

# **Starting Again With a New Church**

*A Pastors Guide  
for Making a  
Healthy Pastoral  
Transition*



*Compiled from many sources and many folks by Rev. Micheal Selleck*

## ***Starting Again With a New Church***

*Making a Healthy Transition for the Pastor*

The idea that once your appointment is announced the pastor becomes a 'lame duck' is a myth, and according to Edwin Friedman in his book, *Generation to Generation*, it is, to say the very least, also shortsighted. The change of leaders is one of the most emotionally charged events any family system endures. The nature of your separation from a congregation can have more lasting effects in that congregation than all your previous years of effort to build and shape the faith within that church family. How you function through the leaving process may make a more lasting witness to your faith and the gospel you proclaim than all your passionately preached messages from the pulpit. Leaving is a time to walk-the-walk more than talk-the-talk. It is a time to convert your deepest felt beliefs into a guard for your tongue and a guide for your actions.

The excitement and challenge of moving to a new appointment is real. At the times when our lives feel overloaded, keeping ourselves organized and streamlined can be harder than ever.

Saying goodbye is just as critical as a healthy hello, but sometimes more complicated. Dealing with the past can be fraught with concerns about how some things are said, addressed, left out, included, and there is sometimes as much negative baggage as there is positive. Because there is so many ways to think about the past, so many angles to consider, it's all the more important that a goodbye be done very well and as thoroughly as possible. Each church will need to address its unique situation prayerfully and thoughtfully in this component.

There are many aspects to consider, but two jump out right away; handling your personal concerns as you prepare for the physical move to a new location and how you manage your own issues of farewell, and secondly, how can you prepare things for the next pastor to follow you.

The suggestions here are not exhaustive in any sense. These are just some that ought to be given consideration. If you have additional stories or ideas you'd like to add, change, or delete from this living document, please e-mail your suggestions to me, Mike Selleck at [mselleck@ngumc.org](mailto:mselleck@ngumc.org)

For Christ and Church  
Rev. Micheal Selleck  
Director of Connectional Ministries  
North Georgia Conference  
The United Methodist Church

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## PASTOR'S PERSONAL CHECK LIST FOR THE NEW APPOINTMENT

As the twelve North Georgia district superintendents and I have met to prepare for this year's holy responsibility of appointment making, we spent many days going through every church, every extension ministry, and every clergyperson name by name. We have prayed that the Holy Spirit would guide us and direct us in our sacred task of superintending the ministry of this wonderful annual conference.

After valuable learning years of ministry, I have observed some very practical realities about effective ministry that I hope every pastor understands. The following thoughts are offered in the hope that they will be helpful to the faithful men and women who have answered God's call to the unique itinerant ministry of our denomination and who are serving our local congregations.

I've learned that effective United Methodist pastors

- ...have, and nurture daily, a winsome, joyous, vibrant and authentic personal faith in, and relationship with, Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
- ...sincerely love God and people and clearly demonstrate that love immediately and consistently through Christ-like servanthood;
- ...show enthusiastic gratitude for the particular appointment being served from the very start;
- ...remember their sacred covenantal responsibilities to the annual conference through which they have been appointed to serve a particular congregation;
- ...complain about almost nothing;
- ...demonstrate the adaptability needed to serve their present appointments;
- ...are self-starters who serve with high energy;
- ...prepare well, and then deliver well, meaningful and inspiring sermons;
- ...serve with absolute integrity while maintaining the highest standards of holy living;
- ...encourage and practice legal and ethical financial disciplines personally and in the church;
- ...creatively mentor laity for mission and ministry;
- ...teach and model generosity by practicing tithing as God's minimum standard of giving;
- ...uphold the primacy and authority of scripture and value Christian tradition, reason, and experience;

...physically move into the church community and also live in the church parsonage where one is provided;

...quickly visit, care for, and genuinely respect long-time members while reaching out to new people and leading in making disciples of Jesus Christ;

...do not change worship, or other traditions, before establishing loving trust with that congregation;

...do not hire family members or put them in high profile leadership positions;

...realize that an autocratic, or military, leadership style of administration is often ultimately fatal for the pastor;

...are completely faithful to The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.

...are deeply involved in the community to which they are appointed in a way that is a faithful and living witness to United Methodist Social Principles.

