



The Call Process

Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area

Sowing and Growing Disciples of Jesus

Interim Ministry Handbook

**Additional information provided to those who serve as interim ministers in
the Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area**

PART II

Information for Interim Ministers



Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

2011

The material in "Part II" of the Interim Ministry Handbook was originally written in 2002 by a committee of NT-NL Interim Pastors and adopted by the NT-NL Mission Area as guidance and support for those engaged in interim ministry. The material was updated again in June, 2009.

Overview

The Interim Pastor shall be regarded as the pastor of the congregation during the interim period with all the rights and privileges of a permanent full-time pastor under Letter of Call. The Interim Pastor shall preach and teach the Word of God and preside at worship.

The pastoral interim period shall be understood to begin on the last day of service of the previous pastor and conclude the day prior to the new pastor beginning his/her service unless otherwise specified in the Interim Contract.

The pastoral interim should be viewed as a unique opportunity of growth and insight. Through the assistance of the interim pastor, the NT-NL Bishop and staff will be intimately linked through conversation, evaluation and strategy to seek the most favorable and mutually beneficial future for the congregation. The developmental issues of the congregation that are most critical during this interim period include: (1) coming to terms with history, (2) facilitating shifts in power and leadership, (3) evaluating the congregational identity, (4) rethinking denominational linkages, and (5) committing to new leadership and the future.

It is the primary concern of the ELCA, the NT-NL Mission Area and the Conference that each congregation function in a healthy, growing and viable manner as an extension and example of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

SECTION I

Definitions and Expectations

1. What an Interim Ministry is. **The interim period is:**
 - time bound,
 - an opportunity for growth,
 - a time for reflection on the past, evaluation of the present, and preparation and planning for the future,
 - a time, in some instances, for healing and relationship building, and
 - a time to regroup and refocus on ministry.

2. What an Interim Ministry is not. **The interim period is not:**
 - a permanent solution,
 - a step away from death, unless that is the result of the strategic planning process,
 - a "cop out" of congregational or mission area responsibilities,
 - a time just "to build the money coffers," or
 - a "way to save money".

3. Expectations of the ELCA. During the interim period, **the ELCA expects that the congregation will:**
 - continue in faithful ministry,
 - establish a call committee for the purpose of calling a new pastor,
 - work closely with the NT-NL Mission Area office on issues relating to the call of a new pastor, and
 - provide adequate and appropriate compensation to the interim pastor assigned to the congregation.

And the ELCA expects that the interim pastor will:

 - provide Word and Sacrament ministry to the congregation and community it serves,
 - function as pastor within the congregation, based on any written agreement between the council and interim pastor and the constitution of the congregation and mission area,
 - work closely with the NT-NL Mission Area office on congregational issues of concern to the interim pastor or mission area, and
 - be involved in continuing education that strengthens the pastor's interim ministry skills.

4. Expectations of the NT-NL mission area/bishop. During the interim period, **the NT-NL Mission Area/bishop expects that the congregation will:**
 - develop a Transition Team to assist in all aspects of maintaining pastoral care and attending to the emotional process within the congregation,

- work closely and cooperatively with the mission area staff during the call process, and
- provide adequate and appropriate compensation to the interim pastor, based on mission area recommendations.

During the interim period, **the NT-NL expects that the interim pastor will:**

- work closely with the congregation's Transition Team,
- support the congregation's work to complete the *Ministry Site Profile*,
- encourage leaders to strategize on mission and ministry issues critical to the life of the congregation as a foundation for beginning the call process,
- refrain from interaction with the Call Committee except for giving pastoral care and support,
- work closely with the NT-NL Mission Area office on congregational issues of concern to the interim pastor or mission area,
- submit a monthly written report on the ministry and seek out periodic conversation with the staff as needed, and
- observe confidentiality and collegiality regarding the information that is learned about the congregation, its previous pastor, and congregational dynamics.

5. Expectations of the conference and its congregations. During the interim period, **the conference and its congregations expect that the NT-NL Mission Area/bishop will:**

- make arrangements for adequate interim ministry to the congregation and community during the pastoral vacancy,
- work closely with congregational leaders to plan for future pastoral ministry within the congregation, based on the congregation's present and future needs, and
- honor the uniqueness of each situation and, when appropriate, strategize creative options for pastoral ministry within the congregation.

During the interim period, **the conference and its congregations expect that the congregation will:**

- maintain a strong relationship with the conference and conference congregations for on-going mutual support and encouragement, and
- consult with the conference regarding relocation possibilities (if they are being considered) and strategic planning.

During the interim period, **the conference and its congregations expect that the interim pastor will:**

- establish collegial relationships with the conference dean and pastors, and
- work closely with conference leaders on congregational mission and ministry issues that directly impact the conference or its congregations.

