

# **ASSOCIATE PASTOR HANDBOOK**

**A Guide for the Selection of an Associate Pastor  
and the Development of a Healthy Working Relationship  
between an Associate and his Senior Pastor**

**MICHIGAN DISTRICT OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Lord Jesus Christ gave his church “pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:11-12). As a local church grows and its ministry expands, the need for additional pastoral leadership is often evident. A pastor may adequately care for and nurture a congregation of a hundred parishioners, but when that number doubles, he may find himself stretched and taxed beyond his ability to serve effectively. Though lay leadership is essential to any healthy ministry, it often makes sense to bring another pastor on staff to assist the Senior Pastor in equipping men and women to use their spiritual gifts to glorify God, strengthen the church and reach the lost for Christ.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide local churches with guidelines for Associate Pastors. The Handbook is designed for churches with one or two staff pastors, as well as congregations led by one minister, but desiring to add an Associate. While the Handbook recognizes the uniqueness of each local church, it will attempt to address key issues related to the selection, qualifications, duties, compensation, accountability and evaluation of staff pastors. It will also focus on the working relationship between the Senior Pastor and his Associate. The Appendices provide sample job descriptions, interview questions, salary and benefit guidelines, and annual report forms.

## **SELECTION**

### **1. Timing: When to Add an Associate Pastor.**

When should a church add to its pastoral staff? Is there a set ratio of pastor to member that determines when more staff is needed? Several items should be considered:

- **Vision and Core Values.** What is the vision of the church? What are its core values? How will adding staff help a congregation fulfill its mission? For example, if a church is structured around a small group or cell ministry, it makes sense for its first staff hire to be a Pastor of Discipleship and Small Group Ministries.
- **Attendance Average.** Based on Sunday morning worship attendance, some have suggested that there should be one full-time pastor for every 100 attendees. Using this ratio, a church whose worship service averages 300 will have three full-time pastors. While there is merit in using attendance figures to determine need, the formula is not a hard and fast rule and other factors must be taken into account.
- **Giftedness and Needs of the Congregation.** One local church may have a growing youth ministry that is supervised solely by volunteers. These lay leaders are using their spiritual gifts to coordinate a ministry that thrives without the need for paid staff. The lay team approach is working well and students are being disciplined to reach their peers for Christ. Another congregation with a healthy youth ministry realizes that the demands and needs of the students are more than its group of volunteers

can handle, so it employs a full-time youth pastor. While every ministry relies on a core of lay volunteers to sustain it, there may be a need for full-time professional leadership.

- **Budgetary Considerations.** One church with a hundred members may have enough income through tithes and offerings to support two full-time pastors, while another congregation of two hundred struggles to pay one pastor. Income levels and community demographics vary from church to church. If the church of two hundred is an inner city work that ministers to poor and needy families, it is unlikely its income base within the congregation will be large enough to support additional staff. Other issues, such as facilities (e.g., a church building mortgage), may keep a congregation from adding staff. A church desiring to add staff needs to plan financially, educate its congregation on the importance and blessing of sacrificial giving, and exercise care and wisdom with God's resources.
- **Facility and Ministry Resources.** How will the addition of pastoral staff impact the church's present facilities? Is there office space for the new Associate? When a church, for example, seeks to expand its educational ministries, a new Christian Education Director will need audiovisual equipment, adequate and attractive rooms for programming and educational resources for his/her team of teachers and volunteers.

## **2. Choosing: How to Select an Associate Pastor.**

Once the Senior Pastor and the Church or Elder Board determine the need to add staff, they must determine what process they will use for funding, seeking, interviewing and hiring an Associate Pastor.

- **Formulate a Search Process.** The bylaws of a local church determine the course of action that should be taken for adding staff. Most churches rely on the Senior Pastor's active involvement in the selection process. Normally, the Senior Pastor will interview potential candidates and recommend his choice to the Board. The Board then takes appropriate action to approve the selection, duties, length of service and compensation. Sometimes a selection committee, working with the Senior Pastor, oversees the process. On rare occasions, a congregation may be asked to vote on the candidate. In any case, clear and frequent communication between the leadership and the congregation is vital.
- **Pray, Pray, Pray.** While only a select few will be directly involved in the search process, the entire congregation can "bathe the matter in prayer." Request that all members and ministries within the church pray regularly for guidance and direction. Keep the congregation informed of the progress and share specific requests through public announcements, printed information and e-mail contacts.
- **Establish the Job Criteria and Compensation Package.** Write a clear description of the job criteria that includes the qualifications, duties, work relationships and accountability structure. (See Appendix A for samples of job descriptions) Also determine a pay package that includes both salary and benefits. (See section on Compensation)

