

Step 4: Negotiation Process

There is a continuum between the Candidate Selection Process and the Negotiation Process. The purpose of the negotiation process is to eliminate misunderstandings that can damage the fellowship between the congregation and the pastor in days to come. The committee is seeking God's man for their church and desires to ensure a good working agreement that will form a basis for fruitful ministry over the years.

- A. **There is wisdom in conducting both the credit and criminal background checks.** The character of the pastor is of utmost importance. A book entitled *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church* by Hammar, Klipowicz and Cobble, available from Christian Ministry Resources (800-222-1840), is a complete and practical guidebook for prevention and risk reduction in these matters. Some pastors, even though having nothing to hide, may have never had a search committee make this request before, especially if they have been in their current church for more than ten years.

A sample consent form for background checks is on page 33.

- B. **Invite the minister and his family to visit your church field** This visit should be discreetly held on your church field prior to the candidate coming in view of a call. The visit will help the candidate to become acquainted with the church field, community and schools. Of course, this visit should include the candidate's family and expenses for the visit should be paid by the church. The committee should plan not to hear the candidate preach until after the church field visit. The candidate's preaching style should be the last criteria the committee evaluates in seeking a new pastor.

Visit checklist:

1. This visit does not take place on a Sunday
 2. Introduce to and/or conduct interview with church staff members. The staff should not be involved in the search process, but they do need an opportunity to meet the candidate and give feedback to the search committee.
 3. Candidate and spouse should see:
 - * Church buildings and property
 - * Parsonage or potential housing
 - * Church field
 - * Total community
 4. Obtain written consent for credit and criminal background checks.
- C. **Negotiate a Covenant with the candidate.** A sample covenant is on page 36. In establishing a covenant with the candidate, give consideration to each of the following categories:
1. Include the total compensation package:
 - a. Salary and housing allowance
 - b. Protection benefits: Health insurance and annuity
 - i. Flexible Spending Plan
 - c. Ministry related expenses:
 - i. Travel expenses _____ per mile (Use current IRS rate)
 - ii. Professional expenses
 - iii. Annual convention expenses
 - iv. Other
 2. Include time away from office:
 - a. Day(s) a week off
 - b. Week(s) for vacation

- c. List of holidays
 - d. Revivals or Sundays away/church paid pulpit supply
 - e. Sick leave: number of days _____
 - f. Any other agreed-upon arrangements
3. Include moving arrangements:
 - a. Moving expenses
 - b. Utilities hookups
 - c. Moving day activities
 - d. Schedule the move
 4. Include job description; sample job descriptions are on pages 37-39
 5. Include all expectations of pastor.
 6. Include all verbal agreements
 7. Include what constitutes a call:
 - a. **Rationale:** Many church constitutions state that a simple majority or an affirming vote of 75% of eligible voting members present is necessary to call a pastor. However, a pastor would rarely have a successful ministry if he begins with 25% or more members against calling him.
 - b. **Solution:** The Pastor Search Committee and the candidate negotiate an acceptable percentage of eligible voting members present to issue a call. A recommended range to call a candidate would be 90%-99%. A higher percentage will encourage the pastor and give his ministry an affirming beginning.
 8. Include notice required to terminate the Covenant: “Under ordinary circumstances, the pastor shall give the church _____ day’s notice of his resignation. If the pastor is involuntarily terminated or resigns under pressure, he shall be paid according to the Severance Policy.” A sample severance policy is found on page 34, but each church should write their own as needed. The pastor should not be expected to preach or perform other pastoral duties during that time.
 9. Include how the church will resolve disputes with the pastor. If the dispute cannot be resolved through the internal grievance process, then the Personnel Committee or other appropriate committee (according to church by-laws) is encouraged to call for an outside mediator (always following the guidelines set forth in Matthew 18:15-22). The Associational Director of Missions or the IBSA Church Health Development Director is available to assist the church, hear the dispute, identify the issues and seek reconciliation between the parties. If your church does not have a reconciliation policy, contact IBSA Church Health Development for assistance in developing one.
 10. Include the church’s sexual harassment policy.
 11. Include the candidate’s first day on the church field.
 12. Write the candidate a letter that describes all agreed-upon items negotiated.

