

Entry into a New Setting

Stranger in a Foreign Land — Outline

And he will watch you — they will all watch you and in his own time he will accept or reject you.
— Margaret Craven, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*

New Pastors Must Remember their Role in the Early Months

- The new pastor is the guest.
- The congregation is the host.

New Pastors Tend to Forget they are the Guests and Act Like the Host

- They make things more comfortable for themselves.
- Changing the bulletin
- Changing the newsletter
- Changing the order of worship
- The pastor as guest shows appreciation and asks before doing things.

Strategies for Getting “Adopted” by Your New Congregation

- Recognize that the congregation is the host; they are in charge. Show that you are willing to accept this position of deference to the host.
- As host, the congregation must accept responsibility for extending hospitality to the stranger.
- Receive the hospitality the congregation offers and express your gratitude.
- Be gracious when the congregation checks you out and scrutinizes your assets.
Learn to simply “be there.”

(adapted from George B. Thompson, Jr., *How to Get Along with Your Church: Creating Cultural Capital for Doing Ministry*, Pilgrim Press, 2001)

Entry into a New Setting

Your First Days and Weeks — Outline

“The actions you take during your first three months...will largely determine whether you succeed or fail. Transitions are periods of opportunity... But they are also periods of acute vulnerability...”

— Michael Watkins

“Your first three days shape the first three weeks... The first three weeks shape the first three months. How you as pastor use this time together with your congregation shapes the first three years. How you begin shapes how you continue and where you end.” — Ken Callahan

People do not make judgments based on an objective analysis of facts but on perceptions that may or may not represent the facts. You only have one chance to make a first impression.

The First Day

You only get one “first day” so use it well.

- Don’t spend your first day dealing with moving.
- Introduce yourself to staff.
- Call key people.
 - Key officers
 - Matriarchs/Patriarchs
 - Retired clergy
- Community visits

Say, “I am so proud to be your pastor,” followed by something you want to see more of.

The First Worship Service

According to Roy Oswald, people are looking for two things:

- Is this an authentic person?
- Do they care about me?

Don’t preach your best sermon on your first day.

Should You Make Changes Soon or Wait?

- It’s usually wise to wait.
- Learn why they do things the way they do.
- Ask questions.

Continue your Professional and Personal Transition

- Adopt a learning mindset. Become a student. Seek advice and counsel.
- Ask questions. Focus on good questions and probing follow up questions when appropriate.
- Listen actively.

Entry into a New Setting

Avoiding the Predecessor Syndrome — Outline

“One of the most disillusioning experiences which I have had with ministers is their invariable tendency to belittle or to be unappreciative of the work of their predecessors.”

— Reinhold Niebuhr, journal entry, 1924

Honor Your Predecessor’s Ministry

- Do not criticize the former pastor, even if criticism is warranted.
- Honor the progress and achievements accomplished before you arrived.
- Let people know it is okay to grieve the loss of their former pastor.
- Do not be threatened by positive comments about the former pastor.
- Honor traditions long enough to understand the positive motivation behind them.
- Show understanding for your predecessor.

“Few events in the life of an organization are as critical, as visible, or as stressful as when the leader leaves the organization.” — Frances Hesselbein

