

**An Evaluation of the Transition Process within
The Episcopal Church**

aka

**“So You Want to Call a Rector or Be a Rector?
Church Deployment for Dummies ©”**

By

Linda Vaught Hutton

**Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Theology of the University of the South
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

Doctor of Ministry

May, 2010

Sewanee, Tennessee

Approved:

Date:

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
---------------------------	----

GLOSSARY	vii
--------------------	-----

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION	1
---------------------------	---

PART I

AN EVALUATION OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS WITHIN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2. METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS	4
--------------------------------------	---

Intentional Research Limitations	7
--	---

3. ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW	10
----------------------------------	----

The Church Deployment Office and CDO Profiles	13
---	----

The Diocese in the Deployment Process	18
---	----

Transition – Deployment – Where Is It On the Diocesan Webpage?	21
---	----

Feedback from the Rector Candidates	22
---	----

4. ANALYTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	28
---	----

Analysis and Recommendations	28
--	----

Conclusions	34
-----------------------	----

PART II

SO YOU WANT TO CALL A RECTOR
OR BE A RECTOR,
CHURCH DEPLOYMENT FOR DUMMIES ©

5. SEARCH COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS	38
The Planning Phase and General Considerations	38
Interims and Associates	42
The Size and Nature of Search Committees	49
Shaping the Parish Profile	55
The Parish CDO Profile	62
Considerations for the Search	68
Shaping the Search Process	70
Electronic or Paper	71
Clergy Contact	73
The Process of Sharing Information	77
The Phases of Screening In the Candidates	83
The Basics of Interviews and Questions	101
Choosing	109
6. RECTOR CANDIDATE CONSIDERATIONS	115
The Planning Phase and General Considerations	115
Shaping Your CDO Profile	121
The Searching Phase and Considerations	123

Search Committee Contact	. . . . .	126
The Basics of Interviews and Questions	. . . . .	129
The Site Visits	. . . . .	137
Appendix		
A. SURVEY METHODOLOGY	. . . . .	142
B. SURVEYS USED	. . . . .	144
Rector Surveys	. . . . .	144
Search Committee Surveys	. . . . .	151
Transition Officers Surveys	. . . . .	159
BIBLIOGRAPHY	. . . . .	165

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the many rectors and search committees who so willingly gave of their time and energy to respond to the surveys in this study. Every new relationship is fraught with time-consuming challenges, and your alacrity of response is gratefully acknowledged. Every one of your comments and ideas were read. No doubt many of you will observe your inputs incorporated into this project in some fashion. Your love and concern for the Episcopal Church and your desire to further the work of Christ in the world reflects a passion for Christ and a willingness to do whatever it takes to assist in that process. To the faculty and staff of The School of Theology of the University of the South, I extend my appreciation for the opportunity and the honor to have walked with Christ in your presence. To the parishioners of historic St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Orange, Virginia, thank you for calling me as your rector to share in your ministry. May the peace of Christ be with you all.

GLOSSARY

CDO: Church Deployment Office, located in New York City. CDO includes both personnel and a computer program to maintain openings of various church positions as well as computerized profiles of individual priests and churches in search.

POB: Positions Open Bulletin [POB], documents generated online by the CDO designating churches with “positions open” for consideration by clergy and other members of ministry of the church.

Pronouns: As there are both men and women serving in rector positions, the reflective pronouns: he/she, him/her will be used randomly throughout this work. No single use of any one pronoun should be used to construe the strength, skills, or talents of any particular priest of any gender.

Rector/Pastor: This work focuses on the Rector Search. The terms, Rector and Pastor may be used interchangeably, but always with the understanding that we are referring to the installed Rector or Senior Pastor of a parish.

Transition: The CDO Program Office, in conjunction with diocesan deployment officers, is changing the traditional term: “Deployment” for the more accurately descriptive word: “Transition.” As a result, the word Transition, Transition Officer (TO), Transition Coach/Consultant (TC), etc. will be used throughout this work vice the word “Deployment.”

St. Swithins: Represents any church. The use of “Any Church USA” or variations thereof seems impersonal and does not represent the emotional and spiritual ties to one’s own church. St. Swithin is a real “saint,” the former Bishop of Winchester

cathedral, England, d. 862. His date of remembrance is July 15. There are no Episcopal Churches that bear his name; hence, its use should not offend.

