the information above:

Total churches that are listed as active are 524.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 129.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 130.

Total churches that have attendance figures of 0, (these are churches that have not reported) totaling figure, 202. This leaves 322 reporting churches. Over half are family-sized churches. Another third are pastoral size.

- 50 or fewer attendance 168
- 50 - 150 in attendance 110
- 150-350 in attendance 37
- 350 or more in attendance 7¹¹²

It seems that the majority of churches in our Atlantic Baptist context are pastoral and family size. Even if all of the churches reported 32% would be family size and 21% would be pastoral size. This is a total of 53% that are churches of 150 in attendance or less. A greater understanding of the life in ministry in these sizes of churches is needed. Perhaps a study of this topic would be of benefit to the Atlantic Baptist understanding of church life. To understand the dynamics within these churches will help when it comes to making changes.

From the business world, Michael Watkins suggests that change should be planned. “The straightforward plan-then-implement approach to change works well when you are sure that you have the following key supporting planks in place:

- Awareness: A critical mass of people aware of the need for change.
- Diagnosis: you know what needs to be changed and why.
- Vision: You have a compelling vision and a solid strategy.
- Plan: You have the expertise to put together a detailed plan.
- Support: You have a sufficiently powerful coalition to support implementation.”¹¹³

¹¹² Mr. Ken Peabody, Network Administrator, Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, e-mail sent June 25, 2010.

¹¹³ Michael Watkins, The First 90 Days, 98.

The first major change a pastor makes, if successful, will move the congregation to a new level of living and loving. It should ready the congregation for significant growth by increasing its spiritual depth, social outreach, and care for its members. When a congregation grows in these three areas of congregational life, numbers are likely to grow too. By postponing the first major change, it gives pastor and people time to establish a good relationship, knowing that the new pastor cares about them. It also gives the new pastor time to identify and establish working relationships with people of influence in the congregation. Also it allows time to know the key issues and determine the best way to promote congregational health. A new pastor needs to secure the trust of those who are most influential and this takes time.

Early changes are risky, and many pastors who have tried early changes that failed miserably, have compromised their ministry in the congregation ever after. At any point in ministry any change a pastor and congregation decide upon should be based upon broad support and prayerful consideration.¹¹⁴

The importance of having a mentor or nearby colleague.

In the interviews above pastors spoke of the need of having a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon in the first year of ministry. This need continues as one matures and is experienced. The questions and the kind of shape this mentoring evolves into changes throughout one's career.

It is good to have a mentor with whom to work. One needs to watch an "old pro" deal with issues. This is especially true in the first year of one's initial ministry setting. Sometimes these mentors are built right into a parish as a retired minister is in the congregation or a nearby minister emeritus will give one time and a safe place to talk

¹¹⁴ Oswald, Heath and Heath, Beginning Ministry Together, 131.

about things in ministry life. Other options are nearby clergy within one's own denomination and failing that, one of any denominational stripe to find some mutual encouragement and support.

At present in the Atlantic Baptist context this is part of the role of Regional Ministers and a central part of their ministry is to "offer mentoring/pastoral support to congregations, pastors and their families."¹¹⁵ If in the future the role of regional ministry changes, where will this kind of mentoring ministry come from? It may serve the Atlantic Baptist context well to give some serious thought as how to facilitate mentors for pastors. If there are already a number of informal mentors who are supporting pastors in their area, should the Convention and Seminary not be working on this issue now? It is hoped that the CABC and ADC will continue to take a lead role in this vital part of a pastor's journey.

This mentoring relationship is part of a clergy person's self care that is vital and needs to be a key element of a pastor's life and ministry. These kinds of mutual supporting relationships help one deal with the personal isolation and vulnerability clergy face in a new situation.

Hoge and Wenger in their research received recommendations from experienced pastors. One 45-year-old pastor stated straight from his heart:

Everybody who goes into ministry needs to have three people in their lives before they start: they need a therapist, a mentor, and a pastor, so that there is a therapist that they can go to in confidence with the issues related to personal life, growth type things. They need a mentor, somebody to go to and say, "I don't get this, what am I supposed to do? It's my first funeral." Those types of issues. And you need a pastor, somebody that you can go to as your spiritual advisor. Clergy don't have that and they're not taught how to have that. They're taught the mechanics of theology, but not

¹¹⁵ This information is found on-line from the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches web site. <http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/departments/regions>.

the practical application of translating what they've learned into what's the reality of parish life like.¹¹⁶

Having a good mentor or role model can be very valuable to a newly arrived pastor, especially if it is one's first church. Harbaugh says that "one of the crucial tasks in a first call is the integration of the person, role, and faith."¹¹⁷ A mentor is a much needed partner as a new pastor struggles to integrate personal faith with the sometimes surprising demands of the new pastoral role.

Harbaugh speaks of mentors, role models and colleagues. He says a mentor is a "trusted counsellor and guide."¹¹⁸ A mentor helps to keep a busy and stressed newly arrived pastor accountable for issues of spiritual formation. A mentor aids in making the needed connections between the new pastor's faith and the facts of congregational life. Mentors help to gauge stress levels themselves to help the new pastor with the balance of life and ministry. A mentor can check on the new pastor who has a spouse and children to help guide them to strengthen their marriage and family life.

Role models are different than mentors in that they have been (or now are) "heroes" or "heroine" to the newly arrived pastor. The role model is viewed as "someone I can be like." The role model is influential because of what she/he models in terms of style, skill development and values.¹¹⁹ These role models, especially in the younger first time ministers, can be a source of growth and learning far beyond any text book or class room situation. If one enjoys a positive relationship with a minister emeritus who is still involved in the life of the church one pastors, this role modeling is invaluable.

¹¹⁶ Hoge and Wenger, Pastors in Transition, 203.

¹¹⁷ Harbaugh, Beyond The Boundary, 29.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50, 51.

To watch a seasoned and gifted pastor work up close and personal, to hear them pray, to observe how they conduct a funeral and interact with church folk and the community is an education that is priceless.

Colleagues are peers or friends who have more experience than the new pastor, but do not necessarily fit either the description of mentor or role model (although some of those dimensions may be present at times). A colleague makes time for the new pastor, listening, supporting and sharing to help one's peer to see the dynamics of a situation and examine possible choices in ministry life.¹²⁰

Again from a practical perspective, Michael Watkins encourages leaders to build their advice and counsel network. "No leader, no matter how capable and energetic, can do it all. You need a network of trusted advisers within and outside the organization with whom to talk through what you are experiencing. Your network is an indispensable resource that can help you avoid becoming isolated and losing perspective."¹²¹

Having a Spiritual Companion

Another type of ministry or role in the pastorate is having a spiritual companion. Having a fellow companion through the journey of ministry life has proven to be beneficial. Sometimes this person is called a spiritual director. William A. Barry has written on this subject and defines Christian spiritual direction as:

Help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.¹²²

¹²⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹²¹ Michael Watkins, *The First 90 Days*, 219.

¹²² William A. Barry, *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological Inquiry*, Revised Edition, Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2004, 2. William A. Barry and William J. Connolly also coauthored, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).

Further, Tilden Edwards, in his book, *Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion*, writes:

The ministry of spiritual direction can be understood as the meeting of two or more people whose desire is to prayerfully listen for the movements of the Holy Spirit in all areas of a person's life (not just in their formal prayer life). It is a three-way relationship: among the true director who is the Holy Spirit (which in the Christian tradition is the Spirit of Christ present in and among us), and the human director (who listens for the directions of the Spirit with the directee), and the directee. The director is a companion along the pilgrim's way, wanting to be directly open along with the directee to the Spirit-undercurrents flowing through the happenings of the directee's life.

These currents provide glimpses of the divine love and beauty, of particular callings to fuller communion and compassion, and glimpses of the illusions and wilfulness that we are being invited to relinquish as this is empowered – those things that impede our soul-fullness. As these currents are explored together, the directees' responses to what is being shown can be noticed: what they are wanting and fearing, suffering and hoping, waiting for and acting upon. Such attention together requires a fundamental trust on the part of both director and directee that God is, that God is for us, and that God's Spirit is actively at work in our lives, within the context of our God-given freedom.¹²³

Finding a spiritual companion and fellow traveler in ministry life is not always easy. One should be particular when seeking this companion for the spiritual journey. Tilden Edwards gives some thoughts concerning the qualities of an authentic spiritual companion. He begins by saying:

If we have been drawn to a particular person many times to listen with us for the Spirit's ways in our lives, then we have known someone who likely reflects the fundamental calling of a spiritual companion, someone with a true charism for this ministry. The marks of this charism historically are these:

1. People come to such spiritual companions spontaneously and repeatedly to speak of their yearnings and life in God.

¹²³ Tilden Edwards, *Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion: Guiding to Tending the Soul*, Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2001, 2,3.