Like you, I want every appointment to be blessed by God so that every congregation and ministry setting will flourish and every clergyperson will be effective in his or her ministry. The North Georgia Cabinet and I most sincerely ask you to join us in prayer that this may be so.

Dear God, let it be!

Mike Watson  
Resident Bishop  
North Georgia Episcopal Area  
The United Methodist Church

## PASTOR'S PERSONAL REFLECTION CHECK LIST

Part of the good-bye process is best done in isolation, reflection, prayer, and journaling. Listed below are some questions that Bob Winstead uses to help manage stress and dig under the layers of protection we put up to protect ourselves from hurt and pain. These are questions worthy of a "day apart."

1. What do you consider your most important accomplishments in this congregation?
2. What will you miss most about this place and this ministry? What are you not going to miss?
3. Were there things you had hoped to do but were not able to accomplish?
4. Write out one incident you handled well that you might use as a model in the future.
5. Write out one incident you managed poorly and wish you could do over again.
6. What dreams have you seen realized, and which will you have to relinquish as you leave?
7. Name five people on whose lives you feel you have made a significant impact.
8. Note at least two critical points in the life of the congregation where you feel you made the right decision and took the risk of convincing this congregation to follow you.
9. Can you think of a point where you made the wrong decision and wish you had decided differently?
10. What in this ministry took the heaviest toll on your body and spirit?
11. What were the things that always seemed to refresh your spirit?
12. How did this congregation bless you and your family? (Optional question for single clergy: How did the congregation support and affirm you as a single person?)
13. How was this congregation hard on your family? (How was it difficult for this congregation to support you as a single person?)
14. During your tenure, was there any time you felt this congregation let you down? Describe why you felt that way. To what degree have you recovered from the experience?
15. Thinking of the future of this congregation, what would you say is its unrealized potential?
16. What will be some of the difficult challenges your successor will have to face?
17. Who are some of the people you will miss most? Who are the people who will have difficulty seeing you leave?
18. Have you made a list of things you have normally taken care of that someone will have to be responsible for during the transition? If no, how and when will you make it?

## PASTOR'S CHECK LIST FOR SAYING GOOD BYE

### **1. Deal with Your Personnel Issues**

If you cannot actually fix the big problems as you depart, at least set the stage for changes that may come soon. Please consider not leaving an entire urgent negative situation for the new pastor, thus making a good clean start for him or her almost impossible. This is a tricky gift to give the incoming pastor as it plays against our natural tendencies of having a church hold you the highest esteem possible as you depart. This may call for you to martyr some of your legacy with the congregation as a necessary price to helping the congregation truly have an excellent chance at going to the next level with the new pastor assigned. Pray about this, and find a gentle and loving way to do the right thing(s) as much as it is viable and possible. Better to do a little bit of good than to pretend 'it will all work out eventually' as you leave a predictable mess for your successor that you know will likely cost him or her some skin.

### **2. Clean Up Your Office Computer**

Clean up computer and picture files that won't be helpful or necessary for the next pastor. Especially personal e-mail addresses, any personal correspondence, family photos, and 'favorite' browser sites, downloads, histories, and the like. If this task is difficult for you, find someone you know who can help.

Leave important files on the computer and another copy with the church secretary with file extensions that are helpful and clear, i.e., Christmas programs should be labeled as Christmas – Advent Candle Liturgy, '07, not cmascdllit.07

### **3. Forward Your Mail and Update Contact Info**

This is a time consuming step, but a very necessary one. Few things begin to chaff at the new pastor than daily receiving piles of mail addressed to the previous pastor, not months after the fact, but years! While not all the vendors can be contacted, certainly you can do the work of letting family, dear friends, your alumni associations, boards, and the like, know you have moved and to no longer use the old address for subsequent correspondence. This applies to both your home address and your mail that goes to the church office address. As you consider the changes think at a minimum of the following:

Obtain an IRS Change of Address form (Form 8822) by calling 1-800-829-1040 or by going to the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and then clicking on "forms" to download a request form.

Contact the Board of Elections in the county of your new residence to request a form to change your voter registration.

Notify the post office of your change of address. From your local post office, you can pick up change of address packets, including change of address postcards.