Entry into a New Setting

Personal Transition Plan Worksheet

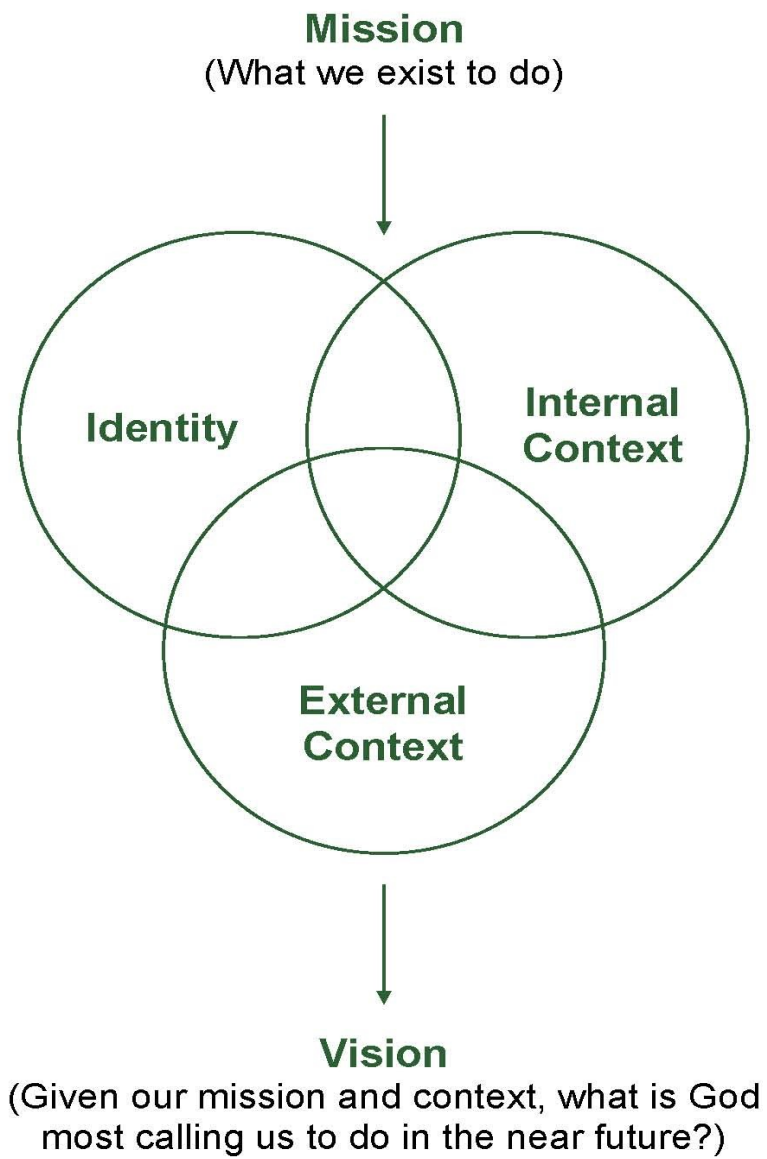
First Day

First Worship Service

First Six Months

Avoiding the Predecessor Syndrome

Professional and Personal Transition



(from Weems, Lovett H., Jr. *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture, and Integrity*, rev. ed. Abingdon, 2010)

The Start Up Period

Personal Transition Plan Worksheet

Love the People

Learn the History

Read the Culture

Help Discern an Appropriate Vision

“All Things New”

by Bishop Sally Dyck

Bishop Dyck recalls her feelings when she was on the receiving end of a pastoral move.

As I was driving back to my office after taking my husband to the airport, I was a little worried because he was flying on an airline that had had a plane crash the day before. My concern prompted me to reflect on my life as I sped along. “I love my life!” I thought to myself.

I was driving my beloved 10-year-old car. I thought to myself, “I like my car!” I couldn’t imagine getting a new one. I thought about the house that my husband and I had owned for 13 years, and after all the work we’d put into it, it was just the way we wanted it. “I like my house!” We had owned the house for the last 13 years because I had served the same church for that long, and, yes, “I love my church!” All of this was motivated by my original concern for my husband, so I concluded my litany by saying, “I love my husband of 21 years!” (You can tell from this litany that I’m not quick to change major components of my life!)

I dared to think out loud, “What a wonderful life! What could go wrong on a day like today?” I no sooner walked into my office than I was handed a message requesting me to call the bishop. After reaching him, I discovered that everything in my life was about to change — except my husband.

Within weeks, the house was sold. I purchased a new car. (My old sports car wasn’t going to do well out in the hills where I was to be the new district superintendent.) I said goodbye to my wonderful church and all my friends, and I moved away from the city I had lived in for the last 20 years.

“I am making all things new,” it says in the scriptures (Revelation 21:5). I discovered that “all things new” can be a painful experience. Suddenly I had a new address and phone number (which I frequently forgot) and a new home (where I didn’t always know where things were). I had a new car with features that were a mystery to me at times. (One night I couldn’t find the switch to turn on the bright headlights.) I had a new job in a new office in a new town with a new set of people to work with and to develop into friends. Quite frankly, “all things new” brought a new experience of many tears and frustrations, loneliness and uncertainty.

Throughout the experience, the greatest discovery for me was how much we as a society, even the church, minimize the grief, sadness, and loss that all of us experience when we move — whether it’s a planned and accepted move or not. As a pastor, I know that people are forever dealing with their anger in one way or another. I learned that some anger is really redirected and unresolved sadness. It’s a lot easier to be mad than sad. Some people encouraged me to be mad because it’s not as scary as sad — but I’ve just felt sad.