2. The companion cares about these people at the fundamentally spiritual level of their lives and feels called to be with and pray for them.
3. The companion desires and humbly pursues union and life in God through all things.¹²⁴

Finding someone a pastor can trust, one who is living near to God, and one who has the director (the pastor's) life in the Spirit as the center of this journeying relationship, is crucial. This kind of companionship in the Spirit will help a pastor in all parts of ministry.

Leadership Styles

Other aspects of newly arriving clergy to a parish include that of leadership style. Pastors, by the very nature of what they do are leaders. Pastors lead in worship. Pastors also lead in life and model how to lead.

Roy Oswald once again has words of wisdom for pastors who follow pastors and the congregation's expectations regarding leadership style:

An analysis of the leadership style of both the past and the present clergyperson can give insight into disappointments and conflicts that may arise around leadership issues. Congregations seem to develop a corporate expectation for the kind of leadership they want from a pastor. Should the new pastor's leadership style differ significantly from this, conflict can be expected.

Clergy often live with the notion that changing laity's expectations of pastoral leadership style is a good thing. A new pastor who sees changing the parish into a more democratic institution as part of his/her ministry is a good example of this. The pastor's effort may be based on a notion that, from a theological perspective, there are good and bad styles of pastoral leadership. We, from our perspective in this project, find neither Biblical nor theological support for one style of leadership or another. It is our viewpoint that when, in a start-up situation, clergy consciously try to change pastoral leadership expectations within the parish, they are attempting to create a parish that is more to their own personal liking. For

¹²⁴ Ibid., 93, 94.

us, this raises the ethical question of whether laity should be expected to change their leadership needs to suit the personal preference of clergy.

Several years ago Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt studied which styles of leadership are most effective. They discovered that no one style emerged as being better than another and that the most effective leaders were those who could most closely match the leadership expectations of those being led.

What these learnings seem to call for is the ability of new clergy to approximate closely the leadership expectations of their new parishes. Their style may be based on that of the previous minister, but not always. The previous minister may have sorely disappointed the parish with his style of leadership. Clergy new to their congregations need to discover what the majority of parishioners expect in this area. To be sure, they need not attempt to imitate a style that is foreign to them. They can, however, explore the breadth and depth of their own leadership capacity to see whether they can legitimately offer to the new parish a style that approximates what is expected.¹²⁵

A second option is to talk about this issue with lay leaders after the first year to see whether any differences between what is offered and what is expected can be negotiated to a workable compromise.

Every pastor is an individual and must lead as the Holy Spirit directs. Pastors need to be themselves as God intended. Still, when a pastor is joined to a congregation the leadership style that emerges can be a mix of the divine such that pastor and people are walking together with God in the same direction.

Understanding how a church works.

As mentioned earlier in suggestions and interviews understanding how a church works takes some time. Part of the reason pastors experience conflict early on is because pastors do not fully understand how a church works right away.

Research reveals that a newly arrived minister should observe how the new ministry situation operates. Once again, Roy Oswald suggests some key areas:

¹²⁵ Oswald, *Pastor As Newcomer*, 20. Oswald's thoughts came from Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern," *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 1956).

- How are decisions made in this church?
- Every church is a little different in policy and constitutional format.
- Is there a small group who make the decision or is it more of a congregational vote?
- Who are the key persons of influence?
- Where does the pastor fall in the mix?

Oswald speaks of three power networks in a local assembly. There is the official person of power who is elected to certain offices. There is also reputational power where a handful of people who have the respect of members because of charisma or discernment so people look to see how they vote or what they have to say concerning issues. There is also coalition power which is found in the various groups that gather together for fellowship, fun or family. They all have opinions about the direction a church should go. There are other people who just seem to know what is going on around the church so these people need to be identified as persons of power or influence.¹²⁶

How does the congregation communicate? Is it primarily through the formal bulletins and letters? Are there groups of people who seem to know what is happening and who pass on that information informally? One of the potential dangers at this point in time is e-mail and other electronic news movers. One should be careful so that these new ways of disseminating information are used in positive and helpful ways for a congregation.

How does the congregation handle conflict? Is there a group within the church that handles the major disputes? Does one's Convention or Association have resources and persons available to help resolve big issues? What has been the history of this church regarding stress or differences?

¹²⁶ Oswald, New Beginnings, 47,48.

When it comes to new ideas how hard is it for someone to be heard and the creativity to get an ear? What persons of influence or committees are the best place to start with an idea that is new and involves change?

When it comes to worship, who decides what music is played, the order of service, the frequency of special music or guest preachers? How does the congregation experience fellowship? How often do they make time to be with one another to get to know one another better for understanding, mutual support and encouragement? Fellowship was a key element in the early church and in healthy churches down through the centuries.

Making decisions, communicating, handling conflict, allowing creative voices to be heard, fellowship and worship styles and elements are all things a newly arrived minister should think about and have an understanding of the way things work in this new church.¹²⁷

Understanding Strengths and Weaknesses

As one begins a new ministry setting, it affords an opportunity to make some changes in one's own heart and life. Arriving in a new church and place affords a fresh start. One should begin by thinking about former situations and churches. How did I do in the past? What are my strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths are things one does well and enjoys. They also include things one does well but does not always enjoy doing. As well it includes things one does not do well but enjoys doing. Other things to consider are ministry gifts that have been appreciated in the past and aspects of ministry that bring high energy.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 45, 46.

Weaknesses or self-defeating behaviour that one would like to overcome should be acknowledged and weeded out of one's way of doing things. These include thinking of where we find ourselves backed into the same old corners, situations that de-energize, conditions that cause one to become defensive or to procrastinate. These may include:

- Characteristics of people that cause one to struggle (e.g., age, gender, physical characteristics, attitudes and behaviours).
- Areas of ministry where one feels inadequate, unskilled or under-trained.
- Times and places that evoke anger.

These items hold one back from leading with strengths and energy.

Clergy need to work out a plan that includes finding support, training and help in identifying one's issues and working through them. This is part of being intentional about one's self care for greater effectiveness in God's kingdom.¹²⁸

Having a Self Care Plan

Roy Oswald says it plainly, "It is a sorry sight to see young women and men enter the ministry with vigour and enthusiasm only to end up years later as shallow, uninviting people. This happens most often when clergy enter a new situation without an intentional plan of self-care."¹²⁹

This self-care includes three dimensions of a pastor's life: Church work, spiritual growth and development, and personal/family time. All three parts of the pastor's life are important and any part left out of balance results in a pastor who is diminished.

Church work is mentioned first for that is what a pastor is called to do. One has to attend to the ministry of worship, caring for the flock, and providing leadership. This can be done for a while in one's own strength and know how but one's ministry will lose

¹²⁸ Ibid., 57, 58.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 60.

effectiveness and passion if the spiritual growth and development part of the pastor is left out of the balance.

A pastor has to be intentional about spending time with God in prayer, reading the scriptures (not just for sermon prep), meditating and listening to God. Continuing education is another way of growing especially if one studies those areas of life and ministry which stretch in ways that take one out of one's comfort zone.

Married pastors must spend a good proportion of time with a spouse and family or those relationships will suffer. The author heard a pastor's wife say recently that she was wondering why "the people at church got the energetic and enthusiastic pastor and when he came home she got the tired husband." Pastors need to make time for family as well as making time to be alone to rest, relax and be involved with some kind of recreation for one's own wellbeing.

Establishing a Support System

Another area upon arrival to a new ministry situation is establishing a support system. Many of the pastors interviewed enjoy a ministerial or clergy prayer group for understanding and support.

Clergy need a good peer group where the trust level is high and the sharing is significant. This kind of support does not happen on its own. One needs to seek out and establish a peer support or accountability person or group. We need persons in our lives to affirm and care for us, to provide a base of support with peers who understand ministry and who are willing to prod us when we have become comfortable or lethargic.