- **Prepare a Church Profile.** A church profile provides background information on the church for potential candidates. The profile should include the church's mission statement and core values, your most recent Annual Report, five years of statistical information (e.g., membership, baptisms, attendance averages, financial figures, etc.), samples of bulletins and newsletters, pictures of the facilities (inside and outside), and other pertinent materials (e.g. a pictorial directory).
- **Seek Available Candidates.** Begin with the District Office. Your District Superintendent has a list of available and approachable ministers in the District. You can broaden your search by contacting other Districts for qualified pastors seeking ministry opportunities. Be sure to check with department heads at Bethel College and other Christian institutions. Some congregations may look within their own membership for individuals possessing gifts and passion for ministry. Consideration may also be given to pastors outside the Denomination. It is acceptable to post the job opening on the Internet, in a Christian periodical, or at college's placement office. **If a potential candidate is not currently a credentialed minister of the Missionary Church, the church must seek the approval of the District Executive Board before hiring the person (See Article XIII, E, 2 of the Constitution of the Missionary Church).**
- **Solicit Resumes and Ministry Samples.** Invite interested parties to submit resumes for consideration. Solicit ministry samples that reflect the person's gifts and abilities. Ask an Associate Pastor for a sermon tape or a minister of music for an audio or video tape of a recent worship service. A Youth Pastor should be able to provide you with a video of a student outreach or youth Bible study that he has led. Request a Christian Education Director to send you sample educational resources that he/she has developed (e.g., lesson plans, Power Point notes, etc.). Ask a candidate to write a brief philosophy of ministry statements.
- **Check References.** Be sure to request references and contact them directly. Whenever possible, talk to current or previous employers and colleagues. Also, check with the pastor's District Superintendent. Find out if the person is a team player. What are his/her strengths and weaknesses? How well does he/she handle conflict? Ask if there are issues or unresolved matters that need to be addressed? Checking references will help narrow the search to the candidates most suitable for the church. Whenever a candidate has been eliminated from consideration, promptly notify the individual (usually in the form of a letter). Thank the person for their interest and explain that the church has chosen to look elsewhere for filling the position.
- **Conduct Interviews.** The interview process usually involves three stages:
  - 1) Phone Interviews. Once you have decided to contact two or three candidates to discuss the job opening, begin with a phone interview. The two-fold purpose of this contact is to learn more about the candidate and to determine his/her compatibility with the church.
  - 2) Face-to-face Interview. Based on the phone interview, you may decide to meet personally with a candidate. Select a place for the interview, such as your office or a nearby restaurant. Invite the spouse to attend. Allow the candidate to share his/her testimony and call to ministry. Have a preset list of items to discuss. (See Appendix B for a

sample list of interview questions) Be specific in your questions. Avoid generalities, such as, “How important is it to reach lost people in the community?” Instead, ask the person to share a recent example of how he/she built a relationship with a non-churched person.

- 3) **Onsite Visit.** Have the candidate visit the church, meet members of your congregation and attend or participate in services. For example, you will want to arrange for a Youth Pastor candidate to lead a teen Sunday school class and eat lunch with the Youth Staff. It may also be wise to arrange an interview with the Church Board. If possible, give the candidate and his family opportunities to fellowship with your congregation and familiarize themselves with the community (e.g., housing options, nearby schools, shopping centers, etc). Many churches have found it valuable to schedule a weekend visit that balances planned activities with free time. Be sure to cover travel and lodging expenses for the candidate and his/her family.
- **Finalize the Selection.** Once the interview process has been narrowed to one candidate, follow the church’s bylaws for finalizing the selection. The decision should be promptly shared with the candidate. If the candidate is not immediately prepared to accept the call, ask him/her to respond within one week. Notify the congregation and inform the District Superintendent.
  - **Provide the New Pastor with a Smooth Transition.** As soon as the Associate accepts the position, determine a time table for making the move to the church. Timing issues, such as a child’s schooling, may dictate a move during the summer months. Appoint a committee to assist the pastor with the transition. Many churches plan a “Welcome Dinner” and/or a “Grocery Shower” for his/her family. If the individual is a newly credentialed minister in the Missionary Church, contact the National Office as soon as possible to enroll him/her in the Denomination’s long-term disability insurance and pension plans.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Several qualifications are necessary for the Associate Pastor:

- **Spiritual Qualifications.** The Bible lists the various qualities that are essential for spiritual leaders: above reproach, self-controlled, respectable, able to teach, gentle, not a recent convert, etc. (1 Timothy 3-7; Titus 1:6-9). Spiritual maturity is a must, along with giftedness in the area of ministry. Seek out and check references on the individual. If possible, talk to the senior pastor and/or leadership of the previous church where he served. Were there problems or issues at the last church that were not addressed or resolved? How did he handle conflict and criticism? Was he a team player or a “lone ranger”? Did he leave a positive or negative impact on the church and community? Was his spouse supportive of and involved in the ministry?

