

FINDING AND ENGAGING A PASTOR(S)

INDEX

	<u>Page</u>
A. Preamble	2
B. Corporate structure	2
C. The role of elders and pastor(s)	3-4
D. Understanding the church environment	4-5
E. Preparing the church	5
F. Doing the paperwork	5-6
G. The search process	6-9
H. The decision-making process	10
I. When Vision Ministries Canada (VMC) is involved	11
Attachments	
Sample Advertisement	7
Flow chart	9
1. Sample Job Description	12
2. Sample Review sheet	13
3. Sample Employment Contract	14
4. VMC Application form for potential candidates	15-17
5. VMC Church application form	18-19

A. Preamble

Many churches are looking for pastoral staff. Often they are not clear about what kind of person they are looking for, but they are praying that the door will open for God's person to come and minister. This paper is to help churches understand their own needs and expectations so that the relationship between pastor and congregation will be a happy union. We hope that the process described will produce the desired result for the extension of God's kingdom.

There are several church models that have some support in the Scriptures. Our constituency of churches generally adopt either the "elder led" model or the "congregationally governed" model or a combination of both. This paper will assume that a functioning elders' board exists and that the elders and the congregation will be involved in the process of engaging pastoral staff.

Some churches know exactly the kind of person they want and need. They have studied carefully the kind of congregation they have and the kind of person who would best serve them. Others are engaging a pastor for the first time and may have a variety of reasons for seeing pastoral assistance. For example, the elders may be so busy that they cannot keep up with the pastoral needs of the church. They may be looking for a pastor who will do ministry that they aren't getting done. Others will feel the need of leadership within the elders group and see the pastor as one who will lead them in their leadership of the church. Often they will rely on the pastor to help them work through such things as the church's vision, values and mission.

Generally full time effective pastoral staff will take the church further than it would ever go without them. When a pastor is working as a part of the team with the elders a certain synergy exists and more can be accomplished in the extending of God's kingdom than either of them could do alone. Some of the advantages of paid full time pastoral staff might be summarized as follows:

1. Provide day-to-day on site leadership for the church
2. Devote time to focus on issues facing the church.
3. Devote time to ensure functional structures are in place so that all the church is operating within the stated vision of the church.
4. He can be very helpful in providing pastoral care and ensuring that the needs of people are being met.
5. He becomes a link to the community allowing a more effective outreach into the community.

B. Corporate structure

Sometimes the question is asked, "Can or should a Pastor be an elder?" The short answer is "yes." But can he be a member of the board of elders if the church is incorporated? A director of a corporation may not be remunerated by a Registered Charity. This poses a problem if the salaried pastor becomes a director.

A workable corporate structure might be as follows:

1. The elders, apart from the pastoral staff are the members of the corporation.
2. The elders, apart from the pastoral staff are the directors of the corporation.
3. The elders also serve as spiritual overseers of the church, as does the pastor (or pastoral staff). On all non-corporate matters the pastor is a voting member of the Board of Elders but is not a director or member of the corporation.

C. The Role of Elders.

It will be very necessary to clarify for any pastor coming to a church how the elders and he will relate to each other in terms of decision making. If he is one of the elders, subject to the limitations regarding corporate and legal matters noted above, the only difference between him and the other elders is the amount of time put in. They will be part time volunteers and he will be a full time financially supported pastor.

But in terms of decision making, there must be clarity about how much latitude the pastor has in terms of day to day on site ministry related decision making. The following describes a range of freedoms that may be granted to the pastor:

- The pastor makes no ministry decisions unless they are approved by the board
- The pastor makes day to day ministry decisions within the parameters and policies established by the board
- The pastor should bring unusual questions relating to ministry to the board
- The pastor should propose needed changes to vision, goals and policies to the board for their consideration
- The pastor should initiate changes to vision, goals and policies to the board for affirmation

The best model is where the elders have several main functions in addition to having overall responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the church:

- Policy development (e.g. constitution; Philosophy of ministry, etc;) The major work may be done by the pastor but specific responsibility is borne by the Board of Elders.
- Provide an accountability and mentoring environment for the pastor.
- Set goals and benchmarks for achieving the vision, mission and purposes of the church.
- Thinking through the shepherding needs of the flock
- Prayer and people contact
- Strategic decisions
- Appointment and mentoring of primary volunteer leaders