These kinds of support relationships provide arenas safely to discuss issues of concern that challenge us from within ourselves and without.¹³⁰

Often pastors who have entered a new ministry location are still dealing with the separation from their last ministry setting. There may still be unresolved issues which linger in one's heart. The pastor's family may be still impacted by the change in location and their friends or family they have left behind. A pastor needs support as one wrestles and struggles with these things.

Hoge and Wenger found this kind of support crucial in their research. They noted that: "New ministers need help forging bonds with veteran ministers, and ministers newly arrived in a given community need to make connections with everyone there. Information sharing and feed back are crucial to the success of this kind of support; the question is how to ensure that it happens."¹³¹

George Barna points out that we fail to train our pastors to seek fellowship with other pastors. He says:

In some areas of the country, local pastoral support groups have been established to enable pastors to uphold each other in the difficult responsibilities they shoulder.

In the typical church, it is impossible for the pastor to be truly transparent about the struggles he endures with people within the church, within his family or within ministry overall. So who pastors the pastor? Few churches have people skilled at doing so or who have the mind to do so. In essence, the pastor is on his own from the time he leaves seminary.

Consequently, most pastors tell us they feel lonely in ministry. While they have many friends and acquaintances with whom they can share a good laugh and a pleasant evening, they have few people with whom they can share their hearts. The isolation they experience erodes some of the enthusiasm and the power they bring to ministry.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid., 63, 64.

¹³¹ Hoge and Wenger, *Pastors in Transition*, 48.

¹³² George Barna, *Today's Pastors*, 145.

In the Atlantic Baptist context a pastor could begin by looking within one's Association. Many pastors know one another from Divinity College days and have a relationship at one level already. One can also find support electronically through e-mail, telephone or "skype" to share with a trusted friend or colleague.

It is important for clergy to put the shoe on the other foot when a new clergy person arrives in one's community. One can take the awkwardness away by going first to the new person and by being genuinely friendly and offering one's support as he/she begins ministry nearby.

Professional Counseling

In the Atlantic Baptist context, recognized pastors have resources for counsel and advice through the Employee Assistance Program.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is provided for all ministry staff who are members of the Canadian Baptist Ministries Pension Plan residing in Atlantic Canada. The EAP provides professional assistance for a wide range of issues, including:

- Personal and work-related stress
- Couple and marital relationships
- Childcare and parenting issues
- Eldercare concerns
- Depression and anxiety
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Family matters
- Bereavement
- Legal issues
- Financial concerns
- Career issues
- Crisis counseling/Trauma
- Other concerns

These services are provided by FGI, Canada's largest and most respected behavioural health service provider.¹³³

Your EAP is voluntary, confidential, short-term counseling and advisory service that connects you and your eligible family members to a network of dedicated professionals who are available to give you assistance 24 hours a day.

This network is made up of experienced counselors, psychologists, social workers and specialists. Their experts are ready and waiting to assist you with your special concern, anytime you need help.

Worklife Solutions

It can be difficult to find the time and resources needed to make decisions about day-to-day concerns. WorkLife Solutions can help. It's a confidential advisory service that assists you and your family in balancing work/life issues.

Professional WorkLife Specialists provide telephone assessment consultation, resources, and advice. They can also send you a package of information, educational material, website listings and books to give you the tools you need to get things done.

WorkLife Solutions is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer your questions, offer advice, and refer you to helpful resources.

WorkLife Online is a website that provides you and your family with easy access to relevant and timely information on a wide array of work/life topics, including reference materials, articles, books and links. You can also access counseling or

¹³³ <http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/departments/operations/eap>.

information via an on-line appointment request form. Visit www.shepellfgi.com/ecounselling.¹³⁴

When a newly arrived pastor is feeling stressed from many areas of life the services provided by the EAP is a valuable resource for help and encouragement to cope with family, personal and ministry life.

Planned Renegotiation

A pastor related the common experience that there is “the church the pastor hears about when he/she is talking to the pulpit committee and then there is the reality he/she faces when the work begins.” Pastors often experience a difference between "the church that called you" and "the church you have to learn to work with." Part of that reality will be the way the pulpit committee described its relationship with the former pastor, and the reality that might be discovered after one arrives.

Pulpit committees and pastors do their best to describe one another, yet reality happens and things change, or are better understood within the first years. It serves one well if it is said up front that when a surprise or unexpected change occurs in the pastor/church relationship that things can be discussed openly to minimize anxiety or uncertainty.¹³⁵

These suggestions that have grown out of the interviews and pastoral life are not exhaustive. They are only the beginning of exploration one can make to become the pastor that God wants and people need. There may have been many questions raised in the heart of the reader which are outside the scope of this research. May this work be the

¹³⁴ This information comes from the Convention of Atlantic Baptist churches web site under the heading Resources. <http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/departments/operations/eap>.

¹³⁵ Oswald, New Beginnings, 75, 76.

gateway to more discoveries and understanding of pastoral life in Atlantic Canada and to the uttermost part of the world.

Conclusion

A brief chapter-by-chapter summary of this thesis

Chapter one was a starting point of a biblical and theological foundation for this thesis. As stated, the church was founded by Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone. Christ is the founder and the Church is subject to Christ and Christ is the head of the church. Through the work of the Holy Spirit leaders are called to minister in and through the Church. In the New Testament these leaders are called elders, bishops and pastors. Such Spirit filled leaders guided the early church even to this day.

Just as Christ is head of the church, Christ is head of the pastor too. Therefore pastors are not to be self centered or self serving in ministry. Pastors are called ideally by a Spirit-led congregation and called to walk with God and serve the Lord humbly. Christ is Lord of the church and Lord of the pastor. This Lordship resides in regenerate church members and pastors. With Christ as Lord, God's will rules when calling a pastor. The early Baptists understood a pastor to be called of God first and then set apart for a local congregation. Our Baptist predecessors sought to be Christocentric in their decision making. There was a sacred bond between pastor and people as they were unified by Christ. They were covenantal people living in relationship with Christ. They sought God's will when calling a pastor. They were guided by the Holy Spirit as they made a choice together. The pastor who was called of God first, and then had that call confirmed by God's people, found strength and encouragement to serve.

The local church is part of a wider family of Christians as well. Christians can work together to stand against all forms of evil whether organized or unorganized. The

Church universal can work together concerning issues of life regarding justice, poverty, peace and equity.

In the church pastors follow other pastors who have gone before them. Each pastor leaves a mark upon a congregation. Some pastors leave bouquets. Some pastors leave bombs, IEDs, (an improvised explosive device) undetected until another pastor steps on them. This writer preached and pastored in a church that had dynamite literally hidden under the church that had been undetected for years. When an electrical contractor was doing some wiring he was terrified to crawl upon this mound of explosives. A newly arriving pastor at times can walk into explosive situations. Some of these difficult transitions have been discovered along the way in this research.

There have been examples given in God's Word of leaders who followed leaders. Joshua followed Moses and was encouraged by him. Samuel followed Eli and was mentored by him. Elisha followed Elijah and was inspired by him. Matthias followed Judas, Timothy and others followed Paul. Each one had different shoes to fill. Each one was compared or contrasted in some way to the person they followed.

With Christ as the Lord and Head of the Church may pastors and congregations take their place with Christ reigning supreme over each. May the Holy Spirit be allowed to guide in all of a congregation's choices of a pastor and also a pastor in choosing a particular place to serve. As covenantal people may all seek to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in unity of heart and purpose.

Chapter two is a theoretical foundation for this research. This thesis stems from a genuine concern for pastors arriving in a new place of ministry. The concern was also for young, inexperienced, first time pastors to have some resource to help and to encourage

them. This writer has been in ordained ministry for over 30 years and possesses a real compassion for pastors and ministry life. This writer has witnessed some first time pastors become discouraged, disillusioned and then quit the ministry as a result. Why pastors quit was part of the research of this thesis.

The impact of the former pastor was addressed in this chapter. How a congregation deals with a pastor who has left and moved on. The attending guilt associated with how they may have treated the former pastor as well. The discussion also considered how a pastor follows a good pastoral experience versus a poor one and the resulting effects.