Change your address with any magazines or other periodicals you receive. Many have a toll-free number listed near the front of the publication under subscriptions or on their web site. Remember some require 60 to 90 days to activate a change.

Email friends or businesses if your email address will be changing with your move.

Request medical, dental, and veterinarian records for all family members and pets. You will need to do so in writing to include a signature of release. Some doctors will release copies directly to you while others will require the records be sent directly to your new doctors.

Leave your new phone number at the church office.

#### **4. Stamped Envelopes through the End of the Year**

As much as you try to stop it, mail will still come to you at your previous address. You can ease some of the drudgery of your successor trying to determine what should be forwarded or is fodder for the circular file, and how quickly kept mail needs to get to you, by providing this easy option.

Leave a packet of large manila envelopes with the church you are leaving, pre stamped AND pre-addressed with the address of your new location. As your mail at the old church piles up, it can be lobbed into one of your envelopes and sent to you on a timely basis. This step is especially helpful if you get royalty checks or rebates from organizations which don't seem to update addresses in a timely way.

#### **5. Own Your Move!**

At times, itinerating pastors honestly have a hard time explaining the appointment process to the congregation he or she is leaving, specifically 'their' appointment. It can be a complex procedure with many nuances that push and pull the appointment sequence in one direction or another leaving even the most veteran pastor scratching his or her head. Other times you know exactly what was involved but the truth of it all is hard and sharing the reasons could be unnecessarily hurtful if spoken carelessly. In these cases, pastors need to be very careful to remember that what and how they speak has ramifications beyond their immediate situation; at times, long lasting consequences. Do no harm.

It must be remembered at times of transition that ordination vows don't provide for a "say-so" in an appointment. There is no Book of Discipline promise of delight and peace with each move, and nothing at all about prior consent and agreement from members and/or leadership of affected churches. The hardest truth of all is no guarantee is stated that each move would be upward in terms of salary, budget, facility, or size of membership. (This is a reminder of how vital it is church members clearly understand United Methodists have lived under this system for our entire history as a denomination, and clergy knew, agreed, and committed to this method from day one.)

Explaining a pastoral move in a clear, honest, and historical way with tenderness is fundamental. People learn from what you say, they build opinions and construct attitudes from your 'hallway' comments as much as from your 'class' instructions. Be careful to say things, regardless of feelings about a new appointment; in ways that help congregants understand and accept that moving to a new location, any location, is part of the vow and the normal church order. Nothing is more damaging to people than to hear negative and derogatory comments about pastoral transitions. Disagreeable talk about moving leaves a bitter taste in their mouths about the church, and negatively taints things for the incoming pastor.

I am constantly amazed at how quickly our laity can communicate with each other, especially when it comes to gathering intelligence data on 'their' new pastor. This being said, I am also constantly surprised when exiting pastors say things suggesting he or she didn't want to leave the church, didn't ask for this appointment, don't know what the Cabinet was thinking, have no idea what is going on, etc. These types of remarks convey to the new church families a reluctance and resentment about you coming to serve and lead them. Few things can be more harmful and damaging. This is especially sad when you have said negative things only as a way to ease the pain of the people you're leaving behind, unaware that these

kinds of words can ripple out beyond their original intent. Not 'owning your move' damages you and the incoming pastor in unintended but serious ways.

Work prayerfully through your feelings regarding an appointment. Find the words, the attitude, and the spirit to say things that support the appointment process, the denomination, and provides the best chance for a clean and exciting start for you in the new church and the incoming pastor to your present church.

Nothing is worse than hearing of the occasional pastor who out-and-out lies to his or her congregation regarding why a move is taking place. Most often this happens when a pastor actually sought a change but tells the congregation he or she has no idea why this new appointment is happening. This lie usually comes in the form of blaming the District Superintendent, or the Bishop, even though the pastor was the instigator. Don't fall into this scapegoat type of blaming to account for a church move in any case, but especially if in fact you were are the originator. Own your move with gentle tenderness and graceful honesty.

Know your disengagement style. If you don't understand this, do some light reading on the subject. For example, if you like to deny big changes, saying something akin to, "It's not like I'm moving to India! We'll see each other around," rather than say good-bye, you may need to face some of your own baggage around disengagement.