Note: there is a St. Swithins ELCA parish in an Episcopal Call to Common Mission relationship.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The January 2007 edition of *Episcopal Life* carried an article titled: “*Singing the unemployment blues: Minimal help, outdated job listings and silence from potential employers test job seeker.*” The article drew a surprising number of editorial responses in the following issue—all in concurrence with the author’s article. I recently spent over 21 months as an Interim, Priest-in-Charge while concurrently searching for a rector position myself. I coincidentally provided pastoral care to my congregation’s search committee as they also sought to weave their way through this cumbersome process of finding a new rector.

I found myself with a unique perspective of simultaneously looking at both sides. I also admit that I was exceptionally fortunate. I had several bishops and transition officers who actively sought to promote me. Additionally, my resume package apparently intrigued the churches to which I submitted and, in the majority of cases, I had the extraordinary good fortune to progress to the final round in those churches’ discernment.

As a result, I had the opportunity to participate fully in a number of search processes. Throughout the search process, I noticed numerous glaring mistakes made by search committees and prospective candidates, myself included that could easily be corrected if only someone would address them in a public venue. I designed this project to do just that, hence the title: “So You Want to Call a Rector or Be a Rector? Church

Deployment for Dummies ©.”¹ This work is intended for a publishing proposal to Wiley Publications, the trademark and copyright holder of the *For Dummies* series. This comprehensive “process guide,” which constitutes Part II of this work, incorporates the analyzed data and recommendations of Part I into the main body. The elements in Part II outline procedures and considerations for both search committees and rector candidates.

The transition process for calling and installing rectors in the Episcopal Church is in many ways cumbersome and inefficient. Comments concerning “deployment” in The Episcopal Church, from bishops, transition officers, search committees, and priests, are universally negative. The first question is: Are these negative reactions valid? Are the reasons for such a universally negative opinion based upon fact, experience, or hearsay? Admittedly, the transition process in The Episcopal Church does some things well and some things less well. The question is why and what can be done, given the varieties and differences between 100-plus unique dioceses and thousands of parishes ranging in size from small family to mega-large corporate? The transition process is fundamentally an integrated system whose purpose is the connection of a church and its rector. However, the question asked is, “Is the system operating efficiently or in a way that at times actually impedes mission accomplishment”?

¹ *For Dummies* is a copyright trademark.

PART I
AN EVALUATION OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS
WITHIN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Analysis of respondent surveys comprises the first portion of this project: “An Evaluation of the Transition Process within The Episcopal Church.” In this project I employed two different methodological approaches: (1) analytical surveys of the primary system elements (search committees and rector candidates) with an analysis and recommendation of findings and (2) an evaluation of the adequacy of any existing print resources currently available to assist search committees and rector candidates in the process. The goal of the former was to determine the scope and nature of systemic inefficiencies, with the intent to identify potential solutions and recommendations. Additionally, should elements arise that currently enhance systemic efficiency, to ensure that they are noted for continued employment. The goal of the latter evaluation was to determine what resources currently exist to assist search committees and rector candidates in the process.

Using a systems analysis approach, I explored the Episcopal Church rector search process structure and its functioning elements. The process set out to identify the search process structure [henceforth, referred to as: “the process”] and to identify any broken, dysfunctional, or inefficient processes, and, as a result of that analysis, to provide holistic systemic recommendations for process improvement. I define the current process structure by four distinct functioning elements:

- a) The Church Transition Office [CDO] in New York City

- b) The 100+ individual dioceses of The Episcopal Church of the United States
- c) The individual church search committees
- d) The individual searchers or rector candidates

In my research I sought to evaluate how the interaction of these four elements determines systemic efficiency. In the course of analysis I confirmed that these four distinct elements do constitute the functioning transition process. At the same time, I also identified two subordinate elements embedded within the ‘diocese’ element category—Diocesan Transition Officers and Transition Consultants. *Analysis indicated that, without exception, these subordinate elements, Transition Officers and Transition Consultants, contributed to system efficiency.*

The analysis provided an insight into the total transition program, its methods, its efficiencies and inefficiencies, and some recommendations for how the process might be more effective in its fulfillment. One such recommendation was a comprehensive guide of helpful “How to...” steps for both search committees and rector candidates.