None of the things on my list of “all things new” was life threatening, but all of them brought a sense of loss and a corresponding sense of grief. I cannot bring myself to say that everything is all right. It probably will be, but I am not there yet. Psalm 30:11 says that God will turn our sadness (mourning) into joy. I wait upon the Lord!

Source: East Ohio Conference, *Move Pack*, 2001. Reprinted in *Leading Ideas*, the free online newsletter of the Lewis Center. Used by permission.

EMOTIONAL TRANSITION

"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order."

Alfred North Whitehead

Change is Not the Same as Transition

"Times of transition are times of dangerous opportunity. They are dangerous because transitions provoke in us anxiety as we begin to let go and to ready ourselves for what lies ahead. They are opportune because they lead us to reflection and renewed appreciation for one another and to new awareness of God's continuing presence and guidance in our lives."

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward

- Change is external. Transition is internal.
- Different cultural images of movement through time
- Transition happens much more slowly than change.

Importance of "Transitional Sabbath" Before the Move

Some Other Suggestions

- Stay connected with your spiritual disciplines, despite the disruption of schedules and patterns caused by the transition. You need spiritual strength now more than ever.
- Get physical exercise and rest. You are more susceptible to illness during times of stress and change.
- Maintain as much routine and ritual as possible in your life and the life of your family.
- Maximize continuities in this time of discontinuity.
- Stay connected with your support system of family and friends.
- Establish patterns of Sabbath time and family time from the beginning.
- Take a vacation time before the rush of the fall begins.

Dealing with Grief

- We are often unaware of the grieving going on in ourselves and congregation.
- Sharing feelings and permitting others to do so is emotionally freeing for everyone.
- Be mindful that members of the new congregation have also experienced a loss and will still be grieving their loss to some extent. Acknowledge the special place the former pastor holds in their hearts.

Family Emotional Issues

Be aware of special issues of loss for family members.

- Key concerns for spouses around transitions are often:
 - Concern for the clergy spouse's schedule.
 - Housing issues.
 - Leaving a job, especially if finding a comparable position is unlikely.
 - Spouse may feel resentment about not having more say in the move.
 - Leaving a familiar place and close relationships.
 - Having a more difficult time than the pastor finding a place in the new church.

- Remember that transitions can be stressful times for relationships
 - Stay closely connected during this time.
 - Communication is key.
 - The stress may trigger negative feelings from previous difficulties.
 - Do not let your own grief hinder your help for others.
 - Spouse unhappiness puts additional stress on the clergy during entry period.
 - Try to limit the "negative emotional spillover" from church struggles.
 - Survey results indicate that clergy spouses tend to feel that pastoral support services for clergy couples are either not available or, if available, should not be utilized for fear of career repercussions, despite clear confidentiality guidelines.

- Beware of family dynamics
 - Be attentive to your own feelings.
 - Remember that people grieve differently.
 - Don't underestimate the hurt family members are experiencing.
 - Acknowledge losses with understanding.
 - Remember that children and youth deal with change in their own ways.
 - Involve family members to the maximum extent of their comfort in the transition.
 - Provide ways for children and youth to say goodbye in ways that matter to them.
 - Continue family events throughout the transition.
 - Find ways to mark the endings and beginnings as a family.
 - Seek professional counseling if needed.

Emotional Transition

The Relational

Aspects of Transition

“The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.”

— Alfred North Whitehead

Relating to your former congregation

- Most denominations have guidelines that call for departing pastors to:
 - Support the new pastor.
 - End all pastoral functions.
 - Not be involved in congregational matters.
 - Use care in contacts with former members.
 - Some denominations require retiring clergy not to worship in the previous church for a specified time.
- The most important factor is the relationship of the leaving and the new pastor.

Issues for associate pastors in transition

- Associates should cultivate a solid relationship with the lead pastor.
 - Get to know the lead pastor.
 - Clarify roles.
 - Pray for and support the lead pastor.
 - Ask for advice.
 - Never let problems fester.
- The lead pastor should welcome a new associate.
 - Get to know the associate.
 - Ask about passions and gifts for ministry.
 - Ask for their opinions and advice.
 - Treat the associate as a valued colleague.
 - Always offer public support, sharing disagreements privately.