- **Experience and Expertise.** Does the candidate have experience and/or training for the open position? Ask for specific examples of involvement in a particular ministry. Make sure he/she has a passion for that ministry. Learn what kind of goals he/she has for the future and how he/she plans to implement them. Determine what spiritual gifts and natural abilities the candidate has and how they would be exercised in the local church. Discuss the church's mission statement and what part he/she would play in fulfilling it.
- **Education.** The Missionary Church Constitution sets forth the minimum educational guidelines for ministers. Ideally, a candidate should possess a bachelor's degree in an area of Christian ministry that is appropriate for the position. Under certain circumstances, candidates who do not meet the minimum educational standards may be considered for the position with the provision that they will pursue their education if they are hired. A timetable for completing their schooling should be established upon employment.
- **Credentials with the Missionary Church.** The Missionary Church Constitution states: "Full or part-time ministry staff may be hired provided the person has been approved as a minister in the Missionary Church or has been approved by the district executive board for the ministry position." (Article XIII, E, 2) Whenever a non-credentialed person is being considered for ministry staff, the District Office should be contacted promptly. The District Superintendent and his staff will work with the local church in determining the compatibility of the candidate with the doctrines and practices of the Missionary Church. If the candidate is already ministering in a Missionary Church, common courtesy dictates that the Senior Pastor at his current church, along with his/her District Superintendent, be notified that the individual is under consideration.
- **Other Qualifications.** Additional factors to consider are: good people skills, positive family relations, effective time management, administrative abilities, giftedness and basic competency for the ministry position.

## ***DUTIES***

A job description is a tool that enables the Associate to work with efficiency and effectiveness. It gives the Associate guidance, direction and purpose in ministry. A Youth Director's job description, for example, should indicate the age range of student ministries for which he/she is responsible. Does he/she oversee both junior and senior age students? Do his/her responsibilities also involve college age students?

Here are a few suggestions when preparing a job description:

- **Look at samples.** When creating a new position, contact other churches who already have this position to request a copy of their job description. Call the District Office for resources. (See Appendix A for samples)
- **Talk to your people.** Solicit ideas from members of the Church or Elder Board. Seek input from laity within the congregation who are involved in that area of responsibility. If a job description for a Worship Pastor is being

written, consult those currently serving with the music and worship ministries of the church. Encourage discussion and invite suggestions.

- **Include the basics.** A job description should include these elements:
  - 1) Purpose Statement
  - 2) Responsibilities
  - 3) Accountability/Working Relationship
- **Be concise, yet clear.** A good job description can be summarized in one to two pages. Spell out the basic responsibilities of one's ministry without "micromanaging" the details. Chairing Youth Staff meetings is an appropriate job duty for a Youth Pastor. Requiring that the staff meets weekly is inappropriate. Allow the Associate Pastor flexibility in carrying out his/her responsibilities.
- **Adjust as needed.** A job description is a work in progress and may need to be modified periodically as ministry demands change. Also, keep in mind the spiritual gifts and abilities of the current Associate. Be willing to adapt the position to better utilize the Associate's giftedness.

## **COMPENSATION**

Consult the Guidelines for Pastoral Salary and Benefits found in the District Conference Journal. (See also Appendix C for the 2004-05 Guidelines) The District's Pastoral Benefits Committee makes guidelines available for preparing compensation packages for pastors. Compensation should reflect both the community and congregation's standard of living. Take into account the person's education and experience. If the Associate is expected to work full-time for the church, he/she is entitled to full-time compensation (1 Corinthians 9:7-14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Under normal conditions, the Associate is directly accountable to the Senior Pastor and through him to the Church or Elder Board. He/she is to attend all staff meetings and submit written reports to appropriate boards and committees. It is not recommended that the Associate be a voting member of the Church Board. However, he may serve as an advisory/non-voting member of that board. All credentialed ministers are to file annual reports to the Denomination and District. (See Appendix D for sample forms). The Associate is encouraged to have an accountability partner(s). An accountability partner, whether someone inside the congregation or a fellow minister from another church, meets regularly with the person to ask the "hard questions," act as a "sounding board," and pray for specific requests. These private meetings require confidentiality and transparency, and provide an opportunity to address personal and professional matters in a Biblical manner. The Associate should also recruit a prayer team of select parishioners, friends and family members who are updated regularly on the ministry and prayer requests.

## **EVALUATION**

According to the District Bylaws (Article X, C, 1), “The Church Board or Elder Board shall meet between November 15- February 28 each year, in the Pastor's absence, to review the Pastor's work, salary, and benefits. After the review, the Church Board shall meet with the Pastor as soon as possible to present a summary of the evaluation.” As a rule, the Senior Pastor conducts the evaluation of his associate. If members of the Church or Elder Board are not familiar with the Associate’s ministry, the Board may want to consult those who are (e.g., Youth Staff, Worship Team, etc.) for their input. The Document Section of the District Conference Journal contains a sample evaluation form. It should be noted that not all areas on the form may apply to the Associate. The local church is free to adjust the form to fit specific staff positions.

