Pastoral Search

(The 7 Cs)

These 7 Cs are areas for search teams to probe in seeking a good fit for their next pastor. [These assume the theological fit has already been addressed.]

Evaluate:

[Please *don't tell* them about what you are asking/evaluating! Don't read them the **Cs** below or the things in brackets. Just ask the questions. And, of course, adapt these to your own needs and add your own questions. Each search team should come up with at least one more question to help evaluate each **C**.]

Character

[What do people who know him say about him? This could be asked of his references. It is also a good practice after talking to a reference to ask him/her for the name of someone else who knows the potential pastor well. Call *that* person for a *less* bias opinion! *Caution:* If the fact that the potential candidate is seeking another position is *not* public knowledge, please **do not** make this "second" call.]

Ask:

* What discipline do you practice that best helps you follow Jesus? Explain why this is so good for you.
* What would a friend say is a strong virtue of yours?
* What would your wife say is a character trait that needs more development?
* What do you *fear?*
* Why are you seeking a change from your present ministry?

Care

[Often in Scripture we see the compassion of Jesus. Jesus had plenty to do, but His care and compassion for people directed many of His actions. Your pastor cannot personally *take care of* all the people, but he can strive to make sure there is *care for* all the people.]

Ask:

* What do you like most in the normal Pastoral responsibilities?

[Pastoral care will probably not be in the top 3 of many pastors strengths/ desires. That's OK. In Acts 6 we see that "prayer and ministry of the word" are expected at the top for most. But if pastoral care is not mentioned, ask:]

* What is the best way for "pastoral care" to be practiced within a local church?
* What would you see as your specific role in *our* church in pastoral care?

[It is my bias that pastors have to truly care about their people, not just about proclaiming the word. But again, *they* alone cannot provide good pastoral care for all the people.]

Chemistry

[This is mostly subjective, but how do you feel as you interact with him? Will you be *wanting* to work with this person?]

Ask:

* What excites you about ministry?
* Finish this statement: "I feel most satisfied with my life when . . ."
* Tell me about your hobbies. [Probe with theses.]

Capability

[Does he have the ability, training, experience, common sense, desire, emotional strength and understanding of people (EQ) to do the job you are asking of him?]

Ask:

* What do you see as your strengths as a pastor?
  Why do you think this?
* What type of people are easiest for you to lead?
* What kind of people are difficult for you to lead?
* What kind of leader do you see yourself as?
* Where will we need to support you in your pastoral role? [All pastors will have certain areas that others will need to provide support for him in order for him to more effectively use his strengths.]

Coachability

[Is he "coachable"? Does he listen well to others? Does he seek others' advice? Does he adjust his *excellent* plan after listening to the wisdom of others? Prideful guys are often not very coachable.]

Ask:

* Do you have someone you would call your mentor? If so, tell us about that relationship.
* How have you adjusted some of your *excellent* ideas after listening to someone else's advise?
* Besides your mentor, who has taught you the most regarding living as a man of God?
  [If needed] -- "In what way?"

Courage

[It takes courage to follow Jesus. The "easy" path or the road of "least resistance" is seldom the direction God wants His pastors to walk. Pastors who are following God will not please all the people they are called to shepherd. Does he have the courage to take a Spirit-led "risk"?]

* What are some significant changes that you have spearheaded in your ministry?
* What "good idea" have you tried in ministry that failed? [He may not think of

something quickly. We *all* like to forget our failures! But if he has courage to change things, he will probably think of something. Give him time . . . but don't make it awkward for him.]

* If you were to rate yourself as a "change agent" on a scale of 1-10 (1 is lousy; 10 is fantastic), how would you rate yourself? ____ Why?

[Please . . . if the church does not want someone coming who will be more of a "change agent", then don't ask someone strong in this area to come. If you do ask someone strong in this area, then the leadership needs to have the courage to back him in leadership agreed upon changes! If he is a change agent, there will be messes! But the messes should result in a church more fully and faithfully following God.]

Cheerful

[By the time you get to this, you will already know if he has a sense of humor. Thus, there are no questions to follow. Nehemiah 8:10, ". . . for the joy of the LORD is your strength." This is not quite the same as a sense of humor, but if we always look like we have a headache, it will be difficult for us to encourage others -- which is one of the main roles of the pastor (2 Tim. 4:2). Of course, not all is joyful and there are times for great seriousness and solemnity. But it seems true that as we know and follow Jesus well, His joy will be seen in us (John 15:11).]

In Addition:

Most Midwest District EFCs' by-laws state that the pastor needs to transfer his ordination to the EFCA or, if not ordained, pursue credentialing with the EFCA (license, then ordination). If yours does not, please *require* this for your new pastor.

For the sake of EFCA unity, accountability, camaraderie and "iron sharpening iron", please also *require* that your pastor be part an MWD area Pastor Network (formerly pastor cluster meeting), usually meeting once per month, September — May; please send your pastor and wife to the District's annual TRANSFORM conference; and please send them to the biennial National EFCA Conference. Each of these events are truly an investment in the life of your pastor and, thus, an investment in the life of your church.

Noah Palmer
revised 3/21

Warmup Questions

For Search Team

[Ask them to each write down their answers. I'm assessing the harmony and agreement of the search team as they seek their next pastor.]

1. What are the two best ministries of your church?

2. What are the two highest values of your church? [Values as: honesty; compassion; missions; authenticity; harmony; integrity; evangelism; team work; grace; serving; discipleship; righteousness; godliness; personal disciplines; prayer; community outreach; etc.]

3. What characteristics or strengths of your previous pastor do you want your next pastor to possess?

4. What additional strengths or abilities do you believe your next pastor should have?

5. Where do you believe God wants to direct your church? What is God's vision for your church?

[If they are not in close agreement on these things, they will need to discuss them further and get more on the same page as they seek God's man for their church.]