Relationships with former parishioners who are friends

- Communicate continuing care.
- Guard against diminishing the current pastor’s ministry.

Social media during transitions

- Keep a low profile.
- Don’t rely on social media to get to know your new congregation.
- Manage your social media contacts.

Issues for single clergy

- Build friendships outside the church.
- Be open about the fact that it is normal and important for you to date.
- Comply with restrictions dating within the congregation.

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with restrictions
dating within the

Your Continuing Professional and Personal Transition

Professional - Embrace a Learning Mindset

- Become a student. Seek advice and counsel. Get feedback Early.
- Listen actively.
- Focus on good questions and probing follow-up questions when appropriate
- Use every interaction as an opportunity to gain useful knowledge.
- Cultivate keen awareness of your new context. Look for patterns.
- Remember that it gets harder to learn as time passes.
- Acquire knowledge quickly, but remember it is not essential to know everything immediately.
- Avoid coming in with the answers.
- Avoid being captured by any one constituency or interest group.
- Assess carefully the church's strengths, capabilities, and challenges as the first step.
- Spend time with staff and lay leadership to learn and assess.
- Remember that entering from seminary is often the most difficult transition.

Personal - Stay Attentive to Your Personal Transition

- Balance professional and personal transitions.
- Pay special attention to family relationships.
- Pay attention to health; rest, diet, fitness.
- Maintain personal equilibrium.
- Take advantage of the transition period.
- Establish new working relationships with care.
- Avoid becoming isolated.
- Avoid attempting too much.

Entering as an Associate Pastor

Many practices for pastoral transitions are similar for lead pastors and associate pastors, but not all. There are distinctive challenges and opportunities that associate staff face in making a right start.

Entering

- A first goal is to understand and embody the best of the congregation's identity and mission.
- Early attention may focus on roles and tasks, but keep in mind that this season is primarily about the quality of relationships that are built and the credibility that comes from such relationships.
- Be ready for team ministry.
- Expect to make mistakes, but that you will recover.
- Find support networks among peers and laity.

Title and Role Clarification

- Clarifying title and role starts with you and the lead pastor. No one can control how people see you, but the lead pastor sets the tone for your role and interpreting your place in the church. Your visions about the position need to be in alignment. Clarifying if and how often you will preach is important at the beginning. If there are other associate pastors, ask questions about what their roles are and how your role relates to them. Insist on knowing the fruits of ministry related to your role that are most important to the congregation. You need more than simply a list of tasks.
- Together you and the lead pastor can interpret your work to any committees with personnel or program oversight relevant to your position. There should be a written position description.
- Know that your role, regardless of particular areas of focus, always includes supporting the mission and vision of the church and the leadership of the lead pastor.
- There will be people who see you as a "junior" pastor. Sometimes people will use the wrong term for your role. Have a sense of humor and graciousness with each individual as you help clarify your role. But make sure the right term is used consistently in all spoken and written church communication. Do not take it personally when people act as if only actions by the lead pastor really count or when people ask "when you will get your own church?"

Working with the Lead Pastor

A key to success is cultivating a solid mutual relationship of trust and respect with the lead pastor. Some practices associate pastors suggest include:

- Pray for the lead pastor.
- Support the lead pastor.
- Ask for advice.
- Be clear and transparent when communicating.
- Copy the lead pastor on all pertinent correspondence.
- Handle disagreements and share alternative perspectives privately.
- Ensure the lead pastor is involved in major discussions and decisions.
- Get to know the lead pastor and that person's preferences and goals.
- Do not let problems or hurt feelings fester.
- Keep the lead pastor in the loop especially regarding difficult situations.
- Avoid trian-

The Lead Pastor's Role

The lead pastor also plays a crucial role in making possible fruitful ministry by associate pastors. Practices associate pastors name as helpful from their lead pastors include:

- Take time to get to know the associate pastor.
- Schedule regular times for non-work-task-related conversation.
- Have a one-on-one meeting with the associate pastor regularly.
- Be very clear about roles and expectations.
- Share as much information as possible about major decisions.
- Ask associates about their passions and gifts for ministry.
- Ask associates for their opinions and advice.
- Say positive things about associates and all staff.
- Treat associates with respect as valued colleagues.
- Understand that the new associate may do things differently from you or the previous associate.
- Invite shadowing, especially during meetings or in other settings where the associate may not have regular exposure. Debrief together some of those experiences.
- Always offer public support and share disagreements privately.
- Avoid the temptation to see the associate as a competitor.
- Keep your word. If you change your mind, say so.
- Take your associate to lunch.
- Serve as a teacher, mentor, and guide.
- Realize how fortunate you are to have a partner in ministry.

