



THEIR VALUE

One of the distinguishing features of the Brethren has been the absence of full-time pastors in their congregations. The emphasis historically has been on leadership by gifted, mature volunteers. Itinerant preachers, both full-time and volunteer, provided assistance in preaching.

For a variety of reasons, this practice is under-going change. Approximately 40% of Ontario's congregations now have part-time or full-time ministry assistance. The manner in which these workers serve varies widely.

Full-time ministry workers are not required in all congregations. Needs are not uniform or unchanging. What is essential on the human level are: giftedness, especially of leadership and pastoring; availability in terms of significant time; and a God-given desire to serve tirelessly like the spiritual leaders of the New Testament.

Those in full-time ministry should be doing what others cannot do or are unavailable to do. Their presence should increase and multiply the ministry of others. They should be a part of the leadership team of the church. Such workers were clearly present in very positive terms in the New Testament. The needs of the church in Jerusalem demanded adjustments. The appointment of the seven and the sharpened focus of the apostles were spiritual responses to practical problems. Paul and Timothy spent extensive periods of time with specific congregations. Elders who "ruled well" and worked hard at preaching and teaching were to be considered worthy of material support. I Tim. 5:17-18. The New Testament pattern is one of dynamic flexibility for the purpose of carrying forward the great commission.

There is a great need for men and women who devote themselves passionately to the service of Christ. Some should do so on a full-time basis. They should be identified, thrust into service and supported in every way so that the name of Christ may be advanced and exalted.

THEIR ROLES

Assemblies have adopted a wide variety of approaches to their needs for full-time ministry people. It may help us to identify these roles in "broad strokes".

- **The "Role-Player"**

This worker may or may not be an elder. The worker may be a man or woman. Such workers engage in highly specific ministries; youth, children, women, visitation, music, counseling, administration, etc. Such a highly focused ministry may be ideal for those entering full-time ministry as well as for congregations seeking help for the first time.

- **The Full-Time Elder**

'He's just one of the elders' might summarize this approach. These men usually, but not always, speak or teach more than other elders. They often do visitation, counseling, and provide administrative direction for the congregation. Such workers usually emerge from within the ranks of the congregation.

- **The Pastor**

Some churches opt for a worker who does most of the preaching and who provides primary direction for the congregation. This tends to take place in larger churches, in churches where a fresh thrust is required, or in small ones where no one else is available. One of the high priorities of these workers should be the development of the gifts and ministries of others. This ministry

role should not be seen as a position, but a service in building up God's people and leading them into multiplying their ministries in fulfilment of the mission of the King of Kings.

- **The Church Planter**

Rare, but much needed folks in our time! These servants think like Paul. They seek to serve where no one else is working. Such individuals are highly motivated, but need encouragement and support. Some will begin a new church and stay on indefinitely, while others will plant, move on, and plant again. The manner in which these men function will depend on their giftedness, the nature of their families and on the direction of the Spirit of God.

Those congregations who are seeking help should consider carefully what kind of ministry assistance they need, or are ready for. Those entering full-time ministry similarly, should consider carefully what role they are best suited for.

THEIR "CALLING"

Congregations might choose to encourage one of their own number, or an outsider to assist them on a part-time or full-time basis. How should they go about it?

I Identify the need to be met.

- A. Is the need for; evangelism, expository preaching, leadership, counseling, visitation, administration, ministry to children, youth, women, etc. What exactly do we want them to do?!
- B. Is the need to be met temporary or long term? How temporary or long term?
- C. How will meeting this need fit into the broader picture of where we're headed? In other words, if this need is met as anticipated, what will we do next? Paul was a planner, always thinking ahead.

II Relationship to Existing Structures

- A. How will this person relate to the elders, other committees, and to the church?
- B. How will responsibility and authority be combined? When will this person be free to make decisions on their own, and when should they bring matters to the elders for decision making? Care must be taken to ensure we do not delegate responsibility with no authority.
- C. Do we expect them to help us to develop or re-develop our internal organizational structures?
- D. How will we balance the need for accountability with the need for support and encouragement?