Determination of staffing requirements. A careful analysis of the needs of the congregation will result in identifying pastoral staff required. A rough rule of thumb might be 1 full time staff for every 100-150 adults in the congregation. The following kinds of needs will usually be listed:

- Preaching and teaching
- Leadership
- Pastoral care
- Administration
- Counselling
- Small Groups
- Worship
- Youth
- Children's Ministries

The elders must decide on the staffing priority. Sometimes a questionnaire completed by the congregation will give some insight as to their perceived needs. Usually starting with Pastor who will manage all other pastoral staff is a wise and prudent decision. He will also guide the elders in selecting the next staff person to engage. To engage a specific focused person (e.g. youth, worship, etc) without adequate supervision can result in frustration both for the person and the elders.

As the church grows larger and adds additional staff the elders should increasingly release matters of hiring and supervising staff to the primary or leading pastor.

D. Understanding the church environment

Knowing the church and its culture and environment is important for several reasons.

1. The church and its leadership, including the Pastoral Search Team (See section G), need to know the church and its needs and culture so they can identify the kind of person the church needs.
2. The applicants need to know the same so that they too can determine if they and the church are a good fit. Will the marriage be a happy one?
3. The following questions need to be addressed:
 - Are there leaders in place who will be active and effective in the search process? In other words, is there a capable and clearly identified group of people in place who can serve as a competent search committee?
 - There is a difference between leadership in a church and leadership in business. Church leadership requires leaders who practice the “servant leadership” that Jesus taught.
 - If this is a first pastor what are the church and the elders looking for?
 - An administrative assistant to the elders?
 - Someone to fill in the gaps that the elders don’t have time to do? (for example: pastoral care)
 - Someone to provide leadership for the church?
 - Preacher?
 - Evangelist?
 - Counsellor?
4. There should be a self examination among the elders, possibly with some outside help, to consciously determine how they will adjust their roles so that the pastor can serve and lead effectively among them. If leadership is expected of the pastor, the elders need to address how the pastor will be released to exercise the gift of leadership.
5. The elders might give some consideration to having an interim pastor who will help them in the process of finding a permanent replacement. Engaging the services of VMC in a coaching arrangement might help the church through the process?
6. The elders should develop a list of Congregational Values that explain the DNA or essence of the church so that a candidate will understand the nature of the church’s environment. For example, if the church desires expository Bible teaching, a person with the primary gift and passion of evangelism would be the wrong person to engage.
7. In addition, the elders must clear up any theological issues that might be a source of contention when a new pastor is engaged. The statement of faith must be clearly understood by both the elders and pastoral candidates.

8. If there are existing spheres of unresolved controversy they should be acknowledged to incoming candidates so that such matters may be addressed openly from the beginning.
9. The elders provide direction for the pastor only when they have agreed together on a particular course of action he is to follow. Outside of those corporate settings and formal decisions they are only giving personal opinions. The pastor should not consider informal expressions of fellow elders as anything but personal opinions. The pastor should not have 6-8 elders acting as his “bosses” in such settings.

E. Preparing the church

Engaging a pastor, whether it for the first time or whether it is to replace one who has left, will always result in unsettling change for the congregation. The stability they enjoyed might be interrupted temporarily. Some will have a desire to have input into the selection process. Important steps need to be taken to make sure the congregation is ready to accept the changes that will be happening.

1. The vision of the church should be communicated as clearly as possible.
2. The elders should communicate the results of their study on what model the church will or has adopted. (e.g. Seeker sensitive or seeker-driven (primarily evangelistic), Bible teaching primarily, small group church, worship emphasized, etc)
3. The church should be kept informed as to who the church is trying to reach for the kingdom (It’s target audience)
4. The church should be kept aware of the core values (or distinctives of the church).
5. The church should know the Biblical mandate for having pastoral staff and the benefits that it will bring to the church.
6. Teaching on the concept of “Servant Leadership” as Jesus taught and embraced would be very appropriate.
7. The process of finding a pastor should be communicated and periodic updates given to help ease the anxiety that church members might have.
8. The congregation should understand the kind of person they are looking for, a job description should be made available, and how the pastor will work with the elders.
9. Bathe the whole process in prayer. Set up a prayer strategy with someone to coordinate prayer vigils.
10. When the Leadership Team is confident that engaging a pastor is in the best interest of the church, they should document a simple 5-6 step process that the church congregation will understand.
11. Communicate this process to the church, not only verbally but by way of bulletin inserts or by any means whereby the leadership generally communicates with congregation.