6. Expectations of the congregation. During the interim period, **the congregation expects:**

- **that the NT-NL Mission Area/bishop will** work closely with its leaders and Transition Team to provide strong pastoral ministry, to support strategic planning, and to respect the congregation's needs for future pastoral ministry (full-time, staff realignment, part-time, shared time, etc.),
- **that the interim pastor will** provide Word & Sacrament ministry to the congregation and community, support strategic planning based on an honest evaluation of the congregation's strengths and opportunities, and provide pastoral care and support to the Call Committee, refraining from discussion of particular candidates, and
- **that the congregation will** be encouraged to focus on critical developmental tasks to strengthen its present and future ministry, including: (1) coming to terms with history, (2) facilitating shifts in power and leadership, (3) evaluating the congregational identity, (4) rethinking denominational linkages, and (5) committing to new leadership and the future.

7. During the interim period, **the interim pastor expects:**

- **that the NT-NL Mission Area/bishop will** share any and all history about the congregation that may affect the needs of the congregation during the interim period. These items will include, but are not limited to, congregational conflicts, key historical items, previous pastoral indiscretions, current ministry "hurdles," and reasons for the previous pastor's resignation. If the congregation, its leaders or the previous pastor are aware of the issue, the interim pastor should be made aware of it as well,
- **that the NT-NL Mission Area/bishop, as part of the interim "team," will** work closely and cooperatively on all matters affecting the mission and ministry of the congregation,
- **that the congregation and its leaders will** support Word and Sacrament ministry in the congregation and community through its prayers and through wise stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures,
- **that the congregation will** provide appropriate and adequate compensation, based on the NT-NL Mission Area's Interim Ministry guidelines, and
- **that the congregation will** support the interim pastor's need for self-care, family time, and renewal.

SECTION II Guidelines

NT-NL Criteria for a Mission Council Call* to Interim Ministry

The **pastor** offered a Mission Council Call to Intentional Interim Ministry:

- shall normally have completed interim ministry training or its equivalent,
- shall have previously served as a called pastor of a congregation for at least three years,
- shall be available for this call by reason of vocational choice and discernment and in order to serve the needs of this church rather than as a means to retain roster status,
- shall not be available for call to the congregation being served,
- must be willing to serve in this Mission Council call for at least three years,
- must be willing to serve at least two full days a week when appointed to an interim ministry position and be willing to serve under appointment a majority of the time,
- must be available to serve congregations anywhere within the mission area,
- will assist the bishop in providing support and training for all those within the mission area who provide Interim Ministry, especially those who have not received formal training,
- must be recommended for this call by the bishop, and
- will receive compensation benefits provided entirely by the congregation being served. (The mission area shall advocate, where applicable, the continuity of health insurance funded by sponsoring congregations and the pastor.)

The **Mission Council**:

- shall issue a Letter of Call to serve as an Intentional Interim Ministry,
- arrange for the rite of installation that signals to congregations and the mission area that this particular ministry is integral to this church's overall mission, and
- assume no responsibility of guaranteeing continuous employment and compensation for the pastor under call. It is understood that the mission area is the calling unit and not the employer during the service of an interim pastor in a congregation.

The **bishop or the bishop's appointee** shall:

- determine the appointment of interim pastors, based on the needs of the congregation, the mission of this church, and the gifts of all pastors available for interim ministry,
- encourage recognition of the beginning and the end of the interim ministry in the public worship of the congregation,
- receive periodic reports from the interim pastor on the progress and status of the interim ministry, and
- (with the Congregation Council) evaluate the interim pastor's ministry at the conclusion of the interim period within a particular congregation.

A **call to interim ministry** may be terminated by the resignation of the pastor. If the Intentional Interim Minister under call has not served as an interim pastor for one year, the Mission Council may, with the concurrence of the bishop, terminate the call.

*Since a retired pastor may not accept a *call* while receiving retirement benefits, an *appointment* as an Intentional Interim Minister by the Mission Council may sometimes be appropriate.

ELCA Guidelines for Ordained Ministers Serving in Interim Ministry

Congregations periodically experience transitions in pastoral leadership. Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide for the care of congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy through the appointment by the bishop of the synod of an ordained minister to provide pastoral care on an interim basis. An interim pastor is appointed by the synod bishop with the consent of the congregation or the Congregational Council (C.9.06.). Pastoral care is then provided on a contract basis, either through appointment or a term Letter of Call. The following policy statement describes the guidelines by which interim ministry is provided to congregations.