Acknowledge the grief process. Leaving means significant changes, to you, the people you're leaving, and your family. There is a process to leaving friends and it's important the process be at least acknowledged if not honored. Be aware.

#### **6. Take Care of Your Part of the Parsonage Prep**

If you have been living in a parsonage, work hard to leave it in better shape than when you moved in. This especially applies to damages from pets and hard use from your family. Items such as this are your responsibility, not the church trustees. This means making time, providing cash, and honest acknowledgement, for what is your responsibility as you prepare to vacate the church property. If dogs have scratched the paint off the door, marred the wood frame beyond a brief sanding, consider that you should replace the jamb. If the carpets have been soiled or damaged due to your living style with or without pets, it will need to be replaced with you perhaps paying for a portion or all of the costs. If windows have been broken, or walls damaged, pay for repairs.

It's too easy to rationalize that 'this or that' was in bad shape when you arrived so you have no sense of responsibility for your part in subsequent damages. This is not about "normal wear and tear," but "abnormal" wear and tear that shortens the normal life expectancy of carpet, drapes, paint, tile, doors, screens, and wall coverings. Abnormal uses are the responsibility of the exiting pastor/family and must be addressed fairly.

Take a walk through the parsonage with a church trustee or two and be truthful and honest about what damages and unusual wear you have been responsible for. Talk about how you can pay for the repairs or the cost of materials if someone is willing to make the repairs. This should be done as soon as you know you are moving. If the trustees choose to give you a pass, that's one thing. Assuming you deserve a pass without checking and discussing, is quite another thing. Do a walk through and be ready to pay for damages until you hear otherwise.

Check carefully with your successor about the telephone and other utilities to arrange for transfer without interruption of service. Whose name should the new hookups go in (power, water, trash, telephone, internet, gas etc)? What address should bills and details be sent to? Does the church pay for anything? What kind of furnace does the parsonage have propane, electric, heat pump? What are the approximate costs the previous pastor paid for utilities? Also, what is the pest control situation at the parsonage? Who does lawn care maintenance? Who pays for maintenance of the yard? Etc.

Reminding those moving into parsonages, especially for the first time, to ask these questions is very helpful. If you pay your own utilities, be sure to get a final reading the day you vacate the parsonage.

### **7. Who Pays for the Move?**

Check in advance with the Pastor-Parish or Board Chairperson at the church you are being appointed as to how move can best be handled.

*(Standing Rule # 18) D. 3. Moving Day and Expenses - Moving Day for pastors shall ordinarily be Thursday of the week following the regular session of the annual conference; provided, if unusual circumstances prevail, the cabinet may change the date to a more suitable one; provided, further, the secretary of the cabinet shall have notice of the change published in the North Georgia Advocate not less than thirty (30) days prior to the convening of the annual conference. Departing clergy shall vacate their parsonages by one o'clock on the afternoon of Moving Day. District superintendents shall encourage the pastoral charges to pay moving expenses for newly assigned clergy moving within the bounds of the North Georgia Conference.*

The standing rules of our conference state that the “receiving” church should be responsible for costs associated with the physical move of belongings. This means that you will need to have a conversation with the receiving church before you sign any contracts or arrange for any particulars. The fact of the matter is the church you are going to may be able to move you themselves without the expense of paying a moving company. This is something you need to consider and be open to having such a conversation. Moving companies can be expensive and in these times, viable alternatives that save money need to be considered. As you move into a new place, don't let the first impression be of you refusing to work with them at keeping costs low or avoiding costs, if that is a realistic option.

Movers make cost estimates based on weight. If you move your book library personally in your vehicle over a few weeks rather than giving that role to the moving company, it can save serious cash. Consider this, and like minded ideas, as an option to help the new church with this expense. If you have items that you want to assure won't get damaged or broken; move those items yourself! Don't risk a moving company and all the paperwork and other matters if they damage something. Better safe than sorry.

If you have a vast amount of “things” to be moved, and there is no way to avoid a moving company due to distance or other complications, and you know the receiving church doesn't have the cash to fund the move, talk to you District Superintendent right away. Most of them are willing to work with you and your new church to find a way through, including perhaps, underwriting some of the costs if necessary. Call BEFORE you make decisions.