F. Doing the paperwork

1. Develop a job description (See sample attached)
 - The expectations should be clearly written down. Be specific as far as functions are concerned. For example, if he is responsible for preaching and developing a preaching program, make it clear how many Sundays He is expected to preach.

- Clearly state to whom he is responsible. It should be documented that he is responsible to the elders through the chairman of the elders.
 - Clearly establish what positions report to him.
 - Identify when there will be a review of his position.
2. Develop an employment contract (see sample attached)
The following items should be included:
- The salary should be clearly stated.
 - The agreed amounts for housing, car allowance, etc.
 - Vacation allowances (by years)
 - Statutory holidays
 - Book allowance
 - Work week hours expected. (Generally a pastor works more than 40 hours a week. He should be putting in the same voluntary, unpaid hours that the other elders are putting in over and above his normal work week.)
 - Professional Development arrangements (conferences, etc)
 - Termination provisions
3. The review process
- The review should be done by the elders or a subcommittee of the elders.
 - Complete the review sheet (sample attached) and have both an elder and the pastor sign it.

G. The Search process

The actual process of finding a pastor can happen in various ways.

1. The elders will establish a **Search Team** who will be empowered to do the work necessary to engage a pastor. The following considerations should be part of the process of forming the Search Team:
 - It should be comprised of people who understand the culture and environment for the church. Probably 6-12 persons, depending on the size of the church, would be appropriate.
 - Both men and women should be on the team.
 - The members should have the confidence of the elders.
 - There should be at least one elder on the committee to keep the other elders informed as to the progress of the search
 - The procedures and guidelines for the process, including a proposed time-line, should be communicated in writing by the elders
2. The Search Team might bring together focus groups (people specifically chosen to focus on the pastoral staff needs) to meet with them to help develop a profile of the kind of person they feel the church needs.
3. The Board of Elders should not do the work themselves to arrive at a possible candidate.
4. Prayer support: Set up prayer teams to meet and pray while the Search Team is meeting so that the whole process is bathed in prayer.

Advertising: Advertisements can be placed in several publications and promoted in pastoral resource centers such as the following:

- Christian Week
- Faith Today (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada)
- Training Institutions
- Mission organizations

Advertising should be clear and carefully worded so as to describe the church and the kind of person you are looking for. A carefully worded advertisement should help screen out inappropriate candidates. An example might be as follows:

PASTOR

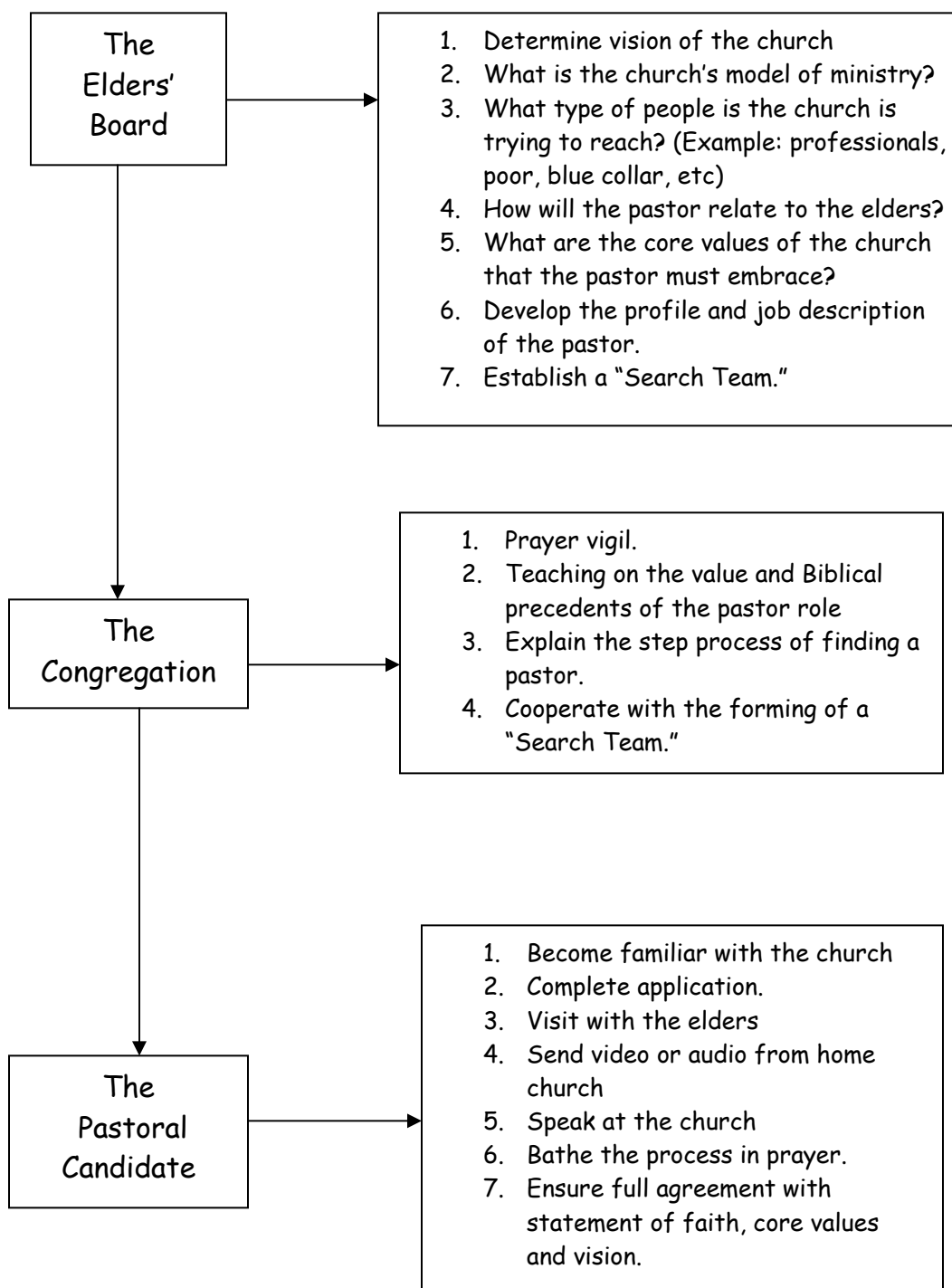
A forward thinking church of about 300 persons including children located in n British Columbia is seeking a Pastor to assume leadership of the Pastoral staff and help guide the church into the future. He will be working in concert with a group of elders in this elder-led church. He will be preaching about 75% of Sunday Mornings and will provide leadership for the Small Group ministry. There are presently 2 persons on staff who will be reporting to him (Youth and Worship). Please email or forward resumes, including references and a video or audio tape of your preaching, to

As resumes come in screen them carefully. The following might be helpful guidelines in that process:

1. Look critically at past pastoral positions. Were there any unhappy experiences that need to be investigated?
2. Check out references. Ask the hard questions.
 - What happened in the past?
 - Is he a team player?
 - Does he have vision?
 - Is he creative?
 - Can he lead?
 - What are his spiritual gifts?
 - What are his strengths?
 - What are his weaknesses?
 - How does he operate one-on-one with people?
 - Is he autocratic (or democratic or catalytic) as a leader? Yes/No
 - What is his management/leadership style?
3. Listen to the tapes and determine if his style of preaching fits into the environment of the church.
4. Always acknowledge the receipt of the application promptly and advise the applicant when he might hear from the church.
5. Make sure that the resume covers his own spiritual journey and philosophy of ministry. (The attached VMC application form may be helpful). Make sure his passions are consistent with the passions of the elders and the church.

6. Invite him to an interview with the team that is conducting the search process. Make it informal but ensure that issues are placed on the table for discussion. A suggestion might be to have three interviews as follows:
 - A formal interview with the Search Team where the questions listed in 2 above are hammered out.
 - A less formal interview with the Search Team but joined by other members of the pastoral staff.
 - An informal meeting, probably over dinner which will include spouses of both the applicant and the Search Team.
7. Make sure that you meet his wife and family at some stage and lay out your expectations for her. (Avoid the 2 for 1 price temptation)
8. The committee should settle on say 3 candidates and make a report to the elders identifying the relative strengths and weaknesses of each, but indicate that they would be happy with any of the candidates recommended.
9. The elders will review the applications, notes, etc and then invite 1 or all 3 to meet with them. They will then make the selection. Present only the person recommended or selected to the congregation.
10. Keep the congregation informed through the process.
11. It is wise to have congregational approval of the selected candidate. The following may be a helpful process:
 - Explain to the congregation that the Search Committee and Elders have endorsed this person and his family but will not make the appointment without at least a ___ % approval by the people.
 - Have a social time when congregation can meet with the candidate.
 - Distribute a form (see attached sample) to allow the congregation to approve the person.
 - Appoint the candidate as pastor

The following flow chart might represent the steps through which the church must go to effectively engage a pastor who will serve them well over many years.