## **WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SENIOR PASTOR**

A good working relationship between the Senior Pastor and his Associate is foundational to the harmony and ministry of the local church. Difference in personalities and/or ministry styles can lead to conflict. Unclear expectations and lack of communication can cause problems. It is the responsibility of both the Senior Pastor and his Associate to seek resolution to conflicts and to work together in advancing the cause of Christ. The following are suggestions offered by Senior and Associates Pastors for creating a positive and healthy work environment:

### **1. Clear Expectations.**

Nothing can frustrate the Associate faster than not knowing what is expected of him/her. Unrealistic demands and/or unclear duties can quickly sabotage a ministry. Is the Associate expected to keep office hours? If so, are the hours clearly defined? Does the Senior Pastor know how many hours each week the Associate puts into ministry and how those hours are spent? While the Senior Pastor does not desire to “watchdog” his Associate, he does want to know that the job is getting done. Senior Pastors need to spell out expectations and avoid ambiguity when assigning tasks. Associates need to complete tasks on time and give frequent updates on ministry projects. It may be desirable to submit weekly and/or monthly reports, summarizing one’s ministry (e.g., hours spent, contacts made, meetings held, etc.).

### **2. Open Communication.**

Keeping the lines of communication open is healthy for any relationship, including the one between the Senior Pastor and his Associate. Do not expect the other person to read your mind or know how you feel. Be open, honest and transparent, while respecting the other person’s time and need for privacy. Maintain confidentiality. Regular staff meetings that include reviewing the church calendar and ministry activities, sharing successes and disappointments, planning, strategizing, and praying together will build team unity, clarify vision and help the staff avoid potential problems. Good communication keeps everyone “on the same page.”

### **3. Flexibility and Freedom to Grow.**

An Associate appreciates the Senior Pastor who allows him/her the freedom and flexibility to grow in the ministry. The Associate should be encouraged to advance ministry skills through continuing education, seminars and conferences. As the Associate learns his/her new position, he/she may have ideas for improving the ministry. The Senior Pastor should welcome these ideas and give counsel. The Senior Pastor may also observe an area where the Associate seems to be well gifted. The Associate needs to be encouraged to excel in that area. The Associate's job description should be reviewed periodically and adjusted to reflect the best use of that person's time and talents.

### **4. Mentoring.**

Many Senior Pastors count it a privilege to pour their lives into their Associates, guiding them in their spiritual and professional lives. This mentoring process can be demanding and time consuming, but Associates can reap great benefits from their Senior Pastors' years of wisdom and experience. Even if the Senior Pastor and his Associate have different personality and ministry styles, an Associate needs to be teachable.

### **5. Respect and Encouragement.**

An Associate Pastor owes his/her Senior Pastor respect. A respectful Associate avoids public disagreements with his/her Senior Pastor and never undermines or criticizes his work in private. A respectful Associate shows up on time for appointments and meetings, and is prepared. A respectful Associate treats others as he/she wishes to be treated.

A Senior Pastor encourages his Associate. He frequently compliments the Associate both in public and private for his/her work. He expresses appreciation for the person's efforts and accomplishments. He also urges the Church Board and the congregation to support and encourage the Associate and his/her family. Associates should not be overlooked during times of Pastor Appreciation at the church.

### **6. Healthy Work Ethic and Time Management.**

A Senior Pastor appreciates an Associate who works hard, is prepared for meetings and services, keeps his commitments, and demonstrates initiative. An associate should seek to improve his/her organizational and time management skills. In addition, the Associate should be willing to be stretched in the position and not seek to avoid unpleasant or unfulfilling responsibilities.

## **RESIGNATION/ DISMISSAL**

An Associate Pastor may leave a ministry for a variety of reasons. The Associate may accept a call to another church. A church may lack financial resources to keep an Associate on staff full-time. Differences in ministry and/or personality styles between the Associate and the Senior Pastor may cause him/her to resign. Personal issues, including sin, poor health and family conflicts, may require a resignation. Unsatisfactory job performance can lead to an early departure. (See Missionary Church Constitution, Articles XII.E.7 and XIV) Notify the District Superintendent of any pending resignation. He will work with the Senior Pastor, the Associate and the Church or Elder Board to provide a smooth transition.

If an Associate can no longer be supportive of his/her Senior Pastor, it is best for that person to resign and seek another place of ministry. The Associate must “take the high road” and avoid criticizing the Senior Pastor and/or the church publicly or in private. Never should he/she undermine the ministry of the Senior Pastor and/or the church by seeking support and sympathy from others for his/her cause. The Associate needs to preserve the unity of the body and model Christian love and humility at all times.

In the event of the Senior Pastor’s resignation, it is appropriate for the Associate to be willing to step aside and allow the next pastor the right to determine whether or not he/she should stay on staff. Some churches require a written resignation from the entire staff when the Senior Pastor resigns.

It is the right of the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Church or Elder Board, to dismiss an Associate. The reasons for the dismissal should be clearly communicated to the Associate. Whenever possible, allow the Associate to submit his/her resignation in writing to the Board.