Seven kinds of pastoral transitions were considered. This list was not meant to be exhaustive. The reader may have other situations that come to mind. The seven transition situations that this thesis was seeking to understand in greater light were: 1. a typical or normal pastoral transition; 2. following a pastor who died; 3. following a pastor who retired and moved away from the community; 4. following a pastor who retired and stayed in the community or area; 5. following a pastor who was involved with some kind of crisis (moral, financial, ethical); 6. following a pastor who was extraordinary, “a legend” and 7. following a pastor who splits the church and stays to pastor the split.

The length of a preceding pastorate as part of the experience was examined. The church’s history regarding a succession of student pastors or short term pastorates was considered. The legacy of a former pastor’s habits, both positive and negative, and how it impacts the incoming pastor was addressed.

The seven types of pastoral transitions that were the focus of the research were considered carefully. The special status and judgement, in light of heaven, that is afforded

to a pastor who has died was considered. The celebration of a retiring pastor and the possible expectations transferred to the arriving pastor were addressed. The pastor who retires and stays in community for various reasons was explored. The lingering influence that is very real and how these retired pastors need to refer to the “pastor to church ethics” section of the Manual for Ministry from CBM was stressed. Also there is a great responsibility placed on the incoming pastor to make an effort to bridge the gap and form a positive relationship with the former and now retired pastor. A list of items to be considered in a formal agreement between the new and former pastor was also shared.

The reactive nature of a congregation whose former pastor left because of a crisis was considered. This is to ensure the new pastor does not fall into the same area of crisis. The pastor who follows “a legend” or “extraordinary” pastor and the attempt to match up to the reputation was addressed. The importance to remain true to one’s own calling and gifts was emphasized. Also the pastor who splits the church, and the resulting fall out upon pastor and people, is part of the mix of the research.

These seven transition situations are impacted by a number of factors: the size of the congregation; the age of the incoming pastor and his/her experience; the circumstances surrounding the arrival as far as what did or did not go well; the strengths and weaknesses of both the former pastor and the incoming pastor; the duration of the interim period before the arrival; also, the type of leadership that took place during the interim period; what kind of contact the incoming pastor may have had with the leaving pastor; and how a mentor, role model or colleague helps in the early and ongoing days of a new pastorate.

These pastoral situations and attending circumstances to an arrival are the base for the research. Underpinning all of this discussion and discovery is a real care and concern for a pastor living through a pastoral change.

Chapter three reveals the realities made known through the survey that was sent to the ten pastors. The survey was designed with input from supervisors, colleagues and pastors. The questions were employed to help discover insights into the dynamics of pastoral change. With counsel from this writer's supervisor a list of possible pastors to interview was generated and ten were chosen and all said "yes" when asked. There were eight men and two women. One of the ten is from a visible minority. They are all Atlantic Baptist pastors. Each gave consent to be interviewed. A sample of the letter and survey was given. Confidentiality was strictly observed. The research was chronicled as shared in the interviews.

Questions were asked concerning the number of transitions a pastor had experienced. It was discovered that as pastors gained experience the depth of maturity increased. All of the seven types of pastoral transitions listed earlier were part of at least one of the interviewed pastor's experience. The majority followed a typical or normal former pastor. The length of tenure of the former pastor and the arriving pastor were part of the discussion. The age of the arriving pastor and the length of each first time pastorate was part of the mix. The interviews also asked whether the pastorates were in a city, rural, or part of a multi-point field. Some discussion revolved around the multi point field and the unique dynamics that attend them.

The type of interim ministry that preceded a pastor's arrival was discussed. The quality of the intentional interim or the pulpit supply ministry was considered. Much of

this chapter dealt with the responses of pastors as the questions were asked from the survey in sequence. Throughout this chapter when applicable, research from other sources was included, as applicable to the situation being considered.

Pastors spoke with candour with their answers to each question. Part of this open discussion revolved around the lack of forthrightness of pulpit committees. This was a recurring issue. Some pastors felt they walked into a mess that was not disclosed in the calling process.

Part of the dialogue was about the changing role of parsonages and the pastor owning his/her own home. The dynamics of a pastor living or not living in the community one serves in was pondered. The hesitancy of churches to call female pastors was discussed.

The interviews talked about the pastor's personal responsibility as to his/her contribution in why things did not go well in the transition. Issues surrounding leadership style at the beginning of a pastoral term were considered. The pain experienced by pastors who felt their ministry was interfered with by retired pastors or interims was expressed. The question was asked about whether a pastor's arrival impacted his/her departure. Most said it did not.

The strengths and weaknesses of former and incoming pastors were compared by transition order. These were summarized in sequence by first, second, third and then fourth through seventh as a group. Was the church similar to or different from what the new pastor expected from the calling process? The need for mentors, role models and colleagues came out of the interviews. Some trends were discovered along the way and shared at the close of chapter three.

Chapter four covers a number of suggestions for new arrivals. Some of these suggestions came out of discussion with the pastors who were interviewed. Some of these helps came from research and reading on the subject of transitions. The topics are typical of what takes place in a pastoral change.

The first suggestion covers the time just before one arrives. It speaks to a well drafted agreement with expectations spelled out as clearly as possible. These expectations are those of the clergy for the church family and vice versa. Taking a break between ministry settings is desirable. Pastors have a sense of duty to get on with ministry as soon as possible. Pastors and their families need a break before starting up in a new place of service.

Pastors need to practice intentional, honest and personal reflection at the outset of a new ministry, based on several questions: Are there any unresolved issues from the last church where one has served? Are there friendships that are hard to let go or to be changed to a different kind of friendship? If so, seeking professional help is wise. Getting help for one's self and also the ministry family is essential when needed. A pastor neglects him/her self and the pastor's family to one's peril.

Once the pastor and family have arrived the commissioning or induction service should take place as soon as possible. Canadian Baptist Ministries has manuals for ministry that provide guidelines and suggestions for such a service. This section also covered the music surrounding such a service. The hymns, especially Canadian hymns, are highlighted. This service is a special one in the early days of a pastor's ministry.

A pastor has only one chance to make a first impression. In the start up period of the first twelve to eighteen months a pastor is closely observed. At all times but

especially so during this beginning time a pastor is watched carefully to see if he/she is authentic and caring. It is suggested that during this time a pastor is to be a lover and a historian. One needs to take the time to learn about the church and community. As a pastor becomes acquainted with the people, a pastor learns how to care for them in a greater way. To be sure, there are inherited psychological contracts with the people a pastor serves. These are the unspoken expectations that are between pastor and people. They are revealed as circumstances and issues bring them to the surface.

There is a lot of excitement that goes with the arrival of a new pastor. This should be built on carefully. There is much energy and positive hope and enthusiasm that attends a new minister coming on the scene of a church. Research suggests using the initial “yeses” from the congregation wisely. It also suggests that a pastor should refrain from changing the worship service for at least six months.

As mentioned briefly already knowing the history of a church is essential. Listening carefully to the parish myth will reveal what the people value and respect. Learning about a congregation’s beginnings, its leaders and glory days, underpins this understanding. A pastor needs to know local history. One needs to take the time to learn to appreciate everything that has shaped the people one serves.

The honeymoon period, so called, lasts for an initial period of time. The research suggests this period is in two phases. The first four weeks when there is much excitement and then the period of time working up to the first disappointment or crisis. It is critical to work through this first bump in the road to reach and continue a healthy relationship. When the honeymoon period ends it is time to get down to reality and truth surrounding

pastor and people. This ending of the honeymoon period also marks a moment for a creative opportunity for the future ministry together.

For a new pastor it is important to remember that change can wait. If a pastor changes things too soon, it can send a negative message that the pastor knows better than the church people about things holy and concerning worship. A new pastor again needs to spend time watching, listening and learning to see how people get things done and what is worth preserving. One should make a list of things to consider before the first change. The size of the congregation may affect the timing of the first change. Change should always involve planning.

Having a mentor, role model or colleague nearby is helpful. This is especially true in the first years of ministry. Pastors in the interviews above expressed the need for this kind of relationship with another pastor. This is helpful throughout one's ministry career. As one matures the questions may change. Further to this kind of relationship the value of having a spiritual companion was stressed. Suggestions were given in this section as how to choose a spiritual companion and guide.