H. The decision making process

How are decisions made in the church? It is best to clearly define what decisions are made by the elders, deacons, the pastoral staff, etc and identify those that require congregational input and approval. The following summary might help determine the issues to be considered and the criteria for deciding on a pastoral candidate.

1. Elders should define the kind of person they need.
 - What gifts are needed most?
 - What support can be provided by others in the church? No one person has all the gifts?
 - Will the pastor fit in?
2. Application to be completed by applicant (sample attached)
3. Letter of agreement between the pastor, elders and the church
4. How will the approval take place (Congregation? Elders?)
5. What about the gifts and involvement of the pastor's spouse? For example. if she works outside the home and has the same involvement as other members of the congregation, will that be acceptable?
6. Ministry issues:
 - How much preaching is expected?
 - Is this satisfactory to him?
 - What other ministries should he be involved in?
7. The value of an interim pastor.
Often a church will find an interim pastor a very helpful way to bridge the time between two pastors. A wise interim pastor can greatly aid in the process of finding the right person.
8. The forming of a search committee.
The search committee could be the elders. However to involve the congregation in the process it would be better to have a committee made up of a cross section of people representing key interest groups in the congregation. (Examples: Sunday School; elders, deacons, seniors, young people, etc.)
9. Value of outside assistance (Coaching by VMC)
VMC would gladly help churches in the process of finding and engaging a pastor. All the people on the staff of VMC are practitioners in a local church and understand the dynamics of pastor – church – elders relationships.

I. WHEN VISION MINISTRIES (VMC) IS INVOLVED.

1. The church seeking a pastor will contact VMC and complete a questionnaire (attached) that describes the church and defines the kind of person they are seeking to engage in a pastoral position.
2. VMC will not take any action until the completed questionnaire is received.
3. VMC maintains a data base of churches seeking candidates and people seeking pastoral positions. A brief description of the church and the candidates will be maintained by VMC staff.
4. The church must agree to the following:
 - That they will keep VMC informed as to their progress by monthly reports.
 - That any potential pastoral candidates referred to the church will be contacted and kept informed as to the progress and whether or not they still are a possible candidate.
 - Copies of such correspondence or emails should be sent to Paul Hoffman of VMC. paul.vmc@rogers.com
5. Persons applying for ministry positions should complete the questionnaire entitled “Application Process for Individuals Seeking Pastoral Positions” (attached) and forward it to the VMC offices.
6. Based on the information contained in the answers in the questionnaire, VMC will forward the questionnaire (which amounts to a resume) to churches that seem to match. (Although generally the churches will decide themselves if a match is probable) The persons applying for pastoral positions should assume that approval is granted to forward their questionnaires to interested churches.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

1. The Senior Pastor will report to the Board of Elders through its Chairman.
2. Guide the church and the various staff members and volunteer church members who in turn supervise various ministries. These include the following, which may change as the church's need changes:
 - a. Worship Coordinator
 - b. Youth Pastor
 - c. Small Group Ministry Coordinator
 - d. Director of Children's Ministries
 - e. Director of Men's Ministries
 - f. Director of Women's Ministries
 - g. Other Ministry Leaders
3. Develop a Preaching Plan for approval by the elders no later than Oct 31 of the preceding year.
4. Preach 20 or 30 or 40 Sunday mornings each year.
5. Keep elders informed on significant church matters, particularly those that affect the governance, policies and health of the church. This assumes that the elders are a "non-hands-on" board.
6. Coordinate a counseling program and maintain adequate records of such cases for legal purposes.
7. Help the elders cast vision for the church and ensure that the vision and values of the church are embraced by the elders and well understood by the congregation.
8. Ensure that an adequate pastoral care program is in place and regularly monitor its effectiveness. Report significant care issues to the elders for wisdom and prayer.
9. Other matters may be delegated by the elders from time to time.