The research for this project employed a broad range of data gathering and analysis, as well as phone interviews, personal visits, and original source input from search committees and rector candidates within two years of installing a rector. I intentionally restricted the survey of search committees and rector candidates to those “called and installed” within the past 24 months. In order to insure relevancy to the present transition process, the 24-month limitation insured that the data fell within a one to four year window. This limitation bracketed individuals installed 24 months ago, who may have commenced the process up to two years prior, and those recently installed, who

may have started the process only a year prior. I also gathered initial data from diocesan transition officers.

As with all surveys, the challenge was to make a sufficiently robust, self-validating survey that was also brief enough to attain an optimum response rate. Despite a desire for reasonable brevity, the survey also required enough information to gain sufficient data to formulate follow-up issues and questions. As noted in the Acknowledgment section, survey respondents demonstrated a remarkable willingness to amplify and clarify data during subsequent phone interviews and personal visits.

The primary survey target groups were: search committees and rector candidates. These two interlocking process elements are ultimately the two groups that can best determine whether the “system” worked, as both are intimately involved in the entire process and intimately concerned with the success of the final outcome.

I used personal interviews and anecdotal information from rector candidates and search committees to identify basic and potential areas in need of further study. This initial round of interviews identified impressions, feelings, and perceptions about the process, but no data to quantify the validity of these impressions, feelings, or perceptions. As a result of this phase, I developed a framework of survey questions to prove or disprove these perceived suppositions. To aid with statistical analysis, I shaped the majority of survey questions to provide quantitative answers. Additionally, I structured many of the questions to provide self-validating answers either within the question itself or within the survey. The majority of questions on each of the two surveys were designed to cross-validate similar questions on the other survey.

Following generation of the surveys, I ran several preliminary surveys in the two primary process elements (search committees and rector candidates) to refine question clarity, to eliminate unnecessary redundancy, or to include questions that I had not previously considered. I also provided both groups with identical open-ended questions to allow respondents the opportunity for self-clarification, amplification, or general comment. Surprisingly, nearly all respondents on all surveys took the time to use the open-ended questions. The survey methodology and actual copies of the surveys used for this research may be found in the Appendix.

Intentional research limitations

This project only considered the process centered on the calling of a Rector/Vicar/ Priest-in-Charge and not on hiring other church ministries such as Priest Associates, Directors of Music, Youth Ministers and Educators, and so forth. Although all of these latter positions are important in their own right, they are not “called and installed” positions. They are hired positions that are generally filled at the rector’s pleasure. These positions are like satellites to a major planet, which in this case is the “rector search.” Since what effects the planet also directly impacts the satellites, much of the data and some of the conclusions may also directly impact on these other ministerial duties, but they are not the focus of this work. On the other hand, in the search committee interview procedures, some insights and “best practices” procedures arose which could be applied by a rector and administrative hiring committee to the hiring of members of other ministries.

Additionally, this project did not consider the diocesan placement of “Special Interims” for a specified period of time, with the intention of “calling” that Interim as the parish rector and thus bypassing the rector search process. These special placements are carefully targeted, often to help churches in unique circumstances or to broaden the exposure of the church to the talented ministry of women, persons of color or differing ethnic background. However, the ease and expediency of these “searchless” placements should in no way become the norm in any diocese. To do so bypasses the established ecclesiological process inherent in The Episcopal Church of involving individual members and their congregational leadership in the discernment process of “calling and installing,” with diocesan approval, their rector.

This project did not consider the areas of: How to “say goodbye” to a former rector or how to transition from that specific event. Likewise, my research does not address the “How to negotiate the contract/compensation package or how to welcome the new rector or the celebration of a new minister.” Other works noted in the bibliography sufficiently cover each of these events.

During the research phase, the Church Deployment Office (CDO) in New York acquired a new Program Director. The CDO Program Office is well aware of some areas where efficiencies or changes might be made. Since the CDO Program Office is itself in transition with an eye to change, a critique of this area is unreasonable and will be limited. Survey evaluations that indicate appropriate potential recommendations or solutions will be noted and forwarded to the CDO Program Office for use in their own evaluative process.