Remember, this is one of the first openly financial interactions you will likely have with your new folks. Show reasonableness and frugality as you work through this first task.

If you and the receiving church agree to use a moving company, choose reputable movers. Ask for suggestions from the church or current pastor of where you're going regarding companies they may have

had good experiences with. Consider getting estimates from movers where you now live and from your new destination area. Sometimes, significant savings can be found.

Be specific when you provide information to the movers for estimates. Watch for ambiguous information in an estimate. Be clear on whether or not the bid includes an assumption for a certain number of boxes; some movers tag additional costs beyond a set number of boxes.

Determine if you are selecting replacement value or a flat amount for damages, if you decide to secure insurance. Make sure you have a written contract of your agreement.

### **8. Make a List of Particular Goodbye's**

Develop a plan of action, with an accompanying time schedule for specific goodbyes. You should consider checking this list with a few other folks who can help you identify for each category below.

- a. Who are the people who are going to need special time and attention because your relationship over time has been difficult and troubled?
- b. Who are the special people with whom you want to visit personally to say "good-bye?"
- c. Who are the people whom you, at least, want to call on the phone before leaving?
- d. Who are the people to whom you want to write a special letter?
- e. Which groups in the church do you want to drop in on before leaving?
- f. Visit your Sunday school classes with a personal message of farewell and appreciation

### **9. Have an Honest Conversation with the New Pastor**

For lead pastors, once you know who is coming in after you, call and offer congratulations, support, and a chance to meet on neutral turf to have some holy conversation. This is a time to be open, and yet careful and completely Christ-like as you can be. There is never a time to 'poison the well' for the new pastor by sharing gossip and bias especially as it relates to specific individuals. It's quite possible to say your piece about folks without being malicious or mean. Stick to the helpful facts and keep it gently honest, sharing insights about how the 'new person' might best work with the people you've known in the life of the congregation.

Issues for conversation:

- a. Key players who are helpful and committed.
- b. Information about how the church structure works - on paper and in reality (if they're different.)
- c. Key calendar events that need attention and attendance.
- d. Any plans for new programs, staff, buildings, etc.
- e. Status of sick and dying, shut-in's, and elderly, and recent deaths of note
- f. Establish mutually agreed upon rules for funerals, weddings, baptisms. Determine what is acceptable and helpful in terms of presence at the old church and when 'enough is enough.' The incoming pastor has the sole vote in this matter, so listen more than talk in this aspect of the conversation.
- g. How you will handle parishioners who call you for advice, comments, etc. Again, let the incoming pastor guide this conversation as he or she is the sole voter.

If you are an associate pastor, it is not advisable that you make contact with the associate following you for a formal private conversation prior to the move. While such a dialogue can perhaps be done well, that is without spiraling downward into quasi-gossip and innuendo, there is almost no chance that it will be perceived as anything but collusion which bodes badly for both persons.

#### **10. A Pastorally Notated Pictorial Directory (Confidential)**

If there is a congregational directory (pictorial or otherwise) have the current pastor make annotations alongside the pictures or names of parishioners. Leaving a quick notation of who is in leadership, or who is related to whom, who is active, and similar brief non-judgmental details, can greatly assist the new pastor in getting to know folks more quickly and avoid missteps. This item should be confidential between the two pastors.

#### **11. Ask your successor what you can do to be helpful.**

Remember that both of you are colleagues in ministry and both are going through the challenge of a new appointment. Pray and discuss how you can be mutually supportive of one another in the process.

#### **12. Organize and Update all Church Records**

Be sure the membership roll is current and up-to-date

Provide a list of all changes to the roll since the last charge conference.

Provide a record of baptism and marriages

Provide pertinent files: Charge Conference records, Annual Report Forms, Evangelism Reports, etc.

#### **13. Hospitals and Homes**

Provide a list of area hospitals and nursing homes with their phone numbers and information about how to obtain clergy identification, if needed.

#### **14. Personnel/Church Leadership/Volunteers**

Provide a list of who is responsible for the bulletin, newsletter, etc.

Provide a list of Administrative Board/Council members.

Provide a list of Sunday school teachers, youth leaders/workers, etc.

Provide a list of individuals that are available for pulpit supply.

