INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MINISTRY SPECIALTIES

An interview should consist of 10-15 good questions. Remember less is sometimes more. Choose your questions carefully and purposefully. The following are possible questions that might be used as a Committee looks at the criteria for ministry that were discovered through Church Reflections 9.

Budget/Financial Management
How have you been involved in preparing and managing a budget?
Describe the size budget you have worked with in recent years.

Church Growth
Tell us about a program you implemented that resulted in growth.
Define your views on church growth. How has that definition been lived out in your present congregation?
How do you work within the church structure to facilitate growth?
Membership in churches are in decline. What needs to change to reverse this decline?

Church Planting
Discuss your experience as a new church planter.
How is church planting different from pastoring an established congregation?

Communication
Describe your communication skills.
Share some of the ways in which you have improved communication in your church, between groups?

Community Assessment/Involvement
How have you helped the church evaluate the needs of the community and become involved in that process?

Conflict Management
Discuss your conflict management style, using specific circumstances.
Describe a recent conflict situation in the congregation you serve. How did you work through it?

Counseling
What specific training have you had in counseling?
What percentage of time in a typical week do you normally spend in counseling?
In what areas are you most comfortable in your counseling?

Cross Cultural Involvement/Mission
What are some cultural groups with which you have worked?
What do you value about cross cultural ministry?

Education
Share with us a teaching idea that you have designed and implemented in your present ministry?
How have you worked with teachers and leaders to improve the educational program of your church?
How would you go about developing a program if you were to identify a concern? Give examples.
What process would you use in determining resources for a congregation?
How have you shaped the teaching ministry of the church to enhance discipleship?

Evangelism
Define evangelism. In what way do you feel most comfortable sharing your faith?
How have persons been assimilated into the life and ministry of your church setting?
How have you trained Christians to share their faith with nonbelievers? How effective was this in actually directing others to Christ and into the church?
In your present ministry, what percentage of your time is spent with non-church folk?

Interchurch Cooperation
Tell us your philosophy of working with other churches of different beliefs in your community.
Specifically, how have you been involved in the ecumenical community?
How would you describe your participation level with the wider American Baptist family?
What do you see as the role of the denomination?
What is the church's role in the denomination?

Interpreting the Faith
How have you helped your congregation find an understanding of the Bible and faith that made sense to their lives?

Leadership Development
How have you gone about identifying, selecting and supporting and training leaders?
Describe the way that you work in your congregation to seek a corporate vision for ministry.
How do you work with the leaders in your church?
Leadership
Define the qualities of a leader. What is your leadership style?
How has your leadership style impacted your present position? What gifts do you bring as a leader?
Tell us about what you would consider your greatest leadership success. What did you do and what were the results?
Have you ever led a group to discuss a new vision from God? What did you do and what were the results?

Ministry of the Laity Development
How have you identified gifts of laity and helped them to grow in those areas?
How have you involved laity in your leadership?

Mission Promotion
How do you go about interpreting and promoting ABC mission?
Tell us some of the things you have done to make the congregation aware of mission.

Multicultural Sensitivity
What is your experience in working in a multicultural ministry situation?
What are some of the challenges and rewards you have experienced working in multicultural settings?

Music Directing/Performing
What kind of music ministry would you like to develop?
What types of music have you found helpful in attracting people to church?
What styles of music would you be comfortable with?

Nurturing Fellowship
What does the phrase “nurturing fellowship” mean to you and how do you go about doing it?

Planning and Management
Tell us about your management style and your administrative skills.
What is your personal decision-making style?
What is the process you use when working with ministry groups in your church to make decisions that affect the whole congregation?

Pastoral Care
How do you express your interest and concern for your people?
In what areas do you find it difficult to express care? Describe your ministry to persons in crisis?

Personnel Supervision
Have you supervised other persons?
Tell us about your supervision style.

Preaching
How do you go about developing a sermon?
How would you describe your preaching style?
How have you adapted your preaching to fit the needs of a congregation?

Program Development
What are some of the programs that you have developed?
What were needs you were trying to address?

Social Action Enablement
Which areas of social action concern you most as a minister?
How have you communicated those concerns with your people?
Share the social action ministry of your current position.

Spiritual Life Development
Tell us about the components of your personal spiritual life. What do you do to feed and nurture that life?
How have you helped others to be intentional in their spiritual lives?

Stewardship
How have you brought a stewardship emphasis to your congregation?
How has that made a difference financially?
Describe your views on giving and tithing.
As a pastor, how have you encouraged mission giving in your congregation?

Teaching
How would you describe your teaching style?
Share with us some of your teaching experiences.

Visitation
What are your visitation gifts or strengths?
Do you like to visit?
How do you organize yourself and the congregation to do visitation?
What kind of training have you provided for lay visitors?
Do you plan a regular pastoral visiting program or do you respond on the basis of need?

Worship Preparation and Leading
What excites you about worship? In what style of worship are you most comfortable?
In what ways have you equipped persons to plan for or to lead in worship?
What changes in the worship service have you implemented in your current congregation and why? How did you lead the congregation through these changes?
Describe a recent worship service that you designed and led.