Congregations in Transition

Because of the importance of the ministry of Word and sacrament, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to insure appropriate pastoral leadership for congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy. Interim ministry is provided by synods during the time of transition following the completion of service by the congregation's former pastor and prior to the calling of a new pastor. This is also provided for in a congregation served by a multiple staff when an associate pastor or other pastoral staff leaves. The interim period is thus a time in which pastoral care is provided a congregation by the synod as the congregation moved through a process of self-study and change toward new pastoral leadership.

A congregation facing the normal range of congregational concerns related to a pastoral transition may be served by an interim pastor without formal training. The synod bishop arranges for the congregation to receive Word and sacrament leadership during the period prior to the regular calling of a pastor through the appointment of an interim pastor. An appointed interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to an "interim supply pastor" with the consent of the synod bishop (S.14.17.). The interim pastor normally serves the congregation in a contracted and compensated arrangement.

A congregation in a situation of significant concerns and stress related to pastoral transition may benefit from the leadership of an experienced and trained interim pastor. Situations in which this is particularly appropriate include the transition following a long pastorate, a congregation facing new mission opportunities and/or a changed context for ministry, a transition following the resignation of a pastor related to disciplinary action by the synod, or a transition marked by significant discord or upheaval within a congregation.

Appointed or Called Interim Ministry

An interim pastor may either be appointed by the mission area bishop or may serve under a term call extended by the Mission Council (7.41.11.b.). Calls to interim ministry may not be extended by a congregation. A pastor serving either under appointment by the bishop or under a term Letter of Call normally serves the congregation in a contracted and compensated arrangement. Unless previously agreed to by the Mission Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served during this time of transition and shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor (C9.97.).

Guidelines for Called Interim Pastoral Ministry

1. A called interim pastor shall provide a minimum of a half-time ministry (at least twenty hours per week) to the congregation with commensurate compensation in accordance with mission area guidelines, and consistent with the ELCA guidelines for shared-time calls. A call to interim ministry shall be primarily for the benefit of the congregation served, not for the status of the ordained minister. Such a call may either be a term call to a specific congregation, or a term call to interim ministry in the mission area. The determination of this will be with the concurrence of the congregation being served.
2. Prior to being eligible for a call to interim ministry, the pastor shall normally receive appropriate training for interim ministry. The Division for Ministry will review interim ministry training programs and serve as consultant to synods in evaluating such programs.
3. Only pastors who have served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years are eligible to serve in a called interim ministry.
4. The interim ministry agreement between the congregation and the called interim pastor will specify compensation, benefits, and the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry. The Letter of Call issued by the Mission Council may include salary and benefit matters. Normally, however, matter of compensation and benefits are stipulated in the interim ministry agreement with the congregation.
5. In issuing a call to interim ministry, the mission area assumes no responsibility for guaranteeing continuous employment, compensation, or benefits for the pastor under call (7.43). It is understood that compensation and benefits are normally provided entirely by the congregation or ministry setting being served. Where possible, continuity of Board of Pensions health benefits will be advocated by the mission area. It is explicitly understood that the mission area is the calling agent and not the employer of record at any time during the service of an interim pastor under call from the Mission Council.
6. Calls to interim service within a mission area may be issued for a one to three-year term of service, with an annual review by the Mission Council or its designated committee. However, if a pastor under a term call to interim ministry has not served in a congregation during the preceding twelve months, the call may be terminated by the Mission Council. A term Letter of Call issued by the Mission Council may also be coterminous with the duration of service within the congregation served (7.43). The term call may be terminated by action of the Mission Council. A pastor may resign a call to interim ministry at any time.
7. Initial issuance of a call to interim ministry by the Mission Council shall be upon the recommendation of the bishop. The initial interim ministry agreement with a congregation may be reviewed by the bishop or mission area staff prior to the acceptance of the contractual arrangement by the interim pastor.

Guidelines for Appointed Interim Ministry

1. An appointed interim pastor is authorized to provide Word and sacrament ministry to a congregation by the bishop with the concurrence of the Congregational Council. The interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The appointed interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the mission area bishop (S14.17.)
2. A retired pastor or pastor on leave from call who serves an interim ministry is recommended by the bishop and signs an interim ministry agreement with the congregation which provides for the compensation, benefits, and the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry.
3. Normally, only pastors who have previously served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years will be eligible to serve in an appointed interim ministry.

Adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as policy of this church,
November, 1996.

SECTION III

Interim Ministry Tasks¹

Interim Ministry Tasks are two-fold. The congregation has certain developmental tasks before it in the interim between called pastors. Likewise the interim pastor has certain process tasks which parallel the developmental tasks of the congregation.