Leadership styles impact the kind of ministry one seeks to do. A pastor is a leader in church life through worship and meetings but also in real life as well. Pastors model leadership. Part of this leadership quality is an understanding of how a church works. Making decisions, communicating, handling conflict, allowing creative voices to be heard, fellowship and worship styles and elements, are all things a newly arrived minister should think about and have an understanding of the way things work in this new church.

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses in one's own life and ministry is important. A pastor needs to know what parts of ministry life bring energy. A pastor

needs to know as well what parts of ministry life deplete energy. A greater understanding of one's self is part of self care. This self-care includes three dimensions of a pastor's life: Church work, spiritual growth and development and personal/family time. All three parts of the pastor's life are important and any part left out of balance results in a pastor who is diminished, both personally and professionally.

Establishing a support system in ministry is essential. This may take the form of a local ministerial, a peer group of some kind, or some other form of supportive fellowship. A pastor who has been in an area for a while, needs to reach out to new clergy in the area, to offer some support and encouragement. The Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches through the pastors' health plan offers some resources for support. Professional counselling and a product called WorkLife Solutions are available for accredited pastors.

This chapter ends with a few thoughts on planned renegotiation. This is having a vehicle in place to work through the new realities that arise in ministry and church life. This gives an opportunity for a way to discuss any changes in expectations or just plain surprises that happen along the way.

Some Suggestions for Future Research

Some suggestions for future research are also considered. There could be a study of particular church histories and how this history impacts incoming pastors. Some churches are "peaches" and some are "pits." The same could be said of pastors as well. A study could be shaped by pastors who have had lasting positive impacts. What were their qualities? Conversely, if pastors have had a series of negative impacts upon congregations, what were his/her attributes?

Along with the pastors who have had a lasting and positive influence some study could be given to pastors' spouses. Clergy spouses have a lot of wisdom to share from a life and ministry in the church with a view from the parsonage. Another segment of Atlantic Baptist life is the role of pastors' widows or a retired pastor's spouse. How can their wisdom be used to bless and encourage?

If there are 109 Associate pastors in the Atlantic Baptist world, research in this area could be useful. It might be useful for a greater understanding of the Associate's role in ministry. Also it would help a lead pastor to understand his/her role as well as the lay leaders of a local church. Along with this could be research into the real life experiences of youth pastors in the Atlantic Baptist context.

Is there a need for a Convention ombudsman? From the research above, interfering retired pastors were an issue. Even interims interfered. What vehicle does a pastor have to deal with these things? Could the same be said for difficult churches? What about difficult pastors?

Retired pastors were mentioned in the interviews above. Could there be a retired pastor's packet of information given to a retiring pastor. This could serve as a reminder of the ethical responsibilities and behaviours that are expected of a retired Atlantic Baptist pastor. This could be reinforced at the sessions for retiring pastors when financial things are being considered.

Some research could be given to the length of a pastor's tenure in one congregation. How long is too long? How long is too short? What are the positives and negatives of a long ministry in one place? What are the pros and cons of a short term

pastorate in a particular place? What are the challenges of following a pastor who has been in a church for a long time? This research has only touched on this subject.

More study could be given to the need for solid interim ministry. How can the space of time between pastors be used in a greater way to prepare a congregation for a new pastor, new goals and a hopeful view of the future? How can pulpit supply be better utilized for these same desired ends?

A greater understanding of the size of the majority of churches in the Atlantic Baptist context could be considered. If most churches are 150 or less and many are 50 or less what are the unique dynamics that surround this size of pastoral ministry?

The continuing emphasis of the Divinity College on the topic of Spiritual Formation is commended. How does one help pastors whose understanding of ministry is more secular than spiritual? How does one address pastors who seem more anxious about personal advantage rather than fulfilling God's call?

The reality of pastoral changes continues in ministry life. Churches need to be equipped to ready themselves for the arrival of a pastor. Pastors need resources to help them to be prepared to meet the challenges and joys of a new ministry setting. May both pastors and churches in transition strive for continuity without conflict, through the Holy Spirit's guidance and the Lordship of Christ. This is essential in the calling of a pastor and in partnership for ministry. Only then will God be glorified, Christians encouraged and souls come to a saving knowledge of Christ, producing healthy, growing churches.

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Appendix 1

Thesis Survey Interviews

The interviews in this appendix have been edited slightly so that the identity of each interviewee is kept confidential.

Name: 1 of 1 Date of Interview: 20 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 4
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation. Stable, normal situation
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?
People loved him – sad to see him go.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 26
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 1st
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural – 4 church field
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival. Had a good relationship with leaving pastor, easy to talk to about situations. People spoke well of him.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
I was a brand new minister. Within 2 weeks I had my first ever funeral which was followed by 27 funerals in 20 months.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
Some practical things for SFE: a practice burial, funeral service and sermon.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
Former pastor and wife came back often and forced me to deal with some insecurities. This was a positive outcome.
10. How long was your former pastorate? n/a
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 20 months.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No.

13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)

Former- part of community- people person – good visitor.

New – People person – got along well – restoring relationships.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – None.

New – Insecurity, Inexperience, even voiced to people in congregation.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
6 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?

Pulpit supply in some of the churches.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Yes, after arrival.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any? Visited area afterward.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Yes, generally a good thing, fully supportive. They spent week-ends with next door neighbours as they only lived three and one half hours away.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

Close – “not much lying.”

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, encouraged and appointed by CABC.

Would this have been a help? Was a great help in practical ministry.

Name: 2 of 1 Date of Interview: 20 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 4

2. What type of pastor did you follow?

A. Typical situation.

Followed a youth pastor who was moving up to Associate pastor and then became senior pastor.

How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?

3. What was your age when you arrived? 28

4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 2nd

5. Was it a rural or city church? City.

6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.

Had a good connection with the youth right away.

7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.

When I arrived the pastor informed me he was leaving after he had promised he would not leave. I first heard about it through the grape vine.

I had little or no office space.

3 months in the associate pastor was named senior pastor.

After first year I was made associate pastor with a pay raise.

After first year we bought a house.

Staff meetings with the new senior (former assoc.) pastor were rare.

8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?

Would have been better if the senior pastor who called me had stayed.

9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?

Former pastor for not keeping his word.

10. How long was your former pastorate? 20 months.

11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 3 years.

12. Did your arrival impact your departure? Yes. How? The new pastor met with me after two and one half years to share how our gift mix did not work.

13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)

Former – organized administrator – good preacher.

New – People person.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – non-relational and few staff meetings.

New – Some insecurity

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?

n/a

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? n/a

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any? n/a

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation? n/a

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

I was expecting to be the youth pastor as third pastor of a team. My role changed and more responsibility when the former senior pastor left. I was given senior adult ministry plus radio ministry.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, I had a friend and colleague only one and a quarter hour away. A Youth pastors ministerial and another ministerial along with my Regional minister helped.

Name: 3 of 1 Date of Interview: 20 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 4
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation. Stable and normal.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 9 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 31
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 3rd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural church – single pastorate.
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
The moving process with help of church folks from the church we left. People at new church helped us un-pack and had food ready for our family. Family and friends helped too. Moved into a parsonage.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
We had a mortgage for a year after we left former church.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? All was good.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 3 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 5 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former- solid pastor, well rounded, good visitor and leader.
New – Relational, my age helped me with young couples. Realized my own ministering style.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – stayed too long, people's personal issues became public through preaching.

New – I'm a young pastor and still dealing with departure from last church.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
9-10 months.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Interim pastor.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? After our arrival. Daughter married local man and lived in community. And, what type of relationship was it, if any? Good.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Visited their daughter and communicated with me when around.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
Key couple left early to former community. Another couple left for ADC. This caused the dynamic to change from what we had expected.
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Regional minister, Regional working group, and a good ecumenical ministerial.
- Would this have been a help?

Name: 4 of 1 Date of Interview: 20 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 4
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis.
Pastor was asked to leave.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 36
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 4th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural - 2 church field.
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
New church helped with move into our own home that was like the one we had left. People helped us get acquainted with the community. Welcoming baskets and helpful information. 100% call vote. Former pastorates had helped me prepare for this one.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
Children getting settled into new school.
Lots of congregational baggage and mistrust.
Impacted the trust the congregation had for me.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? n/a
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 5 years
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 4 years and counting.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – good preacher, strong leader.
New – Relational, preaching has improved, more confident.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – Abrasive, non-confidential.
New – Still some lingering insecurities.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 and ½ years.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?
Pulpit supply arranged by solo deacon.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Yes. Worked on denominational committees together.
And, what type of relationship was it, if any?
Still visits some local people and stops by pastor's study from time to time.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Has been involved with occasional funeral.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
Some who voiced support have not kept their word.
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, Regional working group and another pastor cluster.
- Would this have been a help?