The Senior Pastor and the Board should determine the following:

- The timing of the Associate’s departure. The reasons for the resignation often dictate how soon the Associate should leave. An Associate caught in sin should be removed immediately from all ministry responsibilities. In most other circumstances, the departure should happen within three months of a resignation.
- The terms of a severance package, if any. In most cases, it is proper to provide a severance package to assist the Associate and his/her family during the time of transition. The Church or Elder Board should not only be fair, but generous.
- The announcement of the resignation and/or dismissal to the congregation. Generally speaking, the Associate is allowed to read a brief letter of resignation to the church body. Circumstances may dictate that the Senior Pastor or a representative of the Church or Elder Board read the announcement. It may be necessary on occasion for the church leadership to send a letter to the membership explaining the situation. Unless there is a sin that must be publicly confessed, do not “air dirty laundry.” Seek to be positive and affirming.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Sample Job Descriptions**

### **Associate Pastor of Student Ministries**

**Purpose Statement:**

To coordinate the junior and senior high school ministries of the church.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Coordinate and give oversight to the youth ministries of the church.
2. Recruit, train and involve adult sponsors who can assist in the ministry and mentor teenagers.
3. Serve as a role model for teenagers in the church and community.
4. Facilitate youth programming (weekly meetings, small group Bible studies, outreaches, socials, recreation, District youth events, etc.)
5. Provide students with training and opportunities to serve Christ in and through the local church and to share their faith with others.
6. Chair committee meetings for the Youth Staff.
7. Serve as an advisory member of the Church Board.
8. Assist the senior pastor as needed in other areas of congregational life, utilizing one's giftedness for the glory of God and the benefit of the church body.

**Working Relationship:**

The Associate Pastor of Student Ministries is directly accountable to the Senior Pastor, who in consultation with the Church Board, who will give guidance and counsel to him. He is to submit regular written reports to the Church Board and prepare an annual report for the church.

### **Associate Pastor of Worship and Christian Education**

**Purpose Statement:**

To coordinate the worship and educational ministries of the church.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Coordinate and give oversight to the worship and music ministry of the church. He will plan the order of worship for services in consultation with the Senior Pastor.
2. Recruit, train and involve lay workers to assist in the worship and music ministry of the church (e.g., worship team, orchestra, choir, special music, musicals, etc.)
3. Strive to provide meaningful worship experiences for the entire congregation.
4. Direct the educational ministries of the church and assist various department heads (e.g., youth sponsor, children's church director, etc.) with their ministries.
5. Recruit, train and involve lay workers to serve as teachers and facilitators for the educational ministries of the church.
6. Chair meetings for the Worship Team and Christian Education Committee.
7. Serve as an advisory member of the Church Board.
8. Assist the senior pastor as needed in other areas of congregational life, utilizing one's giftedness for the glory of God and the benefit of the church body.

**Working Relationship:**

The Associate Pastor of Worship and Christian Education is directly accountable to the Senior Pastor, who in consultation with the Church Board, who will give guidance and counsel to him. He is to submit regular written reports to the Church Board and prepare an annual report for the church.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Sample Interview Questions**

1. When did you come to faith in Christ?
2. How did you sense God's call to full-time ministry in your life?
3. What kind of ministry experiences have you had?
4. How has your education prepared you for ministry?
5. Why are you interested in this ministry position?
6. What are one or two goals you would set during your first six months of ministry here?
7. What do you consider to be your spiritual gift(s)? In what ways have you been able to use your spiritual gift(s) in the church and in the community?
8. What do you consider to be your strengths? Weaknesses?
9. What aspects of the ministry do you most enjoy and why?
10. What aspects of the ministry do you least enjoy and why?
11. Describe your relationship with your senior pastor (or work supervisor). What are the essential things for maintaining a good relationship with the senior pastor?
12. Give a recent example of how you shared your faith with a non-Christian. How have you built relationships with non-churched people? Give an example or two.
13. Tell about a time when you had a conflict or disagreement with a pastor, or work supervisor. How was the problem resolved? What was your role in resolving the conflict? How did you feel throughout the process of conflict and resolution? What lessons did you learn and how are you putting them into practice?
14. Describe a time when you became discouraged in ministry or when you failed at something. How did you handle the situation? What insights did you gain from the experience? How have you used those insights to deal with discouragement?
15. How do you take care of yourself—spiritually, physically, emotionally, intellectually?
16. What do you and your spouse do to maintain a strong marriage?

### **Questions for the Spouse**

1. When did you come to faith in Christ?
2. How have you been able to affirm and support your spouse's call to full-time ministry?
3. What do you consider to be your spiritual gift(s)? In what ways have you been able to use your spiritual gift(s) in the church and in the community?
4. What do you consider to be your spouse's strengths? Weaknesses?
5. What do you and your spouse do to maintain a strong marriage?