I did not focus on Province IX or any American parishes of The Episcopal Church [TEC] outside of the continental United States. Lastly, although basic demographic information [sex, age, marital status, race/ethnic origin] was requested, this research did not ask or consider the sexual orientation of survey respondents; therefore, it is impossible to determine what impact sexual orientation may have played in the data.

This research and its resulting product are oriented solely to The Episcopal Church of the United States. Although other denominations, like the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Presbyterian Church of the USA, also use various forms of “search, call, and install,” the procedures and recommendations outlined herein will refer solely to The Episcopal Church. That does not preclude the modification or use of the analysis and recommendations by other denominations as they may see fit. As such, other denominational users should first verify that any recommended procedures are in accord with their respective polity.

Due to the sensitive nature of clergy employment in general, *all information was requested on a confidential, non-attribution basis.*

CHAPTER 3

ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW

The transition process for most churches and rector candidates is not a frequently recurring event; and few search committee members and rector candidates have experience or knowledge of the process. As a result, search committees and rector candidates frequently reported that they, “Felt like they were flying blind.”²

Search committees that had transition officers and/or transition consultants reported greater satisfaction with both the process and outcome than those who had little or no transition assistance. Moreover, searches conducted with the guidance of a transition officer or transition consultant reported shorter transition periods by an average of 2-3 months. Clearly, *transition officers/consultants contribute to system efficiency and to the overall satisfaction with the process.*

At the same time, all search committees reported that they would have liked a comprehensive guide to provide information on process, benchmarks, pitfalls, generic timelines, and so forth. Likewise, rector candidates reported that they also would have benefited from a comprehensive guide on how the process works, who to call and when, pitfalls, timelines, and so forth.

In regards to my second research methodology (to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of print resources currently available to assist the process), I found a substantial amount of literature from the CDO Program Office and individual dioceses, as well as works in print from Transition Consultants, the Alban Institute, and Church Publishing.

² When germane or when they help to amplify a recurring point made by respondents, quotations from survey respondents will be noted in parentheses.

These works offer advice and checklists to aid a search committee's work on how to conduct a successful search and transition process. To varying degrees, all of these products offer helpful advice and recommendations. Although many of these works date from the 1970s and 1980s, they remain surprisingly relevant. However, because of the differing ecclesiological structure between the authors' denominations, some of these works occasionally contradict each other or may individually leave out important elements found in other works. As such, this work will seek to collate those useful elements relevant to the search process within The Episcopal Church, while eliminating contradictions and processes used by other ecclesiological structures.

In terms of what work currently offers the most helpful information, only one significant resource appeared: *Search: a manual for those called to guide the parish through a process leading to the election of a rector.*³ It should be noted that some dioceses provide a "search process" guideline, in brochure or manual form, to identify the process and/or describe steps in the process that are unique to individual dioceses. Although the fundamental steps in each were effectively identical, search committees reported that these diocesan search guideline products were either: "not sufficiently robust enough to cover more than an outline"; "were so large and detailed that no one had the time to really read them"; "they were too big and useless"; "some parts seemed to contradict other parts, besides no one had time to read all of it; it was just so large."

No search committee or rector candidate reported any awareness of the variety of "search process" guides, nor did any committees report awareness of any research previously done and available. Moreover, most of these works, many of which are

³ Charles R. Wilson, *Search: a manual for those called to guide the parish through a process leading to the election of a rector*, (Arvada, Colorado: Jethro Publications, 1985)

decades old, reside in unavailable academic environs and are unknown and untapped by search committees. Despite the plethora of books, pamphlets, and handbooks designed to help Search Committees, *no similar works exist for searching priests*—no guidelines, no “Helpful Hints from Heloise,” nothing to guide the rector candidates—some of whom have limited interview experience. Candidates frequently displayed a lack of understanding on what to expect, how to present one’s self, how to evaluate churches in search, even the awareness that they could or should ask questions of the search committees.