Name: 1 of 2 Date of Interview: 21 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 2
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?
Not sure.
 - E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis.
Difficult for former pastor to leave but congregation relieved that pastor left.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 28
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 1st
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural – 2 churches but 7 communities.
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
Church folks helped with move. Pot pie ready for first meal.
Relaxing summer beginning. Soon had first funeral on my own.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I would have been more intentional in my leadership. I was too reactionary.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? n/a
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 18 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – good singers and evangelistic preaching.
New – preacher/teacher and helped congregation move forward and heal.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – temper which caused hurt.

New – Shy, avoided conflict, not strong in visitation (only as needed).

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 year.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply and funerals.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Not before but grew but not about details of congregation.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Yes, more with one congregation than the other. Pastor grew up in area and close to one family.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process? Basically as was described.

There was a history of short term pastorates.

Took time to learn the unsaid expectations and how realistic they were.

They just wanted a minister to be a friend and peace maker.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Had a intentional supervisor for first year. It was a mutual decision and good fit.

Was 45 miles away.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 2 of 2 Date of Interview: 21 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 2
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation. In one church.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 4 years.
 - E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis.
Other church was frustrated.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 47
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 2nd
I started as an intentional interim.
5. Was it a rural or city church? 2 churches (1 rural and the other suburban)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
Core group in larger church wanted to move forward and the interim helped identify issues.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
At first leadership was shaky about moving forward. Some reacted who were on the peripheral but wanted to exert power. Unofficial leaders felt opinions were not heeded.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? Nothing.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
There had been a year when I was at arms length from ministry and I was not used to the stress.
10. How long was your former pastorate? 18 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 3 years and counting.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)

Former – visited older members well, good preacher and witness. This was his last full time church before semi-retirement.

New – preaching/teaching, experience, developed concept of leadership.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – Rigid which created tensions (sincere but...)

New – I don't enjoy confrontation, I have less energy.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?

3 months until I arrived as interim.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Yes, Knew him in former Association. Knew his family but not close.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Yes, a few in the smaller congregation but does not encourage it. Asked back for funerals.

The former pastor to this pastor still lives in community and is friendly and engaging. Still cares about the deterioration of the congregation. Conducted funerals during former pastor's time and visits people occasionally.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process? No difference.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Not really, very little fellowship.

Would this have been a help?

It would have been nice to have even informal "get togethers."

Name: 1 of 3 Date of Interview: 21 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 3
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?
Less than ten months.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 25
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 1st
5. Was it a rural or city church? rural
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
Church helped with moving and got to know the people quickly.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
Walked into messy situation and church not totally honest.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
Being more outgoing early would have helped.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? Me.
10. How long was your former pastorate? n/a
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 4 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? Yes.
How? The people who ran down the predecessor to me were the ones that ran me down.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – Willing to go to a rural setting. Did connect with some.
New – Young, Energetic, Just wanted to share Christ.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – Ordered people around and spouse a liability in the community which brought about alienation.

New – Very little finesse, too rigid and stood ground too often.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 and ½ years.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Not before.
And, what type of relationship was it, if any? When returned for a funeral.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Christmas cards and phone calls to a few.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
I expected more engagement from the people in the life of the church.
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? A local pastor, and ADC staff.
Would this have been a help? Yes.

Name: 2 of 3 Date of Interview: 21 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 3
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 10 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 29
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 2nd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (2 and ½ point charge)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
A better sense of how to engage a community. People were receptive.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
The people chewed up my predecessor. I felt complicit because I listened.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I'm not sure what would have helped.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
Not sure.
10. How long was your former pastorate? 4 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 3 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How?
My best reception was from people outside the church. The community people were most upset when I left.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – Cared about people.
New – Energy, commitment, wanting to engage the community, more self aware.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – Not a good preacher, visitation slowed down as a result of ill health.

New – I pushed for more benefits, vacation, which caused a negative response. I was too open and too trusting.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
2 years.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply (different pastors).

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Yes.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any? We shared a funeral six months after my arrival.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Yes, a couple families but probably initiated by congregants.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

People said they wanted things to happen but really left it up to me the pastor.

“Pulpits committee’s are warm and energetic and by the time you unpack the last box you really know.”

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes. A ministerial group that met once a month.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 3 of 3 Date of Interview: 21 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 3
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 10 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 32
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 3rd
5. Was it a rural or city church? City.
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
Had familiar roles to begin and office administration was there to help.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
I started the first day with the senior pastor on vacation.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? Nothing.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 3 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 1 year and counting.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
 - Former – relates well, dramatic abilities.
 - New – Specialized training now able to use. People skills are better.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
 - Former – Irregular office hours and therefore unpredictable.
 - New – Still looking for approval a little.
15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
2 years.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Interim/part time associate.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Personal friend and colleague before but not since arrival.
And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Limited contact.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
There were no surprises. Everything was as it was agreed to.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, senior pastor, another clergy group and a female clergy group.
Would this have been a help?

Name: 1 of 4 Date of Interview: 23 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 6
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?
4 years. Health probable cause of leaving.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 43
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 3rd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural.
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
The church called 3 times but I refused. Through prayer and Scripture God revealed it was time for me to accept this call. 100% vote.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
2 weeks after arrival strong leaders, husband and wife, who ran the church ran down people in congregation by name.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I would have been less blunt and taken it in stride. It created enmity for 5 years. If I had been less confrontational and more gracious it could have made a difference. "It's better to find things out yourself about people."
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
This same deacon was responsible for the former pastor's leaving.
10. How long was your former pastorate? 4 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 8 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – preaching and teaching.
New – preaching, teaching, visitation, relationships, prayer.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – visitation – likely due to health.

New – Impulsive and outspoken.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
8-9 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Knew of him.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any? Visited the church after our arrival.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Yes, when visiting church.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

I knew it was a troubled church so expectations were accordingly.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, Area Minister and regular ministerial.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 2 of 4 Date of Interview: 23 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 6
2. What type of pastor did you follow?

C. A pastor who retires. And left the community.
How many years did the retiring pastor serve before your arrival?
3. What was your age when you arrived? 51
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 4th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural but Semi-urban.
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
People were congenial, warm, friendly and a 100% vote.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation. All good.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? n/a
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 8 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 4 and ½ years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – warm, loving pastor.
New – teaching, preaching, visiting, prayer.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – None that I know.
New – Wish I had taught things sooner. That I had taken the time to teach.
15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
6-7 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? No, not before.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
He visited the church a few times and a few older members.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

I expected a slow reception of teaching but the opposite was true.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, colleagues and pastors.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 3 of 4 Date of Interview: 23 July 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 6
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis.
Controversial re: constitution – there for around 2 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 60
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 5th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? City/urban/suburban
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
We lived nearby and my spouse is a pianist.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
The people who left over the controversy have not returned.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? Nothing.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? No one.
10. How long was your former pastorate? 4 and ½ years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 1 and ½ years and counting
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
 - Former – visitation and preaching.
 - New – preacher/teacher, visitation, relationships better than ever.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
 - Former – very defensive, hurt easily, made presumptions without knowledge.
 - New – part time status limits ministry.
15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
10 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?

Intentional interim pastor. This was a real help.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? After arrival I asked the former pastor to help with a communion service to promote reconciliation.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

None.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

I had not expected to be treated so well.

I expected controversy, immaturity and bad meetings – completely opposite.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? No one but colleagues and pastors.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 1 of 5 Date of Interview: 9 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 2
2. What type of pastor did you follow?

C. A pastor who retires. (not liked by many)
How many years did the retiring pastor serve before your arrival? 7 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 25
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 1st
Only summer pastorates before.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (3 point charge)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
There was a new parsonage. Three churches and folks helped me get to know area and people. People worked well together and functioned well. They were affirming and encouraging.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.

