

Professional Church Leadership Response Group

June 2013

6-18-13 4:30 pm

- What issues are you seeing?
 - Riley (Dakotas) – interims are hard
 - Don't have retired pastors
 - Churches are spread out
 - Talent pool is shallow
 - Pastors are starting older and don't have time to get trained to handle large churches, so large churches can be hard to fill.
 - Some churches aren't open to female pastors
 - Seminarians come out with major debt
 - Frank (ABCOPAD)
 - Some younger leaders are more talented/equipped to handle large churches and are 'jumping over' medium churches
 - John (Central)
 - Interims are retired pastors from small churches who are not equipped to deal with multi-staff larger churches
 - Different regions/churches are competing for the same pool.
 - Seminarians aren't going into the pastorate.
 - Dakotas are culturally (and geographically) very different from other regions.
- Why don't seminarians go into churches
 - High pressure; low salary
 - Pastors are not well-treated
 - Many churches are not healthy and get less healthy without good leadership – it's a cycle
- Pastoral stewardship – we need to protect and maximize our pastoral resources
 - Pastors aren't trained in how to find a church (like we train churches to find pastors)
 - A good fit will multiply the positive impact
 - Teach pastors to pace themselves
- Many pastorates are becoming part time and churches are in survival mode
 - This requires some specific skill sets on the parts of interim ministers
 - They can no longer be maintenance pastors
 - Interims need to be intentional
- How do you handle the boundaries about interim pastors not becoming candidates?
 - Be intentional from the beginning
 - Tell churches they aren't being set up to hire that person (the interim)
 - Not a problem as long as the person isn't "playing for the call"
- Are you seeing more 'unhealth' in churches

- Frank – yes, because the context has changed dramatically
 - Churches don't want to move forward, but want to go back to 'glory days'
- Have to teach people what it means to be Baptist
 - Churches think it doesn't matter if they get a Baptist pastor or not
 - Make sure leadership expectations are congruent (b/t church and pastor)
- Do you seek trained interim pastors or train them yourselves?
 - Ordination standards are low
- Build conversation bridge between seminaries & regions
 - Seminarians not trained to pastor in 21st century
- In Puerto Rico, pastors are in churches first, and then the region pays for seminary
- Anything else?
 - Riley – I'm the only one who has the job of encouraging my pastors, and there needs to be more people doing this.
 - ABCOPAD fostered clergy reading groups
 - Care & feeding of our clergy
 - These conversations are valuable

6-19-13 11:00 am

- Marcia Patton (Evergreen region)
 - Pastors need to be able to listen
 - Pastors have to meet congregations where they are
 - Both the pastor and search committee need to work to make sure that the pastor is equipped for that church
 - Should partner with Ministers Council to work on ordination standards
 - How do we recognize international education?
 - In crisis, there is no good way to deal with an ordination that should be rescinded
 - She likes that the denomination has continued to do the Orientation to ABC Life conference, and she thinks it should continue to be paired with a clergy renewal event.
 - It would be valuable to get some time with the REMC.
- What bubbles up from these conversations?
 - The issue of the call was a recurring theme.
 - Skills and training that are needed by pastors
 - Bridge between seminaries and pastors
 - Facilitate conversation between some regional execs and seminary presidents
 - Churches don't always know what they need (pastor vs. preacher)

- Interim pastors see themselves as 'placeholders' rather than the bridge between the church and the pastor it needs
 - Stewardship of the call/person
- Palmer grant money
 - Use on new spiritual life/formation program with Brad Berglund for young people
 - There are
- There are specialized ministries beyond parish ministry
 - We may need to focus on this anyway because we may not be able to broaden our task and handle it
- Maybe we need to come up with 'best practices,' looking at what other denominations are doing. We can't force things, obviously, but we don't want to fall beyond everyone else.
 - Maybe we can craft a document of 'best practices.'