#### **15. Policies**

Leave a copy of all church policies - Safe Sanctuaries, building use, weddings, funerals, personnel, etc.

Leave information in reference to any ongoing arrangements with individual groups - AA, Boy or Girl Scouts, etc.

#### **16. Church Schedule**

Provide a meeting schedule for Board/Council, Committees, UMM, UMW, UMY, etc.

Provide dates for events scheduled by the church. Include annual events such as Christmas Bazaar, Soup Kitchen, Mother-Daughter dinners, etc.

Provide information pertaining to pending legal matters - wills, possible liability situations.

Provide a list of continuing ecumenical experiences, such as a community Thanksgiving service with the local churches rotating as the host congregation.

#### **17. The Church Building**

Leave your set of keys, well defined.

Provide name(s) and phone numbers of those who open/close the building(s) on Sundays.

Make sure, as much as possible, to gather any warranties, maintenance contracts, and manuals on all office equipment, heating/cooling systems, etc.

Be sure your church office is cleaned thoroughly and in good repair.

Leave a list of any maintenance items requiring attention or a schedule of things on the docket.

### **18. Parsonage Administration**

Leave a set of keys, well defined.

Put together a file of all appliance manuals and warranties - refrigerator, dishwasher, washer, dryer, heating/air conditioning unit, etc.

Identify switches or fuse box circuits.

Leave some pre-stamped, pre-addressed manila envelopes with your new address at the parsonage.

Leave your new phone number on a card near the parsonage phone.

### **19. Household Checklist**

At least a month before moving day, begin to gather moving supplies, boxes, tape, and markers.

Professional movers suggest you begin three piles; keep & pack, pitch & throw, sell & give.

### **20. About Two Weeks Before Moving**

Consider having all parsonage utilities put in the churches name to avoid the need for security deposits and to ensure the current phone number will be continued. If the phone and utilities are in the current pastor's name, try to request they be listed in the churches name or at least the new pastor's name.

Notify your insurance company of the changes to your household and/or car insurance policy address.

If appropriate, notify your Internet service and cable providers of termination of service date.

## PASTOR'S CHURCH CHECK LIST FOR SAYING HELLO

### **1. Begin with prayers!**

Pray without ceasing. Use small breath prayers. Use humble knee bending prayers. Whisper stuck in traffic prayers. Recite family prayers. Offer all kinds of prayers for discernment, wisdom, grace, and motivation. Keep it up.

### **2. Focus on what is working well, not only on the negatives.**

One of the risks is that when the pastor arrives at a new setting, the first task is to fix things that are broken, aim things that are missing the target, pick up what is dropped, set down what is dead or not working, etc. All of these things are good in a way, but they all have one thing in common too – they begin and focus on the negative. Without careful thought, pastors in the new setting begin to see all the wrong and none of the right, or good, or excellent. It takes maturity and wisdom to manage the negative while keeping an eye on the positive. Mind your human tendency to see and speak only of what is wrong, not done, and so forth. It edifies no one, and puts your new charges in hard spot as well.

### **3. Visit your shut-ins and elderly early.**

They're the ones who share and talk to others most quickly. Don't put off visitation as a low priority task. This is a critical first task. Start early, take your time and do it well.

### **4. The Motivational Mixed Messages.**

When you begin your new appointment with the "let's-turn-this-thing-around-and-bring-in-new-folks-and-grow-this-church" challenge, it has the potential to do two negative things. First it can easily suggest that the people in front of you aren't good enough. After all, you've not really had a chance to get to know them or the issues of why things are the way that they are. Even if statistics are on your side and demographics are as clear as crystal, beginning with a nuance that your new congregants aren't effective is NOT the way to begin your first few months. Secondly, the folks in front of you may know well and good that they need to get out into the community and spread the good news, but before that begins, they may be hoping you will see them, get to know them in such a way that you may point out gifts and graces in them that they might be the solution to the future. The point here is this, be mindful of unintended mixed messages. The best way to avoid any missteps is to look for the good, see the blessings before you, pray that God will show you how to blend and mix what you have in who you have to accomplish what God wants done rather than what you see needs to be done. Start prayerfully and carefully.

