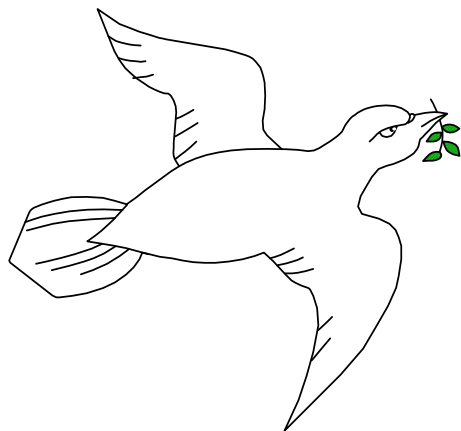


The Baptist Union of Tasmania: (Pastoral Committee)

Suggested Guidelines regarding Relationships between Churches and Pastors



(June 1998)

- c. That following a “Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation” any subsequent voting be exercised by as high a proportion of members as possible. This opens up the possibility of such things as:
 - absentee voting, or some other such facilities,
 - changing quorum at such a meeting to, for example, 75% of the active membership;
 - the possibility of more than one meeting where the final percentage is an agreed composite of the votes taken at all meetings;

4. **Ending of Church/Pastor journey:**

- a. That when the ending of a Pastoral relationship occurs, both Church and Pastor be encouraged to use the services of a Pastoral Facilitator and that both Church and Pastor be informed as to the content of the Pastoral Facilitator's report on a needs-to-know basis;
- b. That following a “Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation” the meeting at which any recommendation for the termination of the present Pastor/Church relationship is presented, as well as the meeting at which any vote is taken, be chaired by someone who is other than a Church member. It is preferable for the Chair to be occupied by someone previously agreed upon by both Pastor and Church Leadership. The following could be possible candidates: General Superintendent, President of the Baptist Union, Pastoral Facilitator or Pastoral Committee appointee.

Notes relating to “Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation”

- a. In this document the process termed *Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation* refers to an analysis and assessment undertaken by a local congregation's leadership of all the aspects of the Church's life.
- b. The intent of such an Evaluation is intended to identify:
 - the strengths of the Church's life and Ministry;
 - any aspects of the Church's life and Ministry which might need developing or adjusting;
 - any aspects of the Church's life and Ministry which need expanding;
 - any aspects of the Church's life and Ministry which need reduction;
- b. Such Evaluation ideally should cover all office bearers and coordinators of “groups” or “ministries” within the life of the congregation.
- c. The “Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation” will preferably be under the conduct of, or at least in the presence of someone referred to as a Pastoral Facilitator whose function will be *at least* to observe, unless invited to participate more directly in deliberations.
- d. The results of this Evaluation preferably to be shared with the rest of the Church on a needs-to-know basis in so far as it affects the congregation and as agreed to by the Church Leadership.

Preamble

The Pastoral Committee is always concerned to promote good relationships between Pastors and churches. There is evidence from the past that a number of Pastors and churches have experienced varying degrees of trauma because of a deterioration in such relationships. We wish to empower churches and Pastors in their quest toward healthy relationships and to increase our sense of family responsibility as Baptists while encouraging our tradition of mutual voluntary accountability as a Union of churches. Such a process acknowledges the imperfection of churches and Pastors. Given this imperfection we know our relationships will need all the Holy Spirit-filled openness they can get. This process seeks to facilitate that openness under our Lord Jesus.

We are attempting to take Biblical principles and put them into contemporary practice. We acknowledge the difficulty in relating to each other with loving, Godly integrity. This process seeks to provide some assistance in relating in a disciplined and healthy atmosphere. Unhealthy Church/Pastor relationships are a poor witness to our society, are not good pastoral care of either Church or Pastor and are expensive emotionally, spiritually and financially.

The following process is not one which will be enforced. We are a family of churches who co-operating together on a voluntary basis. Our fervent hope is that over time this process will become a natural part of the way we behave as churches; perhaps all churches will effectively write them into their own mission statements.

We envisage any facilitating to be carried out by someone in whom both Pastor and leadership agree. The Pastoral Committee will, upon request, provide names and addresses of "suggested" moderators. Such people will be those whom the Pastoral Committee believes have the necessary spiritual maturity and life skills to help in the process. If the church leadership wants to use someone else then it is at liberty to do so. The Pastoral Committee may well be approached to set aside some money in its budget to assist churches in the meeting of any costs associated with this process.

Timing and frequency of this process is up to the church's leadership. We suggest it should be frequent enough to be of use, but not too frequent to be a distraction. Perhaps an attempt at an annual consultation to coincide with the election of diaconate may be helpful.

Introduction

The Pastoral Committee offers the following recommendations in consultation with the Executive of the Baptist Union of Tasmania. We submit them to the constituent Churches of the Union as part of their normal growth in contemporary society and deal with both general and specific effects on several aspects of Church/Pastor relationships: Beginning, Growing Together and Parting. They are intended to encourage our mutual growth, integrity and accountability which, for the sake of each other, need to be made more explicit from time to time. We recognise that the relationship between Church and Pastor(s) can never be totally regulated by the Union Administration or the Union of Churches. However, while we do seek to encourage certain life-style choices and to discourage others, the final choice is always in the hands of the individuals.

Thus, the Pastoral Committee, in consultation with the Executive of the Baptist Union of Tasmania, recommends the following to its constituent Churches of the Union:

1. **General:**

- a. That the Baptist Union of Tasmania (B.U.T.) actively seek to create an atmosphere of mutual accountability between Pastor(s) and Congregation;
- b. That the (B.U.T.) strongly encourages each Pastor to spend at least one day per year debriefing his or her pastoral ministry with a skilled "other." The primary role of this "other" would be to listen rather than provide unsolicited advice;
- c. That on-going "Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation" occur as a matter of normal Church life, perhaps on an annual basis. (Such a process is more clearly defined below.)

2. **The Beginning of a Church/Pastor Journey:**

- a. That the Baptist Union of Tasmania through the Pastoral Committee, actively seek, identify, empower, equip, and appoint a person or persons whose primary responsibility is one of Pastoral Facilitator;
- b. That during the process of searching for a Pastor, a Church be encouraged to use the services of a Pastoral Facilitator, the outcome of which will, in all likelihood be a written report of some kind;
- c. That when a Church issues a "call" to a prospective Pastor, that both Church and Pastor be informed as to the content of the Pastoral Facilitator's report strictly on a needs-to-know basis;

3. **Regular Pastor/Church interactions:**

- a. That whenever a "Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation" takes place, the Pastoral Committee, on request, suggests personnel and/or appropriate resources to assist in the process;
- b. That when a "Ministry & Church Leadership Evaluation" takes place that the meeting at which any recommendation, of any sort, is presented be separated from the meeting at which the vote is taken. A period of time of between one and two weeks is suggested in order for the Church to have sufficient time to pray and seek the Lord's will on such recommendation(s);