Things Churches Can Do

- Churches should know they have been entrusted with helping associates, particularly younger ones, hone their skills. Embrace the role of being a teaching congregation. Be patient and communicate effectively regarding expectations, roles, praise, and correction.
- An associate needs to be recognized just as the lead pastor is recognized. If you do special things for the lead pastor, do something for the associate as well.
- Provide a continuing education budget for associates.

Leaving as an Associate Pastor

- Empower effective laity to support ministries in the time of transition.
- If there are problematic leaders, transition them out before you go!
- Recognize that the position may change during the transition.
- Do not rely solely on the lead pastor to provide welcome and orientation for the new associate.
- Even when associates work with a segment of the congregation, everyone should be included in any farewells and not just those with whom the associate has worked most closely.
- Respect the lead pastor even as you go.
- Maintain proper boundaries when you leave a congregation, even if things are not going well. Respect your successor, and do not get involved.
- Say “thank you” generously for the opportunities you have had.

Issues Single Clergy Face

Single persons in ministry can face many challenges — from the risk of social isolation to a whole gamut of issues related to clergy dating. These issues can intensify during transition, particularly if a single pastor moves to a congregation that has only been served in the past by married clergy. Single clergy may feel judged, inadequate, or awkward if congregation members actively or tacitly project the view that marriage is normative for or sought by everyone. And they face a unique set of challenges around maintaining boundaries, privacy, and social connections.

Establishing social networks

Married clergy generally bring their spouse and children with them when they move to a new community. A single clergyperson, however, may be leaving behind their primary social support network. It is easy to fall into the trap of letting the church become your primary social outlet and support network. But this risks emotional burnout and can intensify isolation from other types of social interaction. Single clergy who have found themselves alone in a new community stress the importance of building a new set of relationships and friendships outside the church — people they can be themselves around and not wear the mantle of “pastor.” It is important to look for opportunities for involvement beyond the church, such as book clubs, sports teams, or community groups, and find people who share common interests. It is important to be proactive in making day off plans and setting aside regular times to get together with friends. Connecting with other clergy in the community can be helpful, too, even if it is just getting together for lunch.

Dating

Single clergy often feel they are navigating a minefield when it comes to dating. The barrage of fix-up attempts, concerns about a lack of privacy, the potential for rumors and ill-informed assumptions, questions about when and how to let the congregation know about a serious relationship — these all can leave a single clergyperson vulnerable and confused. Many single clergy feel it is important for them to be clear and open about the fact that it is normal and important for them to date and to operate within their own level of comfort regarding how much they will share with the congregation.

If the congregation has never had a single pastor before, they may not be aware of norms and expectations about whether it is appropriate for pastors to date congregants. Many denominations and judicatories have clearly defined policies on this question, usually not permitting such dating. Before beginning ministry in a new setting, a single clergyperson should understand these policies, discuss them with the appropriate persons, and consider if there is a need to educate the congregation. But sensitivity is required, or this issue might loom too large in people’s minds or distract from the larger issues in establishing a new pastor’s ministry.

Single parents

Single clergy who are parents may also feel they are vulnerable or open to scrutiny. They may need to set clear boundaries around their schedule, particularly their availability for evening meetings. There may also be questions about childcare — when is it the church’s responsibility to have childcare coverage for church events, and when is it the pastor’s personal responsibility? As one young clergyperson put it, “Congregations and pastors both should work on the tender balance between being supportive and allowing privacy.”

Lewis Fellows, participants in a Lewis Center leadership development program for young clergy, contributed to this resource.

Social Media and Pastoral Moves

By Thom-

as G. James and Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

What should pastors do about their social media relationships when they move from one pastoral assignment to another? Do you “unfriend” all former members on Facebook and “unfollow” them on Twitter? After all, members in the church you are leaving may be watching to see if you post affectionate notes about your new church. You might find yourself curious about what your former members have to say about your departure or your successor. And people in your new church may monitor how you interact with your former members, as might the new pastor of the church you are leaving.

