

Assessment

As the congregation deals with the leaving of a pastor (no matter what the circumstances), there is a distinct tendency to make decisions about the future from a place of emotion and usually, the overarching emotion is anxiety. When decisions are made from a place of anxiety, they are rarely fruitful.

In partnership with OCLH, there are a variety of things that may need to be assessed. However, as a good example of the kinds of things we would want to look at together (Board and OCLH staff member) are indicated below.

Sample Assessment Worksheet

Five Key Questions:

1. What does the data tell me about the last 4-5 years? (Utilize tithe report compilations - ask OCLH for them as well as the Size Assessment, if there has been one done).
 - a. What do the attendance trends suggest? Giving?
 - b. Where do the strengths appear to be? Weaknesses?
 - c. What is the level of faithfulness in paying tithes to the denomination?
2. If there is a staff, what shape are they in and how effective do they seem to be? If there is not staff, who are the people functioning as staff and what are they doing? Is there strong leadership (board, ministry leaders, etc.)?
3. What is the size vs. behavior of the church?
4. What did the former pastor do that should continue? What should change? What effects of the previous pastorate were positive? Negative?
5. When you pick up the rocks, what crawls out from underneath them?

Five Key Dynamics:

On a scale of 1 -10 (10 being high, 1 low), rate each dynamic in terms of its impact

Level of Conflict

Insufficient Infrastructure

Identity Confusion

Financial Stress and Strain

Investment in Status Quo

Score = 36 out of 50 (50 being the highest negative impact)

40 – 50 =	Acute level of impact which creates a very fragile and vulnerable "system"
30 – 40 =	Stressed system that needs relief and hope
20 – 30 =	Moderate stress that can be channeled toward positive shifts
10 – 20 =	Grief work and Identity check in are probably the biggest issues but don't stress the system very much
0 – 10 =	Is there really a need for an Interim?

In partnership, an OCLH staff member and the board will discern together what the assessment might suggest as a way forward for the "in between time."

Most Probable Options

1. Long term Intentional Interim (12-24 months)
2. Short term Interim (6-12 months)
3. "Fill the Gap" Interim
4. No Interim
5. Intervention period followed by long term Interim
6. Other, as determined by assessment and mutual agreement

Other Considerations

- Discern whether a visit to the local church by a OCLH staff person is desirable, necessary or optional. Some things that might impact this decision:
 1. Strength of leadership (especially Board and Staff)
 2. Strength of relationship with denomination
 3. Depth of understanding about pastoral transitions
- Plan visit, which would include:
 1. A forum to explain the process that the board has decided on
 2. Get buy-in and feedback from the congregation in a forum
 3. Leave with a list of characteristics that they believe would be important in an Interim Pastor