### **5. Avoid the "At my old church we did this or that..." or the ever popular, "I've done this ministry thing for many years, I'll show you the way..."**

Sometimes the new pastor feels like he or she may need to press certain issues to get things moving and make a bad choice. Rather than take the time to truly build consensus with meetings, conversations, calls, and collaborative effort, an easier and quicker method is chosen. Due to time constraints, we will sometimes claim a professional experience and ability above what the masses have or need.

This is another risky mixed message (see above) that has the possibility of running amok with the leadership of the church. You want to lead them out of the wilderness and you've done the trip many times, so you'll do it again. However, a key aspect of our calling as leaders is to create more leaders, not more followers, and leaders aren't developed by telling them, "Relax, I'll take care of everything...I've done it before."

Good leadership is hard work, not expedient or simple, which is why perhaps good leadership is sometimes hard to find. However, there is a tipping point in the hard work of creating leaders when the pastor's hard work gives way to many helpful hands doing the ministries, and leadership becomes a new joy where God is praised in all things. It's a better way!

#### **6. Don't treat this appointment as a stepping stone**

No church is hoping for an effective pastor who will move soon after arriving. Pastors know they have only a certain number of years to fulfill a lifetime calling and few are completely void of some level of ambition. The human nature of wanting to excel is compelling and unless managed as part of the pastor's character development, can send terrible messages to congregants.

While pastors move a few times in a career, most churches have been transitioning pastors for a hundred years or more and they know when pastor's heart is more focused on their appointive path rather than them, the new congregation. They can tell just as if it is an odor from the pastor's clothes. Some churches have resigned themselves to being churches that raise young pastors for a season and then expect them to move on, they know that but it doesn't mean they like it.

If you arrive and only put one foot in the circle of commitment to that congregation they'll know it and respond to you differently than if you put both feet in the circle. More to the point, the pastor will function differently. Problems are faced differently when it's believed the move won't last long. People are managed differently and relationships are stunted when a pastor is seeking the next good move to advance his or her path. When it's believed that you could be at an appointment for the long haul, leaders do better work, more lasting and meaningful work, more Christ-like transformative work than when they don't think they'll be there long. The best church in this conference is yet to be developed...it could be right where you're being planted. Plan to be your best by putting both feet in the commitment circle of this appointment.

#### **7. Arrive as a student, not as a professor**

Humility is a noble trait, and most pastors are "GREAT" at being perfectly humble. Kidding aside, pastors are human beings and are a bundle of experiences and lessons learned; good and bad. Like all folks, pastors have preferences, propensities, and peculiarities and, like all folks, must choose to manage or be managed by these aspects of human nature. All pastors want to do well as quickly as possible. This very basic and understandable desire can become problematic if not kept in check in the first months of a new appointment. The simple rule of thumb is to remember no one knows everything about everything, and thus, there is time to step back and be a listener and learner rather than the teacher and talker.

The people of your congregation have an equal amount of experience, skills, insights and ideas, as the pastor. Because their learning is more rooted in the community you will soon enter into, their insights are grounded and can be very edifying. This alone is reason enough to listen more and talk less.

Given that the drive to be seen as valuable is as much a part of their DNA as for pastors, use it in your favor. Before you have to tell them what you know, listen to what they know. Don't be too quick to correct or

“one-up” every conversation, committee meeting, and planning event. Ask more questions and wait for more answers. Gather information and become the student at the feet of their teaching. You’ll learn some great things, and they will respect you so much for letting them teach you, they will desire to become your students soon enough. It’s a better and brighter way!

**8. Become a historian of your new community and its people. Don’t rely too much on your previous knowledge about things.**

**9. Work hard. Understand that you’re being evaluated on what you do each day, every day. Don’t assume you have a lot of credibility from past appointments**

**10. Remember you’re there to build Christian leaders, not a bevy of followers**

**11. Make long term plans with lots of input from others.**

**12. Don’t make radical decisions. Anger is in direct ratio to the element of surprise**

**13. Help coordinate laity into ministry areas and let them lead**

**14. Know the difference between delegation and abdication**

**15. Be present. Attend. Show yourself. Look up. Lead from the back of the room. Don’t hide or assume leaders can work fine without you**

**16. Teach, train, support and encourage. Don’t assume leaders will figure it out, run on their own, improve in a vacuum**