Just as your personal relationship must change when you move from one congregation to the next, your contact through social media sites must change as well. As with the changes that take place in your personal relationships, social media changes are dictated by several factors including the nature of the relationships, the boundaries that you have already established, and a good healthy dose of common sense.

Avoid overusing social media during a transition. One simple way to ease your shift into a different set of social media relationships is to scale back your social media use during your transition. Posting frequent status updates, liberally commenting on other people’s posts, or “liking” everything on your homepage can easily become a distraction and waste time when your attention needs to be elsewhere. Keeping a “low profile” on social media may be the simplest way to manage the many different relational dynamics at play in a time of transition.

Don’t rely on social media to get to know your new congregants. Social media is designed for staying in touch with others, not as a primary avenue for developing new personal relationships. Use social media as a supplementary way of keeping up to date with people, but never as a substitute for face-to-face ministry.

Manage social media contacts in the church you are leaving. Some moving pastors choose to “unfriend” everyone from their former church, eliminating the temptation to continue to act as their pastor. Another alternative is to move previous church members to a list with limited access to your profile. People on this list would not be able to see new wall posts or pictures of your life in the new church. Advanced settings on Facebook permit you to create sub-lists for different categories of friends and set different levels of access to organize Facebook friends into different groups to receive different posts. In addition to grouping people by past and current congregations, you may also want to create other groupings for family or classmates from high school, college, or seminary.

Whichever option you choose, it is important to state clearly in advance how you will handle this transition to avoid hurt feelings. If former parishioners remain as Facebook friends and Twitter followers, remember you are no longer their pastor. Talk about your plan and your new relationship on social media just as you talk about other changes and boundaries that come into play because of your transition. Let people know what is changing and what is not in your relationship, including through social media. Begin with conversations with church leaders, but eventually share the plan broadly.

Bruce Reyes-Chow, a Presbyterian pastor, worked with the church he was leaving to develop a “covenant” both to ensure a healthy transition and to remind everyone of the importance of the relationship between pastor and congregation (*The Definitive-ish Guide for Using Social Media in the Church*, Shook Foil Books, 2012). It reminded everyone that great self-restraint was required to allow for a relationship with the new pastor to flourish.

Check for guidelines. Increasingly, there are denominational and judicatory expectations for pastors both in the use of social media and in how it should be handled when there is a pastoral transition. Check to see if there are such guidelines or rules that apply in your situation.

But no statement or document can capture the complexity of these and other dynamics that go on during times filled with such mixed feelings of joy and grief by all involved. As Reyes-Chow puts it, “The line over which we must not cross when it comes to pastoral transitions is wide and gray, thanks to the expansive nature of social media.” It is hard to strike the perfect balance, but with sensitivity and conversations, we can come close enough to honor our past ministry and relationships while honoring the colleagues following us as well.

Four Key Challenges in Pastoral Transitions

by Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Despite the prevalence of pastoral moves, often little time is spent reflecting on all the issues at stake for many people during such transitions. A few years ago, United Methodist district superintendents were asked to reflect on their years of moving to new appointments as well as their experience in observing other pastors make such transitions. They helped identify four key challenges faced in pastoral transitions.

The Personal Challenge — Dealing with Family and Emotional Issues

Relationships sustain our lives and leadership. Transitions require careful attention to sustaining relationships with those closest to us, being open to new relationships, and letting go of some important relationships. For those with families, spouse employment and issues related to children are paramount. Single clergy may be leaving close relationships. There is a need to find appropriate ways for the pastor, family, and congregation to express their feelings, including the grief that inevitably is present — even when the congregation and/or the pastor are pleased about the move. This transition often requires the letting go of some relationships but may also include letting go of past hurts. Just at the time when these emotional strains are so real, there are the pressures of adjusting to a new community, congregation, schools, doctors, and other new colleagues and friends. Without adequate rest, spiritual renewal, and support, these challenges will prove immensely more difficult. With attention to these essentials, a move can become a fulfilling time for all.

The Professional Challenge — Enabling a Smooth and Positive Transition

The pastor leaving will set the tone for how the new pastor is received. Differences of personality or theology that distinguish the new pastor from the old should not interfere with the manner in which the departing pastor helps prepare the way for the new pastor. The same is true for dealing with one's predecessor at the new congregation. Congregations, specifically the staff parish relations committee, can be helped to prepare for a new pastor. A pastor's feeling of grief in leaving or loneliness in the new setting should not cloud dealings with successor and predecessor. Everything possible should be done to pave the way for a successful transition in the church from which a pastor leaves and for the continuation of ongoing ministries in the new congregation.