The developmental tasks of a congregation in interim times are well documented (see Loren Mead. *Critical Moment of Ministry*, Alban, 1986):

- Coming to terms with history
- Discovering a new identity
- Managing shifts of leadership
- Rethinking denominational linkages
- Commitment to new leadership and a new future.

Failure to resolve any of these “tasks” could adversely affect the corporate life of the congregation. These five tasks belong to the congregation to resolve. The congregation will work through these tasks or not. The best the interim pastor can do is to coach, guide and encourage the congregation in the process of working through these tasks. The interim pastor also encourages and supports the congregation in resolutions that emerge from these tasks. If the interim pastor takes on these congregational tasks as personal objectives for the interim, the analogy of “pushing on a rope” may apply.

The process tasks of the interim pastor have a different focus than the content of pastoral leadership in the interim. Ministry content in the interim does not differ significantly from that of a called pastor (preaching, teaching, pastoral care and leadership development). The focus of the process tasks is on patterns of organization and behavior, relationships, communication, and decision-making. These tasks rely on an understanding of family and organizational systems.

The process tasks of the interim pastor are:

- Joining the system
- Analyzing the organization as a system
- Connecting with the denomination or larger church
- Focusing and assuming responsibility
- Exiting and evaluating.

Joining the System

Effective interim pastors find ways to make quick and significant connections with members of the congregation. Doing so greatly increases the impact of the interim pastor’s leadership and service to the congregation.

Adopting a few significant local customs forms emotional connections. For example, if members refer to each other by first names or by formal titles, Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc., the interim could follow suit. It is good to find ways and times early in the interim ministry to participate in those activities (Bible studies, prayer breakfast, women’s circle meetings, etc.) in which it was

customary for the pastor to attend. Of course key relational practices such as learning names, family relationships, easing into roles of humor or trivial pursuits with members and particularly with leaders are important.

At the same time the interim pastor connects to the congregation system emotionally, the interim is also maintaining a detachment. The interim pastor always remembers that she or he is only temporary, and is present to intentionally fill a very specific role with that congregation. A sense that the interim is simultaneously an insider and an outsider increases the power of the interim to be of service to the congregation.

Without a point of emotional contact, a relationship cannot grow, and no leverage can be applied within the system. Hence this process task comes first on the list and first in priority for the interim pastor.

Analyzing the System

As the interim pastor begins to join the system, he or she begins a more systematic reflection on the nature of the system that is the congregation. Some issues will be obvious, such as the degree of anxiety among the members, the level of dependence or independence in relationship with the former pastor, ministry staff, interim pastor, and with the lay leadership. The existence of conflict or its absence may also be obvious.

A systematic analysis accepts the obvious, surface patterns of the congregation as a first layer of reality, under which lie further factors which define and govern the relationships in the congregation. This is similar to pastoral counseling in which the "presenting problem" usually leads to more hidden and sometimes more difficult issues. Some deeper levels of congregational reality might include:

- Unresolved relationship issues with the most recent previous pastor,
- Repeating patterns of relating with pastors (leaders) over several previous generations of leadership,
- The extent to which the informal lines of authority and boundaries and rules are in line with the formal, constitutional patterns,
- The existence of secrets and the relative emotional power of those secrets, healthy or unhealthy relationship triangles.

Analysis continues throughout the interim. Early results help formulate a picture of the congregation that is tested and refined as additional information confirms or disconfirms the conclusions. Over time then the results of analysis shift and grow into a stronger sense of the reality of the congregation. This sense of reality forms the basis for the interim pastor's choice of focus and responsibility (the fourth task).

Connecting with the Denomination

Just as the congregation faces a crisis in transition that needs rethinking with the larger church, so the interim pastor needs to make strong connections with the mission area staff and appropriate divisions of the church (for example the Division for Outreach for congregations receiving support from this Division). For the interim pastor the mission area staff is often able to provide information regarding history and patterns of the congregation that are helpful in analysis.

Getting to know the resources available within the mission area and the ELCA for conflict resolution, leadership development, program ministries and congregational development will benefit not only the interim pastor but also help the congregation to develop and re-enforce a sense of partnership in ministry with the mission area and ELCA.

Monthly progress reports to the bishop of the synod keep the mission area staff informed as to the status of the congregation and even their readiness for call. As difficulties arise, consultation with the mission area staff can be helpful in maintaining the detachment required to function effectively as interim pastor.

Focusing and Assuming Responsibility

An assessment of the strengths and needs of the organizational system, including gathering information from the mission area staff, usually provides several different needs and concerns which the interim pastor can appropriately address. The focusing task is to select the issues or activities which could be the emphasis of work during the interim time. The selection of an emphasis is based on several factors:

- the interim pastor's understanding of role and responsibility,
- the particular skills and experience of the interim pastor,
- the relative openness in the congregation to one or more of the issues identified, including the agreement from other responsible leaders in the congregation,
- the interim pastor's understanding of God's call to her or him in this particular situation,
- the time available in the interim contract (part-time, full-time, progress of the call process).