"[Disclaimer: This form is for illustrative purposes, and under no circumstances should it be relied upon without the express, written advice of an independent and qualified attorney following a full legal analysis of all the circumstances," See *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*, p. 79]

REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AND AUTHORIZATION

I hereby request the _____ Police Department to release any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in its files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state, or national. I hereby release said Police Department from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

Signature _____

Print name _____

Print all aliases _____

Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Social Security Number _____

Today's Date _____

Please send Record to: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

SAMPLE

SEVERANCE POLICY XYZ BAPTIST CHURCH

A. Purpose. The purpose of this severance policy is to guide XYZ Baptist Church in the event that involuntary termination of a ministry staff employee is inevitable. This policy will be utilized only after the XYZ Baptist Church Personnel Committee has met with the staff member and exhausted all attempts to rectify issues related to unacceptable job performance and/or inappropriate conduct. The committee will keep a documented, confidential record of consultations with the staff member throughout this process. In the event that involuntary termination of the staff member becomes necessary, the personnel committee will report to the church and make recommendation to the church concerning payment of severance benefits.

B. Definitions. For purposes of this severance policy statement:
“Church” means XYZ Baptist Church.

“Comparable employment” includes, but is not limited to, full-time employment as a ministry staff person or full-time secular employment, regardless of the salary or other benefits to be received in that ministry staff or secular employment.

“Ministry staff” means a pastor, minister of education, minister of administration, minister of music, minister of youth, or any similar position or combination of those positions.

“Pro-rata” means a portion of 2.5 weeks of severance will be paid according to the number of weeks served.

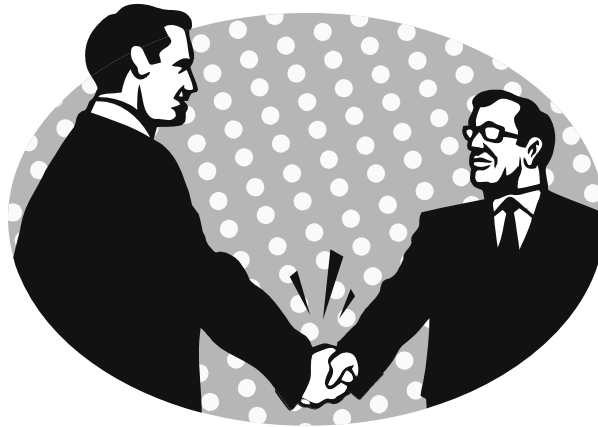
C. Severance benefits. Except as otherwise provided in this policy statement, upon the involuntary termination of a ministry staff person’s employment by the Church, the Church shall pay the person severance benefits. A ministry staff person of the Church earns 2.5 weeks of salary (on a pro-rata basis) for each year of employment. The maximum severance salary will not exceed 25 weeks. The minimum severance is 2.5 weeks (regardless of length of employment). The payments would be equal to the salary and benefits (excluding business expense reimbursements) that the person was being paid under the terms of his/her ministry staff employment at the time he/she was terminated. Payment of the severance salary shall begin with the first week after the end of the period for which the person was paid his/her regular salary and benefits by the church. The payments shall be made according to the regular payroll schedule of the church. Payment of the severance salary shall end when the earliest of the following occurs:

- 1) The person obtains comparable employment.
- 2) The person receives the total amount of severance benefits to which he/she is entitled under this policy according to the period of time for which he/ she was employed by the church.

D. Certain conduct by ministry staff person. If the Church Personnel Committee determines that a ministry staff person's employment with the church was involuntarily terminated because of the person's inappropriate conduct, the committee shall review the circumstances of that conduct and shall make a recommendation to the church concerning payment of severance benefits to the person.

