

## ***Now That Our Pastor Has Left, What Should We Do First?***

*Most churches view the time between the resignation of one pastor and the call of another as unproductive. Some feel it is wasted time. Others fear the congregation will lose members or dollars. Still others are in a rush to call a new pastor as quickly as possible so those things can return to normal.*

*Significant studies of hundreds of interim congregations over the past twenty years are now showing that the interim between pastors can be an important time in the congregational life. R. Neil Chafin, an experienced consultant to congregations, says, "The way a congregation chooses to use its interim time will shape congregational growth, identity, and health for years to come. We also know that what is done in the interim time really determines whether the new minister and congregation will form a solid ministry team."*

*Congregations that fail to make wise use of the interim time tend to repeat their history with the new minister. This can lead to pain and confusion for the minister and prevent the congregation from meeting its goals of spiritual growth for its members and ministry to its community.*

*Expectations of ministers and churches vary enormously. Membership in many churches is either plateaued or declining. Many congregations are unsure of their future. Each generation differs on expectations for the church. The interim is the best time to talk about and clarify these hopes and questions about church life.*

*The **Minister/Church Relations Office** of the Baptist General Convention of Texas has developed a specialized process called the "**Intentional Interim Ministry**" that can help a congregation work through five crucial developmental tasks in search of a new pastor. If congregational members do these tasks thoroughly with wide participation, the chances for effective ministry with a new pastor are greatly enhanced. This approach assists healthy churches as well as struggling congregations.*

*The five developmental tasks are: (1.) Coming to Terms with History; (2.) Examining Leadership and Organizational Needs; (3.) Rethinking Denominational Linkage; (4.) Developing a New Identity and Vision; and (5.) Commitment to New Leadership.*

*For more information and help call **toll free 1-888-446-1453**.*

*Whether your congregation chooses to use an "Intentional Interim Pastor" or a "Traditional Interim Pastor", this Pastor Search Committee Workbook can guide you through the steps of securing a new permanent pastor.*

*If you choose to secure an Intentional Interim Pastor, it is best for your Search Committee to wait until the five tasks are completed before attempting to find a pastor. The valuable information gained from the Intentional Interim process can greatly enhance their ability to find the right pastor for the church.*