Some dioceses have established guidelines for priests on what to submit, when, and to whom, but no formal work exists for rectors in a search to complement the extant body of work for search committees. The notable lack of any supporting information and material for rector candidates, presents a substantial unbalanced anomaly, and may contribute to the universally negative feelings priests collectively have toward the search process.

This issue was statistically so significant that it gave rise to the major portion of this work, which is the collation of a process guide for *both* the search committee and the rector candidate. *Project analysis identified the lack of a comprehensive transition guide as the source of greatest systemic inefficiency and offers the most efficient solution from a systems analysis perspective.*

The Church Deployment Office and CDO Profiles

The second area of greatest dissatisfaction for both search committees and rector candidates, and identified system inefficiency, was the CDO profile. Again, data indicates that this largely stems from infrequency of use and a lack of general understanding on how to read and use the CDO profiles. Of particular note, this was true for both search committees evaluating rector candidate profiles and for candidates evaluating church profiles. General unfamiliarity and misunderstanding of the CDO program and its terminology, subsequently coupled with misuse of the CDO system created the most general confusion.

However, this confusion was significantly ameliorated in circumstances where the search committee and rector candidate had access to a transition officer/consultant for interpretive guidance. Interestingly, access to a diocesan transition officer/consultant did not however, eliminate the CDO profile as a problem area for survey respondents. The Episcopal Church has long recognized programmatic weaknesses in the CDO profile structure and is, I believe looking to address this issue.

By way of amplification for the CDO office, the area of most confusion in regards to the rector candidates' "Personal Profile" dealt with the area of "RANKED MINISTRY SPECIALTIES AND SUPPORTING EXPERIENCE." This section of the Personal Profile was viewed as too cumbersome, not flexible enough, and not detailed enough. For example, within the CDO program, when a rector candidate notes:

"Christian Formation/ Education/ Youth"

What does that really mean? Did the minister lead a specific program [Bible Study, Youth Group, Rite 13, Youth Mission Trip, etc.] or just participate in one? Was it a one-time event five years ago or perhaps a non-stipendiary ministry of the past five years? It is possible that the CDO profile tries to do too much, taking on areas best left to the resume process.

Another critical area of the CDO profile was the “Personal Ministry Statement.” Respondents believed this area should be expanded to allow no less than 100 words. This one area allows the candidate the greatest opportunity to reflect his or her “personality and ministry passion” the most.

The last major area of weakness noted in the CDO Personal Profile was the self-reported “LEADERSHIP DESCRIPTION.” This may be an area better suited to a generic “Leadership Statement” within the CDO Personal Profile or simply left to the resume process and the search committee process as they interact with the candidates. This is one area that Transition Officers often felt that candidates potentially abused “to game” their Personal Profile toward particular openings. In other words, transition officers reported that candidates can and have, “changed their leadership description section to better match specific search openings.” Not only does this situation present some serious ethical concerns, but it also portends a serious potential rector-church mismatch. Either a simple ~100 word Personal Leadership Statement on a CDO profile should be sufficient or be left to the search committee to address.

From the perspective of the Churches’ CDO Profiles, the areas of “RESPONSIBILITIES AND SKILLS” (a link from the opening page) and “FOUR PRIMARY GOALS OF THE PARISH/ INST” (opening page, within the “Description of

Parish/ Institution” section) are often found to not match. In other words, the parish’s primary goals do not match what the parish says that it needs. In some cases they even contradict each other. One can either presume that the parish is conflicted and doesn’t know what it wants or needs or that the parish does not understand the Parish CDO Profile. Since one presumes that bishops and transition officers are not likely to allow a conflicted parish to enter into the search process without a healthy resolution process, misuse of the CDO Profile appears to be the culprit. The operative problem is, “What do potential candidates see?”

Another area of frustration reported by rector candidates dealt with navigating the CDO POSITIONS OPEN BULLETIN (POB). Given today’s web technology, navigating the POB process is cumbersome and time-consuming. This is a web technology problem for the CDO. Additionally, position availabilities are often out-of-date. Although each profile shows a “Last Updated date,” it often has little relevance to how far along or to what part of the process a search committee is currently in. Thus a section that includes the parish’s search stage, such as “Receiving Names, No Longer Receiving Names,” would save candidates substantial amounts of time. This solution requires CDO to modify the Parish CDO Profile program, but also requires timely input by diocesan transition representatives.