If a ministry staff person's employment with the church was involuntarily terminated because of conduct resulting in the person being charged with a felony, payment of severance benefits under this policy statement shall be suspended pending final disposition of the charge. In any case involving immorality or criminal activity on the part of a ministry staff person employed by the church, the Church Personnel Committee shall give special consideration to the needs of the person's family and shall make a recommendation to the church concerning those needs. As stated in Section C, the minimum severance benefit will be 2.5 weeks. The maximum severance benefit will not exceed 25 weeks and will be determined by the length of employee's service to XYZ Baptist Church.

E. Effective date of Policy. This policy will go into effect immediately upon approval of the policy by XYZ Baptist Church.



Sample Covenant with New Pastor

The _____ Baptist church calls Rev. _____
to serve as _____. He is to begin to serve this congregation on _____ 20_____.

Church Mission/Purpose _____

Church Ministry Goals _____

Compensation

For services rendered by the pastor under this agreement, the _____

Baptist Church will pay:

Salary	\$ _____
Housing allowance	\$ _____
Benefits	
Health Insurance.	\$ _____
Annuity	\$ _____
Accountable Expenses	
Travel Expense (per mile _____; use IRS approved rate)	\$ _____
Professional expenses	\$ _____
Other Expenses	\$ _____
Flexible Spending Accounts	\$ _____

The church acknowledges that the pastor's work cannot be rigidly regulated because of the nature of ministry. Crisis situations and emergencies along with meetings and a heavy schedule may alter the pastor's schedule and sometimes necessitate his arranging his work and leisure at his own convenience. Despite weekend work and evening obligations, the pastor must find some time to spend with his family and for his own personal needs.

1. Day(s) a week off: _____
2. Week(s) for vacation: _____
3. List holidays: _____

4. Revivals or Sundays away: _____
5. Total Sundays for church paid pulpit supply: _____
6. Sick leave arrangements: _____
7. Any other agreed-upon arrangements: _____

Termination of Covenant

Either party will have the right to terminate this covenant with a _____-week notice, unless otherwise stated in the Policy Manual.

Pastor _____ Date _____
Chairman of the Committee: _____ Date _____

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Pastor:

Principal Function: The pastor is responsible to the church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to teach the biblical revelation, to engage in pastoral care ministries, to provide leadership in all areas of church life.

Communicating:

- ◆ deliver challenging and stimulating sermons which are biblically based on sound doctrine
- ◆ encourage congregation in personal evangelism and witnessing
- ◆ encourage the congregation in ministering to the needs of members as well as non-members
- ◆ disciple the congregation through Bible study

Administering:

- ◆ give administrative leadership to the church

Leading:

- ◆ lead ministry team and church to carry out specific functions of evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship, resulting in numerical growth, ministry expansion, and advance in missions
- ◆ lead congregation in planning, conducting, and evaluating all the church's ministries
- ◆ lead deacons to accomplish their responsibilities as leaders and caregivers
- ◆ lead in planning worship services
- ◆ lead in observing the ordinances of the church: baptism and The Lord's Supper

Pastoral Care:

- ◆ extend care to individuals or families through one on one contact
- ◆ visit individuals who are in hospitals or homebound
- ◆ contact prospective members
- ◆ contact those who have become inactive in the church
- ◆ contact people experiencing crisis or spiritual needs
- ◆ guide people in times of anxiety, confusion, and doubt
- ◆ be there for people during times of celebration and times of grief
- ◆ involve couples in premarriage counseling
- ◆ perform marriage ceremonies
- ◆ officiate funeral services

Youth:

Principal Function: Responsible to the minister of education for assisting church program organizations to develop a comprehensive program of youth education.

