

## FOREWORD

Sooner or later every church must deal with the matter of finding God's man to be the church's next pastor. At any given point in Southern Baptist life, there are approximately 6,000 churches without pastors. In the Missouri Baptist Convention there will be approximately 200 pastorless churches at any given time. Regardless of the reason for pastoral absence, each of these churches must embark upon a journey to secure new pastoral leadership. Hopefully, when a new pastor is in place, the life and work of both pastor and congregation will grow well beyond the level of maturity and ministry of both which is found at the beginning of their relationship.

Any church can find and call a pastor. Any pastor can find and move to a new church field. However, whether or not that makes any difference in the lives of either depends, to a large extent, on the match between pastor and church and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The whole search process can be one of the most rewarding or frustrating experiences in the life of the church. The decisions that are made have consequences far into the future. In fact, the calling of a pastor is likely the most important decision a church makes. Indeed, the wrong man may be secured or the right man gotten in such a way as to handicap his service. Surely the Pastor Search Committee needs to plan wisely and pray much that God's man may be found. Therefore, the process must be approached prayerfully and systematically with determination that in every step of the way the will of God will be ascertained and followed.

This booklet is made available upon request of Directors of Missions and Pastor Search Committees from the Missouri Baptist Convention. It is our hope and prayer that God's will may be found in relation to pastoral leadership. No claim is made of having the final or perfect answer to all questions relating to finding and calling a pastor. We seek to provide information that will aid churches without pastors during the interim period and in their search for a pastor.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that acknowledgement is given to Directors of Missions. Many of the DOM's who are currently serving as well as many who have retired in the past few years have contributed to ideas and suggestions as well as material for this booklet.

Thank you for allowing us to "partner" with you during this very crucial and significant time in the life of your congregation. Material in this manual may be copied for Pastor Search Committee use.

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