In a related area, a surprising number, nearly half, of the search committees reported that the candidate installed was *not* the first candidate called, as in “not their first choice.” At the same time, *all* of those search committees reported that they were “very satisfied” with the rector installed. For search committees, *the number one reported reason for a candidate’s rejection of a vestry’s call was “finances.”* The second reason

cited by search committees for a selected candidate to reject a church's call was "did not fit the church." Rector candidate respondents also validated this same statistical profile—very satisfied in their new church, even though they knew that they were not that church's first choice. Likewise, those who rejected a call cited the primary reason as "finances"; the secondary reason cited was "did not fit church."

One respondent provided the following anecdote:

I liked the church and believed we had similar interests and goals in ministry. I had sent them my CDO Profile and resume. They visited me and [then] my wife and I visited them. We liked the town and the congregation. The senior warden called me to extend a call as their rector. When we discussed the salary, I was surprised to realize that they were offering me \$25,000 *less* than I currently made, an amount I had noted on my CDO profile! The church could not make up the difference. The misunderstanding came from what they thought they were offering on their church profile and what I thought they were offering. They showed a compensation package of \$50,000 and noted that housing was included. I presumed that \$50,000 was the *cash* allowance. It turns out that the amount *included* a \$25,000 housing *value*. So, the rectory was valued at '\$25,000' and the cash offered was \$25,000 for a total of \$50,000. I felt badly that both of us had spent so much emotional energy and time when we weren't even really on the same page."

To prevent identification of basic issues so late in the search process the diocese must ensure that the Churches' CDO Parish Profile accurately conveys who the church is, what they are hoping to be, what skills and experience they seek, and exactly what the

compensation package entails. Clergy compensation is extremely complex. Although the Churches' CDO Profile has a box to check for "housing included," questions arose over whether or not the housing *value* is included in the listed dollar amount of compensation. Is a utility allowance included? What if the rector does not desire to use the rectory?

When asked to define actual Parish CDO Profile Compensation packages, even diocesan transition officers disagreed over what the compensation packages entailed. Clearly some work needs to be done in this area. The simplest near term fix is to provide a list of common examples that transition officers and search committees can use to ensure potential candidates know exactly what the church is offering. This does not preclude later negotiations over salary or education/ travel/ expense allowances, but should eliminate outright \$25,000 "showstoppers."

The CDO may need to address one last area. One respondent reported receiving from CDO "7 or more" potential openings or matches between their profile and a search church. Whereas 71% reported receiving "None." The remaining respondents reported receiving only "1" potential match. Several of these respondents, including the one who received the "7 or more" potential matches, were willing to share their CDO profiles with me in order to detect what led to such disparity: 7 inputs to No inputs. I compared age, sex, race, marital status, education, education, work history, skill/experience, ordination history, availability/preferences, and compensation.

The candidate who received "7 or more" inputs could have changed names with three of the respondents who received "No inputs" from CDO. The four were within 1 ½ years of age, were of the same sex, race, marital status, possessed nearly identical

educations [Masters Degrees], were from the *same seminary class*, their leadership descriptions practically superimposed one on the other, their work history was nearly identical [the “7 or more” fell in the middle of length of experience], their availability/preferences were identical, their compensation was in the same financial range, and their skill/experience categories also aligned in a remarkable fashion. In short, I could find no discernible difference why one candidate received “7 or more” potential matches from the CDO computer and the rest of the candidates “none.” This area needs attention.

The Diocese in the Deployment Process

As mentioned earlier, dioceses with transition officers and/or transition consultants experience a strong positive endorsement by all respondents. The transition officer network offers an effective way to share trends and concerns within the process. In addition to the promotion and care of highly regarded candidates or perhaps the special needs of certain candidates, the network offers transition officers knowledge concerning what other dioceses are looking for in rector candidates. The subject of a candidate’s age, race, gender orientation, or theological orientation is always a delicate one. Interestingly however, although sometimes frustrated, rector candidates stated appreciation for transition officers who actually explained that, “another diocese might be a better fit.”