Edwin Friedman, author of *Generation to Generation*, has told interim pastors that they should "Join the system, and then do what is fun." Interim pastors have an opportunity to define their own goals and values and assume responsibility for leadership roles in the congregation. Within that responsibility, follow your own heart and focus on the work that suits your unique personality and experience – that's what Friedman means by "fun."

In some settings the focus might be on healing from grief or reconciliation following conflict. In other situations, the need for clarifying roles and structures might cry out for leadership. A congregation might need strong, charismatic leading or it might need to have the leadership reins turned back over to the members of the congregation in empowerment. Alternatively, the interim pastor may feel called to encourage either spiritual renewal or administrative effectiveness based on an assessment of strengths and needs.

In every situation, the focus of the interim pastor needs to include the self-care and acceptance of limitations or responsibility. The spiritual growth, physical well-being and emotional health of the interim pastor, have a high priority in this task of focus and responsibility. Without them, the interim pastor loses the necessary detachment and the essential energy required for a focused and effective pastor.

Exiting and Evaluating

Frequently the best gift to a congregation for the interim period is an experience of a healthy farewell. Such an exit includes appropriate mutual expressions of joy and sadness, intentional person-to-person contacts with members who have had significant relationships with the

interim pastor, and a well-planned farewell in the context of worship or congregational assembly. A suggested Litany of Farewell is included in the manual. Negotiations regarding contract termination are also important to be completed positively and with integrity.

Assisting the congregation to learn from the interim time is included in this process task. This learning is mutual, with the exiting interim pastor gleaning as much constructive information about his or her effectiveness as possible, and at the same time providing the congregation with an opportunity to reflect on its life and ministry.

The exiting process includes the clean break in relationships after the interim relationship has ended. Ordinarily the interim pastor ends all pastoral and social relationships with members of the congregation in order to allow the emotional space for the new pastor to join the congregational system effectively.