My pension stuff did not get handled for about 1 and ½ years.
Calling process was not handled well.
Phone call
Interview
Preach
Voted that night
Told result – all but 2
Told who had voted against.
They basically did not follow the procedure they said they were going to follow.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I would not assume that pension was being paid.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? Church and treasurer.
And, why? I was young and inexperienced.
10. How long was your former pastorate? 1 summer pastorate.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last?

12. Did your arrival impact your departure? No.

13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)

Former – strong doctrinally.

New – Worship, funerals and diplomacy.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – not diplomatic, and dogmatic.

New – administration.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?

Less than 6 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?

Pulpit supply by retired minister from within the congregation.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Not really, but met him eventually.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

A few times (mainly through his wife) and they came back of the mortgage burning.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

As I expected.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, CABC directed mentor.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 2 of 5 Date of Interview: 9 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 2
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation. (left for denominational position)
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 8 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 31
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 2nd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural, town
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
Existing staff person helped me integrate into this new ministry setting. Good deacons, leaders, retired pastors, team ministry and well organized.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
During the calling process I did not meet with existing staff. There were many meetings but pulpit committee did not include existing staff in process.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I would have requested a meeting at the very least something informal for fellowship and getting acquainted a little.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? Not sure.
And, why?
10. How long was your former pastorate? 5 and ½ years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 8 and 1/2 years and counting.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – administration, and intentional about developing leadership.
New – Worship, funerals and visiting.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – a lack of presence in community. Not part of community.
New – Administration and time management.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
9 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?
Leadership from existing staff and retired pastor.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Yes, formerly SFE pastor/mentor and presently regional minister.
And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Attended occasionally as regional minister.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
Pretty accurate.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Not officially but existing pastoral staff were helpful.*

*This brought up a question as to how to handle internal conflict within a pastoral staff.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 1 of 6 Date of Interview: 11 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 7
2. What type of pastor did you follow?

How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?
5 years.

E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis. (moral failure)
3. What was your age when you arrived? 43
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 5th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (3 church charge).
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
People were warm friendly and appreciative.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
There was a distrust of men in general. Felt alienated by the men of the church.
The men felt betrayed and felt former pastor was eyeing their wives.

The interim minister felt she was indispensable and interfered with funerals.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
Would have sought out friendships in general. I would have pressured Area Minister to talk to the interfering interim.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? The interfering Interim in part plus the non-ethics of the leaving pastor.
10. How long was your former pastorate? 4 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 6 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? Not really.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – reputation for being very godly and very personable.
New – ability to listen, build trust and community.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – lack of morals, lack of friends, too much a part of the gang.

New – Loneliness and lack of friends.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
2 years.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Interim, not sure how long?

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Met once before but not afterward.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

A few heard from him sporadically.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

I did not realize how disillusioned people would be with a morally failing pastor.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? No.

Would this have been a help? Yes it would have been helpful. Had some contact through local pastors. A retired pastor from away lived in the area and provided some fellowship.

Name: 2 of 6 Date of Interview: 11 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 7
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 10 years.
D. A pastor who retires and stays in the community.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 49
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 6th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural.
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
People warmed to us. We moved into a purpose driven church. Made positive steps in our attitude.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
Former pastor was prominent in the eyes of some. He did funerals, buried church members without seeking my leadership first. We had to get a policy in place to insure that the resident senior pastor would be involved with weddings and funerals.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I would try not to be too sensitive to the negative stuff.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
The former pastor. Said he would back off but did not keep his word after a short time.
“Doesn’t anyone read that section concerning the ethics of a leaving pastor?”
10. How long was your former pastorate? 6 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 5 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – Dogmatic, energy, his way, and strong/pushy personality.

New – Caring, listening, teaching, preaching, living the faith.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – Used too many personal illustrations. Only one that could do things right. Not listening to hurts and issues.

New – Too much of a perfectionist. Parsonage was not in community.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?

A couple weeks.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?

Interim was the former pastor who retired and stayed in community.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Not before but plenty after.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Yes, too much.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

Very close to the calling process.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? No.

Would this have been a help? Yes. The regional minister did check on us from time to time.

Name: 3 of 6 Date of Interview: 11 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 7

2. What type of pastor did you follow?

How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival?

4-5 years.

E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis.

Pastor asked to leave.

3. What was your age when you arrived? 54

4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 7th.

5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural. (2 church field)

6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.

Nothing as we walked into a big mess. There was non-communication between committees as well.

7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.

There was divided deacon's board and 2 churches that did not get along.

8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?

Sensitivity and perfectionism still hinders personal sanity. Have no friendships.

9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?

Immature church leaders. Weak doctrinally. Too many young pastors in succession.

10. How long was your former pastorate? 5 years.

11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 3 and counting.

12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a.

13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)

Former – Down to earth, related well, reached into community.

New – Dealing with trouble with experience, listening, encouraging healing and love.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – Inexperience, lack of time management, charismatic tendency.

New – Not knowing my own mind and when to clash with power brokers.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
7 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Interim for 7 months which also became part of the calling process. (sat on pulpit committee in some capacity)

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Not before. After our arrival he approached us.

And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Still visits homes and discusses issues. Has lunch with some leaders.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

I was not aware of the depth of division, the spiritual immaturity and how deep the problems ran.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes. Regional Minister and the interim minister both helpful.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 1 of 7 Date of Interview: 13 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation. (stayed in Association)
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 12 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 25
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 1st
5. Was it a rural or city church? City
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
It was all new.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
The comparing of my age to former pastor. I was very young and he was old.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I had no experience. I felt threatened. I followed a legend.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
Experience would have helped. Anything the people did not like about the former pastor they liked about me.
10. How long was your former pastorate? n/a
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 8 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – visionary.
New – Goal oriented.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – no ministry plan.
New – Lack of patience and not understanding the process of how things happen.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
4 months.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?
The former visited me the day I arrived.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Had a lot of contact. He encouraged people to come to his church.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
They understated what inner-city ministry was like, yet very truthful.
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?
No, It would have helped very much.

Name: 2 of 7 Date of Interview: 13 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?

C. A pastor who retires. (moved out of Association)
How many years did the retiring pastor serve before your arrival? 6 years?
3. What was your age when you arrived? 33
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 2nd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
They wanted a younger minister with a family.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation. n/a
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? n/a
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 8 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 4 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – not sure.
New – Relational and friendly.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – don't know.
New – Did not understand the poverty of the area.
15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
6 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any? No.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation? No.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help? Regional Minister.*

*With the changing role of the Regional Minister how might this impact this mentoring role?

Name: 3 of 7 Date of Interview: 13 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - C. A pastor who retires.
How many years did the retiring pastor serve before your arrival? Not sure.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 37
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 3rd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (small town)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
I was younger. People wanted a younger pastor.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
Pulpit committee lied – misrepresented themselves. Said they would do anything to bring in younger families. This started a worship war when we tried to tailor the service to attract younger families.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
I would not have accepted the call. I needed patience. Should have listened to my inner gut feelings.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
The pulpit committee as they were not truthful.
10. How long was your former pastorate? 4 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 3 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How?
Yes, we got off on wrong foot. I thought I could produce change.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – very relational and a grand-father figure.
New – preaching and worship.

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – lack of vision as he was looking to retire.

New – lack of patience and knowing the process for change.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 week.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? n/a

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

A few times. He did his best to make it easy for me.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Minimal.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

Completely different.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?

Had a pastor's prayer group for support.

Name: 4 of 7 Date of Interview: 13 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 6-7 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 43
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 4th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (2 churches)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
New ideas for change.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
The smaller of the two churches was not forthright in how small of a window you had to revive them.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 3 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 4 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No.
*Upon leaving I suggested for them to join with another church and it worked well with the calling of a new pastor. The smaller church was closed while I was there.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – teacher and well liked.
New – preaching.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former - Preaching.

New – I would pick my battles better and not accepted the bait for arguments.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 month.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any? No.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Christmas cards – not an issue.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

Pretty accurate.

Looking back they expected me to be the re-incarnation of the two pastors before me.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?

Yes, Regional minister and local pastor.