### **Guidelines for the Interview**

- Use open-ended what, when, where, how, why, and who questions; avoid asking questions that can be answered with yes or no or just a few words.
- Allow the candidate to do most of the talking.
- Avoid leading questions that contain presumed answers.
- Listen actively and avoid argumentative questions; maintain eye contact.
- Always give the candidate a chance to respond without interruption.
- Be aware of the candidate's non-verbal communication (e.g., eye contact, gestures, posture, etc.).
- Do not express shock or criticism at what the candidate or spouse shares.
- Ask follow-up questions when clarification is needed.

## APPENDIX C

### PASTORAL BENEFITS COMMITTEE REPORT 2004-2005 GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL SALARY AND BENEFITS Adopted 1994 (updated November 2004)

These guidelines are intended for the use of the Missionary Churches of the Michigan District, in the evaluation of their pastoral compensation and in the preparation of annual budgets. When adopted by District Conference, these guidelines become our recommended standard for the year and until modified. The District Superintendent shall use them as a reminder to church boards at the appropriate time each year.

#### Scriptural Foundation

*Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? ... When the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? ... The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.*

*I Corinthians 9:7, 10-11, 14*

*The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages.*

*I Timothy 5:17-18*

#### Full Time Compensation

##### 1. Definition of "Full Time"

It is understood that most full time pastors will invest 50-60 hours a week in ministry.

Note: For the purpose of worker's compensation and disability insurance an employee must be employed a minimum of 30 hours a week.

##### 2. Minimal Full Time Compensation Package

A full time pastor should receive an appropriate cash salary, a housing allowance and/or use of a parsonage, health insurance, long-term disability, and Missionary Church pension. Otherwise, the pastor should be free to supplement his income with outside employment.

##### 3. Establishing the Pastor's Compensation Package

- A. Responsibility Factor - Consider the size of the congregation and the program.
- B. Experience and Training Factor - Consider education, ordination and years in active ministry.
- C. Cost of Living Factor - Consider annual adjustments to reflect changes in the cost of living.

- D. Non-Statistical Growth Factor - Consider the pastor's contribution (his leadership, planning, communication, spiritual guidance, etc.) to the spiritual growth of the members.
- E. Whether the pastor's wife works or not should not be a factor in establishing the pastor's salary.
- F. Consultation with a resource such as Church Law and Tax Report's *Annual Compensation Handbook for Church Staff* or online at the U.S. Department of Labor Compensation Statistics.

**4. Pastor's Salary and Benefits**

Estimate the median salary and benefits of a similar professional person working in your community as the base from which the following considerations are then made:

- A. Cash Salary.
- B. Housing - parsonage and utilities or an adequate housing allowance.
- C. Telephone - the church should provide for telephone service in the parsonage, except for the pastor's personal long distance calls.
- D. Health insurance - for the family.
- E. Long-term Disability Insurance.
- F. Missionary Church Pension plan.
- G. Social Security - at least one-half of self-employment tax, on the pastor's salary and on his housing allowance or the parsonage fair rental value.
- H. Paid Vacation - for all full-time ministers: (Cumulative Pastoral Career Experience)
  - 0-5 years experience = 2 weeks,
  - 6-12 years experience = 3 weeks,
  - 13-20 years experience = 4 weeks
  - Over 20 years of experience = 5 weeks
 NOTE: The pastor and church board should establish a vacation time policy. (e.g., when vacation should be used, how many weeks in a row are allowable, whether unused vacation time is cumulative for future years, etc)
- I. Sabbatical Rest. To honor long-term service to a local congregation, the church is encouraged to consider offering their pastor a 30 to 90 day sabbatical rest after 10 years of service. This shall not be considered vacation time, nor shall it be considered time to candidate for another position.
- J. All additional monies received from the church such as Christmas gifts and additional cash for FICA are cash salary and should be included in the wages section of the W-2.

**5. Business Expense and Health Reimbursement Plans (MERPS)**

- A. Continuing Education - the church should cover expenses for the pastor to at least one seminar a year, besides the District and General Conferences.
- B. Entertainment Account - to cover his expenses for ministry related meals and hospitality.
- C. Mileage - provide for mileage reimbursement at the IRS rate, or some other adequate car allowance.
  - Mileage reimbursement by a mileage log, usually submitted on a monthly basis.
- D. Health costs reimbursement. These can be **employee** funded through a cafeteria plan, or **employer** funded by creating reimbursement funds for Co-Pays and deductibles in the health insurance plan. Both plans are non-taxable, if a fully accountable program is used and payment is given only when a receipt is submitted - usually on a monthly basis

**6. Miscellaneous**

- A. It is recommended that the church strongly encourage its pastor to take a day off each week.
- B. It is recommended that the church send its pastor and treasurer to a church tax seminar.
- C. Salary and benefits packages for all paid church staff should be structured so as to take maximum advantage of the tax laws and to avoid unnecessary tax liability.
- D. Churches should include pastoral counseling liability and sexual misconduct liability in their insurance coverage. An amount larger than the amount included in the basic policy is recommended.
- E. Churches should purchase workers' compensation insurance.
- F. Churches are encouraged to participate in the annual Pastor Appreciation Day.
- G. Churches are expected to cover the expenses for the pastor to attend the annual district ministers' retreat, pastor and spouses' retreat, District and General Conferences. (Not to be considered a part of vacation, continued education, or seminar allowance)
- H. Churches are to encourage their pastor to attend a district camp and not consider it as vacation.
- I. According to the IRS pastors are unique and must be considered employees for income tax purposes and as self-employed for Social Security / Medicare. Withholding is not required from salary payments, but earnings must be reported on a W-2, not a 1099 miscellaneous form. No housing allowance or provided housing value should be included in the wage section of the W-2. Housing is subject only to self-employment tax.