Responsibilities:

- ◆ give leadership and support to youth, adults who work with youth, and parents of youth
- ◆ relate closely with other ministers and staff
- ◆ conduct teaching/worship experiences with youth ministry team
- ◆ witness, counsel and build relationships with individual team members
- ◆ provide worship and in-depth Bible study experiences for youth
- ◆ provide recreation time for youth
- ◆ involve youth in the ongoing activities of the church family

Music:

Principal Function: Responsible to the pastor for the development and promotion of the church music program.

Responsibilities:

- ◆ with the pastor, plan and lead weekly worship services
- ◆ organize and lead adult choirs to sing in worship
- ◆ work with accompanists, soloists, sound technicians, ushers, praise team/band, and other worship leaders
- ◆ organize and enlist leaders for various age-group choirs: preschool, children and youth
- ◆ lead instrumental groups for worship services
- ◆ order music for ministry
- ◆ participate in various types of visitation: prospects, evangelistic, hospitals, shut-ins, in-reach to regular members
- ◆ plan and prepare special music productions, such as Christmas, musicals, Easter pageants, and patriotic celebrations

Education:

Principal Function: Responsible to the pastor for providing staff leadership to the entire church educational program. This involves assisting church program leaders in planning, conducting, and evaluating a comprehensive ministry of Christian education in support of the mission and objectives of the church.

Administering:

- ◆ oversee almost all church program organizations
- ◆ work with staff, Church Council, and nominating committee
- ◆ survey church members' spiritual gifts and skills
- ◆ recruit volunteer workers to serve based on their giftedness, skills, and passion
- ◆ request and manage budget funds
- ◆ lead in setting goals
- ◆ evaluate programs and organize for effectiveness

Leading:

- ◆ develop teaching and learning programs of the church
- ◆ lead church in evangelistic outreach
- ◆ create new units within the church programs
- ◆ select and evaluate curriculum materials
- ◆ direct visitation programs to prospects, new members, and ministry needs
- ◆ project needed physical facilities
- ◆ lead short term and long range planning processes

Communicating:

- ◆ train leaders
- ◆ secure teaching equipment and resources
- ◆ know age-group teaching/learning processes
- ◆ evaluate progress of learners

Educational Caring:

- ◆ accept the role of a ministering servant
- ◆ counsel
- ◆ hospital visitation
- ◆ be active in both personal and corporate worship

Minister of Education & Music:

Principal Function: Responsible to the pastor for the development and promotion of the educational and music programs of the church.

Responsibilities:

- ◆ Direct the planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating of comprehensive educational and music programs based on program tasks.
- ◆ Supervise the work of assigned paid staff members.
- ◆ Serve as a leader on the Church Council.
- ◆ Train volunteer workers in cooperation with the church Nominating Committee and Church Training.
- ◆ Organize and direct a church-wide visitation program.
- ◆ Assist the pastor in planning all services of worship; arrange and provide music for weddings, funerals, special projects, ministries, and other church related activities upon request.
- ◆ Develop projects such as mission trips, festivals, youth camps, retreats; plan activities for senior adults.
- ◆ Edit church publications as assigned.
- ◆ Prepare an annual program ministry budget for approval; administer the approved budget.
- ◆ Keep informed on educational and music methods, materials, promotions, and administration.
- ◆ Cooperate with association and state leaders in promoting activities of mutual interest.

Minister of Recreation:

Principal Functions: Responsible to the minister of education for leading the church in planning, conducting and evaluating a program of recreation for church members and other persons in the community.

Responsibilities:

- ◆ Direct the planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating of church recreational activities.
- ◆ Coordinate and administer activities in the church's recreation center, as assigned by the church.
- ◆ Plan and coordinate training for all volunteer recreation workers.
- ◆ Serve as recreation resource person and advisor to church organizations as requested.
- ◆ Lead the church to provide equipment and supplies needed in recreational activities.
- ◆ Supervise the inventory, care, repair, and storage of recreation equipment and supplies.
- ◆ Provide representation for the church in planning, conducting, and evaluating recreational activities involving other churches and groups.