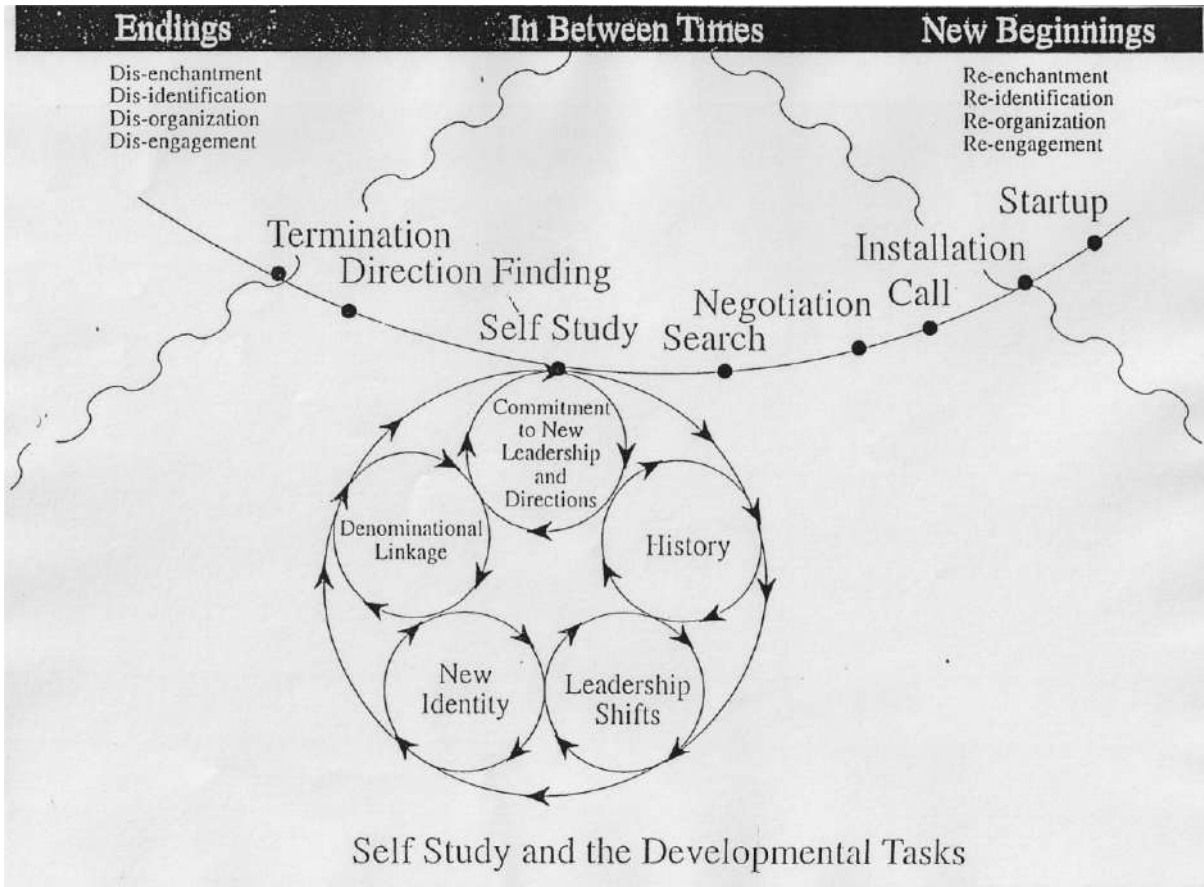
Conclusion

The five process tasks offer an agenda for the health and well being of both the interim pastor and the congregation in transition. These tasks, however, are uniquely those of the interim pastor. To differentiate the interim pastor's tasks from those which belong to the congregation, these five focus on the work of effective leadership and constructive ministry. They are better suited to personal prayer and journaling, or to discussion with supporters beyond the congregation than with the members of the congregation in transition.

Implicit in everything that an interim pastor does, is the facilitating of the new ministry which the congregation will begin with a new pastor. In this the interim pastor has a ministry similar to John the Baptist, preparing the way for someone else. The "success" of an interim is not determined by the popularity of the interim pastor with the congregation, but by what happens after the interim when the new ministry starts to blossom with a life of its own.²

- 1 Borrowed heavily from *Interim Ministry Basic Education Resource Materials* (Revised 1/1/99), Interim Ministry Network, 1999: *The Process Tasks of the Interim Leader*, David R. Sawyer, Ph.D., Copyright 1992 HSD Consultants.
- 2 *Interim Ministry Basic Education Resource Materials* (Revised 1/1/1999), Interim Ministry Network, 1999: *The Work of the Interim Pastor During the Interim Process*, James W. Davis, copyright, 1988, 1993, James W. Davis.

The Stages and Tasks of Intentional Interim Ministry



SECTION IV

A Toolbox for the Developmental Tasks*

R. Neil Chafin

The following pages of ideas or "tools" for effectively engaging congregation members in the developmental tasks have been gathered over a decade of working with interim congregations and interim ministry specialists. The collation of these ideas came in response to trainees who frequently ask for more "concrete, practical, and how-to-do-it" ideas following their first week in basic training. The basic training program, especially phase I, is designed to give a very broad conceptual/theoretical overview in the developing field of interim ministry. Perhaps the "toolbox" will provide a starting point to design congregational activities related to each developmental task.

A few words of caution may be in order. Interim ministry will not succeed effectively if we take a cookbook approach to this work. Each congregation is different, with its own gifts, styles, and traditions. Interim ministry activities must fit with the local congregation and its traditions and norms. I have found that many congregations are very capable of designing their own creative approaches and activities to engage large numbers of members in the developmental tasks. Other congregations, especially those depressed from conflict and struggle, may need more prompting from the interim specialist to come up with the appropriate activities which fit each developmental task. This toolbox is presented only to prime the pump of creativity as an interim minister looks for ways to involve the congregation in their work on the developmental tasks.

I have also discovered that the developmental tasks do not always come in a neat order. I strongly believe we have to deal with "history" first and that "commitment to new leadership" will always come last. In between, however, the interim ministry specialist must discern the needs of the congregation regarding the order of the developmental tasks. Congregations which have experienced power and control issues might need to work on the "leadership and power shifts" before "new identity" can really be dealt with. In denominations where theological polarization is occurring I have discovered that working on "re-thinking denominational linkage" is really a prerequisite to a new vision or "new identity". Frequently, work on a later task will uncover some unfinished business on an earlier task. The effective interim ministry specialist will seek out ways to deal with these bits and pieces of unfinished business while the congregation perceives itself making somewhat steady and orderly progress through the developmental tasks.

Other parts of the toolbox include a restatement of some of the issues of each task, symptoms of non-resolution and signs of possible resolution for each developmental task. These are offered only as a reminder and checklist for the interim ministry specialist. Some references and resources are also listed as helpful aids for each of the developmental tasks.

These ideas and resources have been developed and added to by many individuals over a decade. Special thanks go to interim ministry trainer colleague Ellie Hillers from the former MATC/ Alban training years from 1984-1990; and to David L. Odom of the Center for Congregational Health who have shaped this format and added ideas. I would welcome your input and suggestions as new and better ideas and resources can be added to this unfinished work. Please contact me at the Department of Pastoral Care, Medical Center Boulevard, Winston-Salem NC 27157-1098.