**7. Other Benefits a Church May Wish to Consider**

- A. Library Allowance - the church may wish to make provision for a Pastoral Library Allowance to cover the purchase of books and periodicals, which he deems helpful for an effective ministry.
- B. Equity Allowance - if a parsonage is provided, the church might consider giving the pastor a monthly equity allowance to compensate for the equity he would build up if he were to own his own home.
- C. Additional Life Insurance. The church can purchase up to \$50,000 in term Life without it being taxable to the pastor.
- D. Supplement to the Missionary Church Pension Program. (e.g. 403b T.S.A.) It is recommended that each pastor begin a 403b tax sheltered annuity or some like tax-sheltered savings program early in their career. Contributions made on a "deferred compensation" basis are free of income tax and self-employment tax, are portable, simple and can be started with \$50 or \$100 per month."

## APPENDIX D

### MISSIONARY CHURCH ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REPORT FORM

Due February 15

This form may be completed online and submitted to the Denomination and District

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone:

Office: \_\_\_\_\_ Residence: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Status: \_\_\_ Ordained \_\_\_ Licensed Date current credentials were granted: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section A

1. Church/Organization Served: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date you began serving in this position: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Present ministry description: \_\_\_\_\_  
(senior pastor, associate pastor, evangelist, chaplain, missionary, other – give description)
4. Indicate date you last attended: a) District Conference \_\_\_\_\_ b) General Conference \_\_\_\_\_
5. Local church of which you are a member: \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your desire concerning future ministry?  
\_\_\_ a. Continue in present ministry, credentialed by the Missionary Church  
\_\_\_ b. Move to a new ministry, credentialed by the Missionary Church  
Date available: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of ministry desired: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ c. Discontinue credentials with the Missionary Church.  
\_\_\_ d. Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

### Section B

**Minister's Financial Report** -- Report amount budgeted or anticipated for your ministry position. Please be complete and accurate. This information serves also as the basis for determining Long Term Disability benefits.

Salary & Benefits:	\$ _____
Cash Salary:	\$ _____
Housing Allowance:	\$ _____
Utilities <sup>1</sup> :	\$ _____
Car Allowance <sup>2</sup> :	\$ _____
Social Security <sup>3</sup> :	\$ _____
Hospitalization:	\$ _____
L.T.D. <sup>4</sup> :	\$ _____
Denominational Pension:	\$ _____
Annuities <sup>5</sup> :	\$ _____
Fair Rental Value of parsonage	\$ _____
<b>Total Salary &amp; Benefits:</b>	\$ _____

Ministry Expenses

Travel Reimbursement <sup>6</sup> :	\$	_____
Continuing Education:	\$	_____
Ministry Expense <sup>7</sup> :	\$	_____
Entertainment Allowance:	\$	_____
Other:	\$	_____
<b>Total Ministry Expense:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>_____</b>

Are you bi-vocational: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Are you enrolled in F.I.C.A. (Social Security)? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Notes:

1. List either the value of the utilities of the actual cash allowance paid for utilities.
2. List only fixed amount paid as car allowance. Do not list amount paid as reimbursement for miles driven.
3. List any portion of the self-employment tax that is paid by the church.
4. The acronym "L.T.D." stands for Long Term Disability insurance.
5. List any tax-sheltered annuity plan to which the church contributes other than the denominational pension plan.
6. List amount paid as reimbursement for miles driven.
7. Show amount reimbursed for ministry and hospitality expenses.

**Section C**

1. List the continuing education courses or training seminars you attended this past year.

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount paid by church/organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount paid by church/organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount paid by church/organization: \_\_\_\_\_

2. List your ministry goals for the coming year. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How can we be of service to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# MICHIGAN DISTRICT MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY FORM

Due February 15- Please Type or Print

YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
CHURCH: \_\_\_\_\_  
POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

## MINISTRY SUMMARY

Please indicate how many of the following services you provided in the past year:

Weddings	_____	Pastoral calls/ counseling sessions	_____
Baptisms	_____	Baby dedications	_____
Funerals	_____	Sermons/ speaking engagements	_____

## PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Who was your ministry or accountability partner for the past year? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is this person's profession or role in ministry?

\_\_\_\_\_

How often did you meet with your accountability partner(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
How has this accountability relationship benefited you?