III Identifying the Person

- A. If the individual sought is not found in the congregation, where will we find them? Inquire of other full-time workers, especially those with itinerant ministries, Vision Ministries Canada, Interest Ministries, Bible schools, colleges, or seminaries. Be sure to communicate clearly what you are looking for.
- B. Applications, Resumes, & Interviews
 - a) Those who apply or offer to serve should be responded to clearly. When the decision has been made to interview, those not selected should be told courteously and encouragingly. Those interviewed should be responded to promptly.
- C. Narrow the search down to one person to propose to the congregation.

D. Questions that might be asked to determine the "right fit".

1. Would you tell us about your spiritual journey up until now?
2. What was your assembly/church involvement up until now?
3. What is your background? i.e. educational, employment, cultural, family?
4. Tell us about your marriage, family and family background
5. What is your wife's background? i.e. educational, spiritual, employment?
6. Do you relate best with older people, younger people, your peers, same sex, opposite sex, wealthier, poorer?
7. Describe your vision for a healthy congregation.
8. What would be your strategy for church growth?
9. What do you consider to be the most important aspects of church life?
10. What training have you had for pastoral work?
11. What experience have you had in pastoral work?
12. How much preaching experience have you had?
13. Describe your preaching style. Is it expositional? Topical? Evangelistic?
14. Describe your understanding of Biblical interpretation.
15. Is it easy for you to visit with total strangers? Are you a conversationalist?
16. Do you enjoy pastoral visiting with the sick, grieving, widows, new people, wayward, delinquent?
17. What is your view of divorce and/or remarriage?
18. What is your view of eschatology? Are you premillennial, amillennial, pre-, post-, or mid-tribulation rapture?
19. Would you endorse our Statement of Faith whole-heartedly?
20. What type of working schedule would you expect?
21. Are you a self-starter or do you need help in disciplining time and activities? Give examples.
22. Are you creative and innovative? Give examples.
23. Do you work best alone or with other people? Are you a team-man? Give examples of teamwork.
24. How much experience have you had in leading small-group Bible studies?
25. What experience have you had in counseling? Marital? Premarital? Family? Crisis?
26. Are you an administrator? What experience have you had?
27. Describe your leadership style.
28. How would you describe your expected standard of living?
29. What do you expect your financial needs would be in our area?
30. Would your wife want to work part or full-time, or does she want to minister with you in the assembly?
31. What occupational skills do you have?
32. Would you be willing to do some physical work around the chapel? How much?
33. Describe your relationship with people.
34. Do you have very close friends? Are they relatives, neighbors, co-workers, peers?
35. Would you say that you make friends easily?
36. Are most friendships long-standing, very close, with only a few people, more general with many people?
37. What translations of the Bible do you use in your study? In your preaching? Why?
38. How do you view or relate to the charismatic movement?
39. What types of music or worship to you prefer?

40. What is your view on the role of women in the church?
41. How would you describe your devotional & prayer life?
42. What are your views on baptism? At what age should young people be baptized? Infant baptism?
43. How do you handle conflict? Give examples.
44. What are your spiritual gifts?

IV Making the Decision

- A.** The elders should be unanimous in making this decision. Consideration must also be given to other committees and to the entire congregation. How will their voice be heard? A decision to have a part-time or full-time ministry worker must be done in an above board manner and should enjoy the overwhelming endorsement of the congregation.
- B.** Is this decision of the Lord? Prayer and a sense of the confirmation of the Spirit should be clearly evident. Acts 15:28

V THEIR CONDITION OF SERVICE

- A.** Manner and Amount of Remuneration.
 1. One offering per month?
 2. Regular salary?
 3. Regular financial commitment plus income from other people who know this person?
- B.** How will C.P.P., U.I.C., Insurance and Income Tax be handled?
- C.** Job title (what will you call this person?), description and anticipated time commitment.
- D.** Freedom to take on "outside responsibilities"?
- E.** Holidays
- F.** Ministry reviews.
- G.** Procedure for handling; differences, changes in ministry role, etc.
- H.** A signed contract that includes these conditions as well as principles relating to doctrine and conduct would eliminate misunderstanding and confusion.

Gord Martin / January 1994