Coming to Terms with History

Issues

- putting the tenure of the last and former pastors in perspective
- acknowledging the past and accepting the "good and the bad"
- deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future
- appropriate ventilation of feelings, grieving, accepting, and moving on

Toolbox

- tell the church's story, make a time-line for the church
- write, update, and appropriately edit church history for distribution
- teach the grief process and provide for safe ventilation of feelings
- list strengths and weaknesses of previous pastor(s)
- hang portraits of past clergy
- hold small group meetings to reminisce and ventilate feelings
- listen, and teach listening skills
- "roast" the pastor before his or her departure
- review covenants, update files, records, resource, and member lists
- question the whys of traditions and maintain healthy traditions
- identify watersheds in the congregation's life
- celebrate important past events
- heal the congregation's corporate pain
- church history "trivia" questions and answers in the newsletter

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- living in the past and ghosts(s) of pastor(s) past
- selective memory (memory gaps)
- stuck in grief: anger, denial, guilt, alienation
- declining membership, giving, participation
- unwillingness to consider the why of traditions
- trying to clone the previous pastor or find his or her exact opposite

Signs of Resolution

- living in the present while accepting the past
- movement through the grief process
- stabilizing membership, giving, participation
- articulate about tradition, open to change
- asking process questions: where are we going? what do we do now?
- investment in current and future issues
- healthy humor

Resources

How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems, Peter L. Steinke, Alban
Healing Congregational Corporate Pain (Training by LEAD Consultants, Inc.)
Generation to Generation: Family Systems in Church and Synagogue, Friedman
Making Sense of Life's Transitions, William Bridges, Addison-Wesley
Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth of Congregations and Pastors, Edward A. White, Alban
Critical Moment of Ministry: A Change of Pastors, Loren B. Mead, Alban
Pastoral Transitions, Wm. Bud Phillips, Alban

Seeking a New Identity

Issues

- determining whether the congregation's image is realistic
- seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth
- the congregation sees itself as an entity without a pastor, separating the church's identity from the former pastor's personality and style

Toolbox

- affirm and push for ongoing reality testing
- conduct congregational analysis
- conduct analysis of neighborhood ministry needs
- do a self-study, encourage and affirm accurate data gathering
- encourage program and resource assessments
- engage in the cooperative building of expectations about the future
- develop broad vision of congregation's future
- hold cottage meetings to talk about what we are like and what we want to become
- envision what we want to be like in the future, specifically in 20_
- hold leadership training retreats

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- focus is on the past
- resistance to self-assessment
- unrealistic myths are still operative
- emphasis is on blaming, what's wrong
- low trust level, lack of authentic sharing
- identity confusion: who are we?
- leaders and others continue to consult the previous pastor
- maintain same old programs, even when they don't fit present needs
- rush through the interim

Signs of Resolution

- focus on present or future
- willingness to do self-assessment
- congregation faces reality
- affirm who we really are
- growing excitement and energy for the congregation's envisioned future
- process questions: where are we going?
- inclusiveness
- rising trust level, humor, and patience with the search process
- vision and goals fit present reality

Resources

Sizing Up the Congregation, Rothauge

The Developmental Tasks of a Congregation in Search of a Pastor, Mead

Looking in the Mirror, Schaller

Handbook for Congregational Studies, Carroll, Dudley and McKinney

The Inviting Church, Oswald and Leas, Alban

Center for Social and Religious Research (surveys), Hartford Seminary

Facilitating Shifts in Power and Leadership

Issues

- power and control of decisions and directions of congregation
- healthy, realistic, open decision-making
- managing conflicts
- honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved
- bum-out and drop-out of leaders

Toolbox

- affirm leaders' different styles and talents, use MBTI
- teach conflict management and resolution skills
- rethink process of developing leadership and lengths of terms of office
- recognize and celebrate the leaders going out of office
- hold closure ceremonies for those who have been leaders
- assess leadership needed to reach interim goals and recruit leaders to meet those needs
- use old leaders as mentors
- determine whether decision-making processes are congruent with those stated in governing documents
- open the decision-making process
- begin new member orientation process
- develop a new covenant with broad member participation
- clarify personnel policies, procedures

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- divisions, destructive sub-grouping
- competition and avoidance
- counter-dependency
- power plays and win-lose decisions
- decisions aren't clear, aren't carried out, or fall apart
- the search committee becomes a power center
- secret meetings, self-authorized decisions, gossip and rumors
- exclusiveness, blaming, avoidance of conflict