For example:

One respondent reported that he had applied to a church because their profile stated, “We are an open and welcoming congregation.” The candidate

invested a “substantial amount of time, prayer, and hopeful expectation in this church, only to discover that their idea of ‘open and welcoming’ meant open and welcoming to persons of different ethnic or racial backgrounds, not sexual orientation.” The respondent says that he appreciated the transition officer’s candor that “at this time our diocese does not entertain the deployment of openly-partnered priests.” However, the respondent “would have appreciated the knowledge from the onset, before I invested so much of my time and my heart in the process.”

Communication within the transition officer network could have prevented this system inefficiency. Whether it is diocesan policy, a particular church’s theology, or the candidate’s personal profile, networking transition officers can prevent these “heartbreaking” showstoppers. In this case, the candidate’s own diocesan transition officer could have provided recommendations or guidance concerning which dioceses would celebrate his ministry gifts, and perhaps an accurate interpretation of what “open and welcoming” might mean in another diocese.

This situation actually highlights the one potential area for growth in the transition officer process. Transition officers often focus solely on the candidates applying to openings in the diocese and not to candidates who may be leaving the diocese. Ironically, advising and guiding candidates leaving the diocese benefits the gaining diocese, assists the gaining transition officer, and helps the system work more efficiently. Until issues with the CDO Profile process are addressed, the losing transition officer is the one person best able to ensure that the candidate represents herself accurately and in the best light for openings elsewhere.

As mentioned at the beginning, both search committees and rector candidates lack experience and training on how to navigate this complex process, which makes the support of the diocesan transition officer so valuable. Reviewing diocesan candidates' profiles with them, discussing their strengths and weaknesses, and helping them identify the ministry opportunities that best fit them, not only helps the candidate present an accurate CDO Profile, but also provides deeper insights that might be shared within the transition officer network.

Lastly, some dioceses either fail to keep Parish Profiles up-to-date with CDO or fail to use the CDO Profile system at all. The latter is the most troubling. Many highly qualified rector candidates remain unaware of open positions, positions for which they may have been the best theological and spiritual match, solely because a diocese chose not to use the CDO process. Some candidates may eventually find these positions or the positions find them via the transition officer network system. However, it takes longer, is inefficient, and still leaves other potentially better qualified candidates outside the process. If the goal is to make the best possible spiritual marriage between a congregation and its new spiritual leader, based on theology, experience, skill, and leadership, then it behooves all dioceses to work within the system.

Perhaps most important, nearly all of the respondents reported that they found the CDO "Positions Open Bulletin" (POB) to be "Very Useful." Interestingly, those few who found the POB only to be "Somewhat Useful," also reported that they had "accepted a call from a church that received their name from a Bishop's List."

Although of lesser note, several respondents noted that the Parish CDO Profile was out of date, leading the respondents to submit packages to churches that had either

already filled the position or were in a “no longer receiving names” phase. Several candidates complimented those dioceses that actively maintained such information on their diocesan webpages. Those candidates who took the time to submit packages to churches who had filled the position or who had closed their process noted frustration with “the system” for failing to appropriately apprise them of the parishes’ status, thus wasting time better spent elsewhere.

Transition – Deployment – Where Is It On the Diocesan Webpage?

Candidates reported significant frustration with: “how to find any sort of information about what churches are available in the search process, where those churches are in their process, what the requirements to enter a diocesan search process are, and who to contact to find out this information.” I personally surveyed the webpage of nearly every diocese and I concur 100% with the respondents. Problem areas identified:

- Inconsistent terminology: “Deployment, Transition, Clergy Jobs, and Search” are just some of the terms offered by different dioceses.
- Inconsistent link location to transition procedures. Actual samples follow:
 - The main webpage [Transition/ Deployment/ Positions Open, etc.]
 - Find a Church Tab
 - Clergy Tab [innumerable variations]
 - Administration Tab
 - The Diocese Tab

- Ministries Tab
- Diocesan Staff
- Resources
- Congregational Development
- For Visitors
- No direct link, “Site Search” made a connection, *once the correct diocesan terminology was used*
- NONE
- Confusion on Who to contact first. Failure to clearly specify who the candidates should contact—the search committee/church directly or the transition officer/diocesan point of contact.