\_\_\_\_\_

How can the District be of service to you in the area of accountability?

\_\_\_\_\_

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

List the continuing education courses or training seminars you attended this past year:

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount paid by church: \_\_\_\_\_

Benefits of the course:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount paid by church: \_\_\_\_\_

Benefits of the course:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Send one copy to the District, one copy to your Senior Pastor, and keep a copy for personal records

## **APPENDIX E**

### **SENIOR/ ASSOCIATE PERSPECTIVES**

#### **Five Do's and Don'ts for the Associate Pastor Michael Cadrette, Senior Pastor (Crossroads Community Church, China, MI)**

##### **Five Do's**

1. Do communicate regularly
2. Do pray for your senior pastor
3. Do embrace your growth areas positively
4. Do your paperwork
5. Do be on time or call

##### **Five Don'ts**

1. Don't ignore the value of planning
2. Don't disagree in public or undermine in private
3. Don't get sloppy with the opposite sex
4. Don't expect him to read your mind
5. Don't call the District to complain

#### **Twelve Commandments of a Youth Pastor Relating to His/Her Senior Pastor Mark Douras, Associate Pastor (Gospel Center Missionary Church, South Bend, IN)**

1. Gain his trust.
2. Never cut him down with your word, but always build him up in public.
3. Never undermine his decision in front of others. Speak to him in private, but pick your battles.
4. Always give him the benefit of the doubt in front of others.
5. Take an interest in his interests.
6. Meet on a regular basis.
7. Communicate daily.
8. Learn to accept criticism.
9. Accept that there will be differences.
10. Make him look good.
11. Pray together.
12. Work together and play together.

**A Senior Pastor's Perspective of the Relationship with Staff**  
**Ben Andres**  
**("Rev" magazine, November/December 2000)**

- **Don't make me micromanage.** It's important that I release my staff to what the Lord's calling them to do. It's equally important that my staff communicates with me about what they're doing with what they've been given. When I have to track them down and double check their activities, it wastes everyone's time and isn't very effective. Keep me posted, without my needing to ask.
- **Recognize that I'm human.** I make mistakes, fail to meet staff needs, even have errors in judgment. Give me some grace. When I make mistakes, talk to me and let's work it out.
- **Initiate something.** Just because I'm the senior pastor doesn't mean that I'm the only one who can create and implement. It also doesn't mean that I want to initiate all the social encounters with my staff. It makes me feel good if staff members seek me out and want to have a relationship beyond staff meetings.
- **Be trustworthy.** In order for my staff and me to develop a real transparent relationship, we must all sense that we're safe. Discussions held in the privacy of the staff shouldn't be repeated elsewhere. If I can't trust a staff member the whole team is crippled.
- **Ask me how I am really doing.** I need to be in a safe place where I can be transparent.
- **Offer to pray with me.** It's very easy to overlook the most basic elements of fellowship and teamwork. If I fail to initiate prayer, give me some grace and take the initiative.
- **Keep the team unified.** We can discuss anything as a staff, but we must present a unified position and direction to the church. If a staff member disagrees with me, let's discuss it in private. Let's sit down and work it out. But let's not take our disagreement out of the office.

**Ten Do and Don'ts for Senior Pastors**  
**Bill Barnwell, Associate Pastor**  
**(Faith Missionary Church, Flint, MI)**

<p>1. Do treat us as partners in ministry.</p>	<p>Don't treat us as competitors.</p>
<p>2. Do assume some burden for making the pastoral relationship work.</p>	<p>Don't assume that this burden should fall solely on us.</p>
<p>3. Do take an interest in our lives and ministry.</p>	<p>Don't neglect our lives and make up excuses to justify it ("I'm too busy," "There's just too big of an age gap," "We have different interests.")</p>
<p>4. Do use us where we are strong and challenge us where we are weak.</p>	<p>Don't "hog" up all the ministry responsibilities and/or be afraid to share the credit with your associate. Give him or her opportunities to grow, learn and serve.</p>
<p>5. Do use constructive criticism for the purposes of building up your partner in ministry.</p>	<p>Don't be afraid to offer constructive criticism and don't engage in nasty, hurtful criticism which benefits no one.</p>
<p>6. Do expect accountability and excellence from your associate.</p>	<p>Don't expect something from your associate that you are not holding yourself up to.</p>
<p>7. Do allow freedom and creativity from your associate.</p>	<p>Don't stifle his creativity or "breathe down his neck"</p>
<p>8. Do conduct all staff affairs, criticisms, relationships, etc humbly.</p>	<p>Don't assume an air of superiority because you are the "Senior Pastor."</p>
<p>9. Do share your years of experience and wisdom with your associate.</p>	<p>Don't neglect the fact that your associate is most likely not as experienced and learned as you are and could use your mentoring and/or guidance in ministry.</p>
<p>10. Do show that you care about your associate in public and in private.</p>	<p>Don't leave your associate feeling isolated and/or distant from you.</p>