Signs of Resolution

- open leadership and decision-making structures
- interdependency and win-win decisions
- clear decisions with follow-through
- shared leadership in maintenance and developmental tasks
- election, acceptance, and support of new leadership
- both old and new leaders involved
- inclusiveness: conflicts and differences are dealt with openly

Resources

Moving Your Church Through Conflict, Speed B. Lees, Alban
Managing Church Conflict, H. Halverstadt, Westminster/John Knox
The Life Cycle of a Congregation, M. Saarinen, Alban
The Care of Troublesome People, Oates, Alban
Polarity, Management, Barry Johnson, HRD Press

Rethinking Denominational Linkages

Issues

- healthy partnership with the denomination
- authority, dependency, interdependency, counter-dependency
- congregation's tendency to see judicatory or denomination through former pastor's eyes
- history of the relationship; dollars and trust

Toolbox

- encourage denomination to give
- clear information about its expectations, requirements, resources, and programs
- advocate use of denominational resources
- give feedback: remind denomination of its duties, promises, and programs
- identify and affirm church members who have' denomination jobs and ties
- identify common interests of church and denomination
- make use of denominational resources: staff, programs, facilities, literature, training, retreats
- allow for ventilation of feelings about denomination

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- resistance to denominational requests or suggestions
- criticism of denominational personnel and programs
- failure to meet pledges and budgets
- "We-they" outlook

Signs of Resolution

- willingness to accept help and resources
- appreciation for the denomination's traditions and missions
- denomination's resources and facilities are used
- stable or increased giving to denomination: dollars and people
- shared "us"

Resources

Frameworks: Patterns of Living and Believing Today, Walrath, Pilgrim Press National, Regional and Local Denominational Executives and staff

Commitment to New Leadership and the Future

Issues

- consensus and excitement about the shared vision for the future
- getting a good match between the pastor and the congregation
- clear and shared expectations between clergy and congregation
- clean exit of interim pastor and consultant

Toolbox

- planning for start-up period
- modeling clear exiting skills
- interim shares insight with incoming pastor
- ministers-in-transition support programs
- make sure transition rituals are in place

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- anxiety and rushing the search process
- trying to hire the interim
- unrealistic or unclear expectations of the new pastor
- inability to agree on choice of pastor
- low energy level, lack of humor
- failure to issue a call

Signs of Resolution

- focus on the future
- enthusiastic preparations (housing, installation, start-up) for new pastor
- clarity and consensus on leadership style desired of new pastor
- increasing levels of involvement and ownership in process
- appreciation of interim process and leaders
- willingness to say goodbye to interim
- evident energy and healthy humor

Resources

New Beginnings: Pastorate Start-up Workbook, Alban Institute, Pub. No. AL32

Pastor as Newcomer, Alban Institute, Pub. No. AL18

SECTION V

Informational "Survival" Kit for a New Pastor

- Membership list: including phone numbers, Pictorial Directory (if available), family membership list.
- Annual reports (past three years)
- Newsletters (past year)
- Worship bulletins; average attendance for worship and church school
- Financial reports, current budget; next year's proposed budget, status of indebtedness and/or investments
- Minutes: boards, committees, etc.
- Job descriptions and specific assignments of employees and volunteer leadership
- Listing of church officers, committees and other leaders (include church school, fellowship groups)
- Calendar of special/annual events
- Calendar of regular meetings and programs
- Maps: location of church members, map of community, map of state
- Chamber of Commerce welcome packet
- List of places where church does business (office supply, grocery, plumber, etc.)
- List of "cooperative" churches (ecumenical) and regular activities
- Church history - Special information - Stories - Etc.
- Constitution and By-laws, Policies (use of building, weddings, memorial funds, etc.),
- Procedure manuals
- Information about what was accomplished during interim period
- Keys to every door with locks in church building and parsonage
- Instructions about heating system, sound system, etc.
- Worship resource - hymnal, order of worship for special occasions, traditions and common practices/patterns (list of hymns known by congregation)
- Community services - school system, local taxes, welcome wagon, hospitals, organizations and services, funeral homes, etc.
- List of persons with special needs (shut-ins, recent change in family, job status, people who have been close to previous pastor or interim)
- Goals - Long range and short-term

SECTION VI

Contact Information

Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area, P.O. Box 560587, Dallas, Texas, 75356 (1230 River Bend #105 Dallas, 75247).

Phone 214.637.6865; Fax 214.637.4805; www.ntnl.org

Bishop Kevin S. Kanouse, NT-NL Mission Area, BpKevinKanouse@ntnl.org

Pastor Jane Mar, Bishop Assistant for Mobility and Congregational Care:
JaneMar@ntnl.org.