Application Process for Individuals Seeking Pastoral Positions

Date of Application _____

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Telephone(s) _____

Fax _____ Email _____

Name of Spouse (If applicable) _____

Previous Marriages (If applicable , years married in each case) _____

Names and ages of Children (If applicable) _____

Health - how would you rate your health in each category

Physical _____

Emotional _____

Relational _____

Spiritual _____

List the churches you have been "part of" and the approximate length of time spent in each

Current Financial Situation - indicate indebtedness only

Education

Vocational Experience

Spiritual Gifts

Medications and conditions _____

Daily workload _____

Weekly workload _____

Sick days per year _____

Need for sleep _____

When stressed I _____

What relieves stress _____

What discourages me _____

What bothers me _____

What bothers others _____

What renews me _____

Who uplifts me _____

My theology - attach

My views of **church government** or the decision making process for a church - attach

My thoughts on **how the primary ministries** of the church should be carried forward - attach

- . Worship
- . Evangelism
- . Teaching/Discipleship
- . Prayer
- . Missions

My convictions on what others might consider “**secondary issues**” – attach (Examples: Women in ministry, social drinking, Bible translations, style of dress, borrowing money, etc)

Please forward your application to Vision Ministries Canada. We in turn will forward it on to congregations for which you may be an appropriate match.

Mailing address: 145 Lincoln Road, Waterloo, Ontario N2J 2N8

Telephone 519-725-1212 or Toll Free 1-877-509-5060

Fax 519-725-9421

Email info@vision-ministries.org

Web site: www.vision-ministries.org

Application Process for Churches Seeking Pastoral Staff

We the elders/leadership team of _____
(Name of congregation)

have formally agreed as a board to seek pastoral staff.

We are looking someone for the following in the following area

Ministry roles

- . Senior pastor
- . Lead pastor/elder
- . Full-time pastor/elder
- . Youth worker
- . Associate pastor
- . Worship pastor facilitator
- . Small groups coordinator
- . Other _____

This position is

- . Part-time
- . Full-time

What we are looking for in general terms

Giftedness _____

Formal Training _____

Experience _____

Age _____

Theology _____

Personal qualities _____

Philosophy of Ministry _____

Tell us a little about your congregation - in general terms only.

1. Age of the congregation and how it started? _____

2. Numbers of people in general age categories? _____

3. Spiritual condition of the congregation _____

4. Size or description of community _____

5. Vocational profile of the congregation? _____

6. Brief description of your facility? _____

How does accountability work? To whom will this staff person be responsible? _____

How will this staff person be remunerated? Approximate amount? _____

How will the decision to add this ministry person be made?

- . Staff decision
- . Elders/Board decision
- . Elders/Board plus

- . Search Committee
- . Congregation
- . Other _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

(Signed on behalf of the elders/leadership team board)

Mailing address: P.O. Box 28032 Waterloo, Ont. N2L 6J8

Telephone 519-725-1212 or Toll Free 1877-509-5060

Fax 519-725-9421 Email info@vision-ministries.org**Process regarding pastoral searches****The Vision Ministries Canada process**

1. We receive an informal request for assistance in finding ministry personnel
2. We send the **Application Process for Churches Seeking Staff** to the person who made the request.
3. We take no action of any kind until the completed form is returned to our office.
4. We send recommended resumes and names of interested ministry people to the church.
5. We provide coaching during the process if requested
6. We ask the church to let us now how they concluded their process so we can continue to work with those who are still looking.

Recommended procedures for churches seeking staff

- A. Complete the initial **VMC Application Process for Churches Seeking Staff**
- B. Follow up on the names we provided but for whom we had no resume to see if they are interested in forwarding a resume to you.
- C. Review resumes and - pray a lot!
- D. Narrow the field to the people you are most interested in
- E. Follow up on references
- F. Conduct telephone interviews with selected people - pray more!
- G. Narrow to one person and pursue the interviewing/prayer process until everyone concerned is satisfied and in agreement.
- H. Write them a letter of acceptance and complete an employment agreement (sample enclosed)
- I. Let **VMC** know how the process concluded regarding the resumes and names provided

Mailing address: 145 Lincoln Road, Waterloo, Ontario N2J 2N8

Telephone 519-725-1212 or Toll Free 1877-509-5060

Fax 519-725-9421

Email info@vision-ministries.orgWeb site: www.vision-ministries.org