Youth Ministry
Share your philosophy and experiences in youth ministry.
Describe the ministries to children and youth in your present church? Who is in charge?
How do you see children and young people participate in church life?
ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe your current ministry (or if a student – your vision for ministry).
2. How would you describe your core theology?
3. What is the most exciting aspect of ministry for you?
4. Describe the way in which you work in your congregation to seek a corporate vision for ministry.
5. Describe a situation in which you got persons excited about a ministry project. What were the results? How did you keep the enthusiasm going?
6. From what little you know about our church, what excites you most about coming here? What concerns you the most?
7. What are the most important character traits that a pastor should possess and what are the key traits that you would like to see in church members?
8. What do you do to maintain continued learning? What do you do to relax?
9. What are some things you would do to help us clarify our vision?
10. What do you do to make first time guests feel welcome in your church?
11. How do you train and encourage church members toward Christian maturity?
12. Are there any issues not touched upon in our conversations that, if disclosed later, may compromise the effectiveness of our ministry together?

What Questions Might the Minister Ask the Committee?

There are six main areas within which most questions will fall. If the minister asks some questions in each of these areas, he or she should get a broad picture of the church.

- The relationship between pastor and people and within the congregation itself
- Expectations by the church of the pastor and by the pastor of the church
- The ministry and mission of the church past, present, and future
- Internal functioning of the church
- Spiritual life and theological awareness of the congregation
- Other issues of concern

As a committee you will want to think about the questions a minister might ask you about the church ahead of time and be prepared to answer them.
## MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION ON THE MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE

During a meeting of ministerial leaders in the summer of 2001, the ministers were asked two questions, “What are some of the things you appreciated that you would like to see in every Search Committee?” and “What are some of the things you have not seen that you would like to see in every search committee.” Read over this list and as a Committee, ask yourselves if you will be making a good impression on the ministerial candidates that you will meet. (Note: you will find some items on both lists indicating that one or more ministers experienced something that other ministers did not but wished they had.)

### What are some of the things you appreciated that you would like to see in every Search Committee?
- Honesty and Openness
- Providing purpose statement and mission statement of the church to the candidates
- Providing candidates with the church bylaws
- Sharing complete annual reports (including budget and financial statements) for the last ten years
- Timely delivery of materials
- Used guidelines in Calling an American Baptist Minister
- Well-done church profile which included details of community, educational resources, etc.
- Professionally done video of the congregation and community
- Description of community based expenses (taxes, utilities, etc.)
- Keeping us informed
- Prompt response in communication
- Letting the candidate know where the committee was in their search process
- Being able to share information about former pastors in the last ten years (length of stay, reason for leaving, etc.)
- Search Committee call back when they say they will Confidentiality in the proper places (phone contacts and mailings)

### What are some of the things that you have not seen that you would like to see in every Search Committee
- Demographic information about the church and community
- Take the family group into consideration
- A video of the church and community
- Search committee truly represent the church
- In-depth church assessment (possibly with the help of the region) so they really know who they are and what they are looking for
- Graph of average attendance for the last ten years
- Some members of the Pastoral Relations Committee should be included on the search committee
- Search committees that have a gender balance in its make-up and in the Profiles it receives
- There might be pre-interview practice sessions for both the search committee and the candidate
- Prayer
- Engaged in a season of fasting and prayer
- Committee to have a sense of flexibility
- Confidentiality
- Honesty and truthfulness
- Knowing who the real leaders are (Patriarchs and Matriarchs)
- Integrity when offering a salary package
What are some of the things you appreciated that you would like to see in every Search Committee? (continued)

If phone interview, identify each person on the call

When the Committee did not make assumptions about what our response was going to be

When the Committee was able to share their struggles and joys with the candidate

Face-to-Face events

Worked best when the area minister played an active presence in the process

Cross-generational Search Committee representing all aspects of congregation

Hospitality

Family activity during the candidate process

Dietary considerations of candidate when hosting

Seriously consider women candidates

Good preparation for candidate interviews

Openness regarding recent conflicts

Asking, “Do you have any questions of us?”

Pay expenses in a timely manner

Know when a Committee is coming

Actually checked references given by candidate

Patience…the candidate should be allowed time to check the church’s references

Flowers/other tokens of welcome and appreciation

Statement of projected time line

Church code of ethics used during installation

A timely process

An appropriate social, reception for spouse and family

Minister/church agreement

What are some of the things that you have not seen that you would like to see in every Search Committee (continued)

Generally candidates do not prefer phone interviews

All members of the search committee involved and prepared during the process, especially the interview

Honest consideration of female candidates

Candidate given opportunities to ask questions

Committee not afraid to discuss compensation

Willingness to put candidate up in a decent hotel

Do not contact the minister’s present church

More prompt response

Regular reference checks (The Committee should at least contact or call on the references listed on the Profile.)

Prior to the call being finalized, the minister and the Search Committee should be clear on the specifics of the package, the expectations of the church and the expectations of the candidate

The best candidate should be called regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, etc.

Discover or discuss boundaries for Search Committee interviews—what is relevant and applies to calling a minister

Search Committee should have the authority to agree to the terms of the call

Better follow up; not leaving us hanging

Letting us know when they have completed the process, especially when we are not the candidate of choice

Timely response to all candidates

The orientation should include tours of the town or knowledge of the area

A weekend should be spent with the prospective candidate