Name: 5 of 7 Date of Interview: 13 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - C. A pastor who retires. (moved to neighbouring town)How many years did the retiring pastor serve before your arrival? 5-6 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 46
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 5th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (small town – 2 churches)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
Quickly bonded.
I think it was because of a good interim ministry.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
The pulpit committee understated the church to me as far as its size and potential.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? n/a
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 4 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 1 year and counting.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – Good funerals and short sermons.
New – Clear ministry plan, goals and preaching.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – Age and health related issues.
New – too early to tell.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 year.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?
6 month intentional interim – very positive.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?
Not really. Knew him before but had very little contact.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Still attends lodge meetings in community.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
Everything is bigger than I expected.
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?
Regional Minister.

Name: 1 of 8 Date of Interview: 16 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 1-2 years.
 - B. A pastor who has died.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 30
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 1st
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (2 churches)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.

All went well. People were gracious and loving. Many pastors won't let people love them.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.

Making sure I did not listen to people outside of field.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? n/a
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? n/a
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 3 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)

Former – Not sure – not in good health.
New – Agreeable, wanting to love the people – willing to learn.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former - Not healthy (widow stayed in community – tried to tell pastor how to do things).
New – Inexperience.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
6-7 months.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?
Intentional interim – old gentlemen.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?
Vaguely.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Widow did.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
Close to expectations -
Calling process - visit to the church was stressful – I was invited to give a Bible study and when I arrived they asked me to preach. (ticked me off).
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?
Yes, the mentor was assigned by convention.

Name: 2 of 8 Date of Interview: 16 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?

How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 8 years.
F. A pastor who was extraordinary.
Dynamic, charismatic and split church upon leaving.
G. One who split the church and stayed in the area as pastor.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 33
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 2nd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Town/City (single pastorate)
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
Nothing.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
Controlled by a few leaders. I was not told about split. I felt this was dishonest.
They seemed very “uppity”.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
The church was not willing to change so it was time to leave.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
The deacons- 3 assertive and 2 weak ones. (1 apologized later)
10. How long was your former pastorate? 3 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 2 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How?
Yes, a bad start with no improvement. (I quit without a call).
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – outgoing, preacher, dynamic.
New – Wanted things to go well like before. (I was blindsided by the situation).

14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former – Went overboard on charismatic side.

New – too accommodating and naive.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?

A few months or less.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any? No.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Not really.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

It did not match the glowing picture. No mention of the split. They spoke highly of the former pastor until I arrived.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?

No, I did call the ABU president from time to time.

Name: 3 of 8 Date of Interview: 16 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 3 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 35
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 3rd
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (3 church pastorate).
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
It was seamless. Parsonage was refurbished and new appliances, fridge/stove.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
I was too blunt but comments brought about the parsonage work.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better? n/a
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 2 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 7 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – people person, equitable, good reputation in community.
New – Not intimidated or threatened by former pastor.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – don't know of any.
New – none.
15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 week.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? None.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

We are still friends.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

All good and unthreatening.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

Accurate.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? No.

Would this have been a help? Not in this case.

Name: 4 of 8 Date of Interview: 16 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?

How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 3 years.

E. A pastor who was involved with some sort of crisis. (health – asked to leave).
3. What was your age when you arrived? 42
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 4th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural (2 churches).
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.

All good, went well.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.

I was a little overconfident.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?

No.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 7 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 16 years. (I left for 4 months after 12 years and then came back, recalled for 4 more years.)
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)

Former – minimal due to health.

New – Experience. Saw ministry in clearer light. Loved the people.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former - Mental and emotional issues. Used bad judgement.

New – Not as assertive as I am now.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
2 years.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? 2 year interim – retired pastor who was well loved.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?
Yes, well respected reputation.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Yes, a neighbour – no threat.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
Pretty accurate.
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Would this have been a help?
No.

*Hurtful conclusion – attempted to join 2 fields together.
One of the 2 churches joined with another 3 church field to make one church.
One church remained on their own.
Could not afford 2 pastors.
Board chair deceptive about the feelings of the board.
Cut pay such that we could not afford to stay.

Name: 5 of 8 Date of Interview: 16 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 5
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation. (lives in the community but pastors 40 k away).
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 15 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 58
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 5th.
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural/town (single church).
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
Disappointed. Arrived with U-haul and no one helped, no one to greet us. One person checked on us but did not help. People were distant, inhospitable and unwelcoming.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
Not sure. We were kind of forewarned by the congregation itself.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? 16 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 5 months and counting.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – good preacher/teacher and pastor.
New – Outgoing and confident.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – Shy and non-aggressive.
New – Not used to keeping my nose out of different committees' business.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
1 year.
16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?
Pulpit supply – local retired pastor.
17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?
Met at ministerial.
18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?
Came to church once.
19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?
Very close. Finances are tight.
20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Yes, retired pastor and affirming friend.
- Would this have been a help?

Name: 1 of 9 Date of Interview: 23 August 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 1
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - C. A pastor who retires.
How many years did the retiring pastor serve before your arrival? 2 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 37
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 1st
5. Was it a rural or city church? Rural
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
All good. This church went on its own when she arrived. They were willing to learn together. A positive beginning.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
A few were hesitant about a female pastor. Also they were hesitant to make long term plans as former pastors had short stays as a rule.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
May have addressed my feeling more openly.
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why? n/a
10. How long was your former pastorate? n/a
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 24 years and counting.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? How? n/a
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former – great preacher.
New – teaching and preaching and pastoral care.
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)
Former – He left and withdrew from crisis or confrontation.

New – Administration. I don't like confrontation. My main struggles were within, insecurities.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?
2 or 3 months.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there? Pulpit supply.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? And, what type of relationship was it, if any?

I met his wife when she visited my apartment. The same one they had lived in. Occasionally would see them at Convention.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Christmas cards for a while to the odd senior. No interference. Never felt threatened.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

Not much difference. Attendance was lower than the impression given. People were more related than I thought.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Internship supervisor. Fortunate to be near ADC. Neighbouring pastors very helpful. Had other female pastors near for support.

Would this have been a help?

Name: 1 of 10 Date of Interview: 2010

Thesis Survey Questions

1. What is the number of transitions in your career? 6
2. What type of pastor did you follow?
 - A. Typical situation.
How many years did the former pastor serve previous to your arrival? 7-8 years.
3. What was your age when you arrived? 52
4. Which particular transition in your career are you referring to in this scenario? 6th
5. Was it a rural or city church? town
6. What went well? Share a positive arrival.
The church liked former pastor and invited him back from time to time. He was unsure of himself and felt insecure. Folks relaxed around me. Our ministry was a good contrast. Acceptable change was good.
7. What did not go well? Share a not so easy arrival situation.
One person who had spent a lot of time with former pastor was hurt by former pastor leaving. Felt a lot of loss and shared with that with the incoming pastor. Eventually warmed up to new pastor.
8. What would you change within yourself if you could that may have made things better?
9. Who had the greater share of why it did not go well? And, why?
10. How long was your former pastorate? 8 years.
11. How long did this term of pastoring last? 9 years.
12. Did your arrival impact your departure? No.
13. What were the former pastor's gifts/strengths and what are the new pastor's gifts/strengths? (what were your strengths?)
Former- good pastor in relations, good preacher, community person
New- good administrator, good preacher, pastoral care
14. What were the former pastor's weaknesses and what are the new pastor's weaknesses? (what were your weaknesses?)

Former- lack of self esteem, not self confident, had a child who caused embarrassment.

New- few if any with years of experience.

15. How long between the former pastor's departure and your arrival as the new pastor?

Not long – a few months. I was interviewed (May) while pastor was still there. (I arrived in Sept.) Saw the parsonage and church and met the pastor and wife the night of the interview.

16. What type of interim pastoral leadership was there?

None, youth pastor handled the church for the summer.

17. Did you as the new pastor have any contact with the former pastor, before or after your arrival? Yes, as above, later became good friends.

18. Has the former pastor maintained any contact with members of the congregation?

Yes, I pastored this church again as an assistant to following pastor.

19. How was the church similar to or different from what you expected from the calling process?

I had some tapes of services so I knew it was like I was used to. Pulpit committee very thorough and I felt very free and I was agreeable to financial arrangements. Felt they were fair.

20. Did you have a mentor, role model or colleague to call upon during your first year of arrival? Area Minister called in. Divinity College was near and local ministerial helped.

Met weekly with youth pastor.