The Leadership Challenge — Understanding a New Church and Community

Things taken for granted after years of interaction in one church and community must now be relearned in a new setting. Learning to "read" the history, traditions, and culture of a new context is the primary challenge in the first year or so in a new church. This also gives the new congregation a chance to "learn" the new pastor. In both cases, imperfections will be spotted quickly; discovering each other's strengths will take much longer. Your "job" as pastor may be similar from church to church, but the leadership assignment in a new congregation, in all likelihood, will be very different given the new circumstances. Merely doing what one has always done normally is, as a rule, inadequate when a leader changes from one context to another.

The Congregational Challenge — Closure and Saying Goodbye

Saying goodbye to the pastor leaving and hello to the new pastor should not be left to chance. This is a time of major transition in the lives of many people. As such, it needs to be handled with care, sensitivity, and sufficient spiritual depth and ritual. Special attention to the needs of children and youth may be particularly significant in some congregations. Lack of proper closure can hamper ministry for a long time. A pastor's ability to express genuine love for a congregation and, at the same time, make clear the new relationship of former pastor will do a great service to self and congregation. A congregation's ability to express profound appreciation for the years of service by a pastor and, at the same time, release that pastor for new ministry and welcome their new pastor with open arms will make effective ministry more likely for all involved.

Moving to a Large Church for the First Time

By Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Pastors moving from small or mid-size churches to large churches face a particular set of challenges. Interviews with pastors of large churches about their own transitions revealed two sets of foundational challenges that were generally constant throughout the conversations. These pastors reported specific personal and professional issues needing special attention.

Personal Challenges

The Transition Itself

- Exiting and entering required more care and attention, especially given some new dynamics and expectations as they entered the larger church.
- One of those dynamics was the need to use the time before the actual move in conversations with the outgoing pastor and in planning for the early months. There were high expectations that you come in “up to speed” and ready to go.
- It is not unusual to follow a long-term pastor when going to a large church.
- Make sure that your personal support network is strong, especially during the first two years of transition.

A New Way of Thinking

- Virtually all pastors reported the need for a new way of thinking about themselves and their role.
- Many practices that served them well previously no longer fit.
- Expectations and sources of credibility may be very different than before.
- A higher degree of flexibility may be needed for a leadership driven far more by the priorities facing the congregation than by personal preferences of either the pastor or members.

The Importance of Mentors

- Pastors of large churches discovered the need for one or more mentors from among their colleagues already serving larger churches.
- Those who reached out for such support were happy to discover that these pastors were thrilled to help.

Spiritual Life and Balance

- Pastors with much smaller congregations find keeping their spiritual, physical, and emotional lives in balance difficult. The dilemma only increases with a move to a large congregation.
- Time for such care now must be planned carefully on a regular schedule and guarded relentlessly.

Professional Challenges

Staffing

- While having a larger staff opens many opportunities, it also brings new demands on skill and time.
- The investment required for maximum fruitfulness from staff always seems to surprise new pastors of large churches.
- Building the team, learning new ways to work with staff, developing improved supervision and evaluation skills are among the professional development needs these pastors identify quickly.

Visioning and Planning

- The vision does not reside in the pastor alone, but the congregation looks to the pastor to make sure that visioning and planning are happening in ways not previously experienced by many pastors.
- In addition to planning skills pastors bring is the importance of paying attention for clues, trends, unspoken issues, and especially for opportunities the church may be missing.

Worship and Preaching

- What happens in worship, including especially the quality of the preaching, looms far larger now.
- For most church members, worship will be their only connection with the pastor and the church for the entire week.
- Expectations are higher for every aspect of worship, and no matter how many staff and planning teams are involved, the pastor must be attuned to the vitality of worship and address shortcomings.

Funding Ministry

- Some might think that with more staff and competent laity, the pastor's role regarding financial matters might diminish as their churches become larger. Just the opposite happens in that small churches often do not need or welcome active pastoral engagement, whereas large churches expect that the pastor will stay abreast of church finances.
- No pastor will ever serve a church so large that ensuring the funding of the church's ministry will not be in their top three or four priorities.