The ability to efficiently access basic transition information on a diocesan webpage was cited as a significant frustration and is potentially the easiest to rectify.

Feedback from the Rector Candidates

Although rector candidates recognized the need for Telephone Interviews as a “necessary evil” in the process of determining which candidates to continue with, nearly all respondents disliked the process, reporting it either “somewhat effective” or “not effective.” The principal reason for disliking the process was, “I don’t like talking to people I cannot ‘see’.” Follow-up conversation confirmed that all clergy preferred face-to-face engagements. Given the nature of ministry in general and parish ministry in

particular, the desire of clergy to interact in a direct and personal manner is a tribute to their vocational call and perhaps should not surprise us. Whether or not this is something unique to clergy may be fertile ground for further sociological study, particularly if a minister's pastoral skills are inversely proportional to his skills in the disembodied world of the telephone conversation!

What the data does say, however, is that although search committees may need to use the Telephone Interview as part of their process, committee members should be informed of how uncomfortable it makes most clergy. Most distressing however, were the numbers of clergy who reported, what I will collectively call, "telephone abuse," and an uncaring attitude that I can only refer to as disrespectful. Despite the number of outstanding telephone interviews conducted by so many search committees, over 80% of all rector candidates reported one or more of the following unacceptable phenomena during their various telephone interviews [samples of actual amplifying comments also provided]:

- Only two or three committee members were present
 - "Obviously an hour of my time was not as important as an hour of their time"
 - "Maybe they just weren't that interested in me and were just 'going through the motions,' [but] it hurt my feelings that only a few [search committee members] cared to honor the appointment"
- One committee member dominated the discussion
 - "(He) never discussed the proposed questions, and only told me what he thought ministers should do"

- They were not clear on *which* candidate I was
 - “They repeatedly confused me with someone else [another candidate]”
- They failed to call at the appointed time
 - “They never called to tell me they were running behind or to reschedule...I was left in limbo”
- One member seemed hostile toward me
 - “One member dominated the conversation with political issues, venting his dislike for my prior profession the entire time”

Obviously, these incidents indicated a “poor fit” for the clergy interviewed, however, it also reflects an unacceptable level of system abuse. An anecdote from one respondent encapsulates some of these issues:

“The Search Committee called and set-up a time for a telephone interview. They followed this up with an email confirming the date and time. I cleared my schedule, de-cluttered my desk and my mind, and spent a half hour in quiet prayer before [my] interview time slot. At 6 p.m., I waited anxiously for the phone to ring...nothing.... 5 minutes after...still nothing. I quickly checked my email and confirmed the date and time were correct. It was now 6:10 p.m. ‘Was I supposed to call them? Did I fail to get a number? My child has a little league championship game that starts at 7:30 p.m., what should I do?’

At 6:40 p.m., the committee finally called. They apologized for running late. I explained that I could only speak for about 15 to 20 minutes, before another appointment, so perhaps we could reschedule. [What if I’d had another phone interview?] They persisted and said they could ‘get it done’ in that

timeframe. I felt frustrated, angry, and disappointed. Did they think that others warranted ‘more time’ than I did? Was my time and schedule less important than theirs? As a courtesy, they could have at least called me a few minutes before my scheduled time, explained their dilemma, and offered to reschedule.

I was not invited to continue beyond that phase. I don’t know if my frustration or hurried answers were to blame or if they simply did not like me, but I’m glad I did not accept a call where the “process” was more important than the “people” in it.”

Search committees that conducted telephone interviews, unanimously agreed that the telephone interviews substantially assisted their process and the greater majority of those interviews went well. However, the courtesy of having all or nearly all of the committee members present, actually engaging in the agreed upon questions or topics, allowing equal time for both the committee and candidate to exchange information in an affirming setting should be the norm for all candidates.

However, despite the negative issues surrounding some telephone interviews, of those asked to provide DVD/ CD versions of services led or sermons preached *clergy disliked the requirement to provide DVD/CDs most*. Reasons given include: lack of equipment, lack of trained personnel to operate the equipment, and difficulty in maintaining confidentiality within the parish. Although search committees were only asked if they had requested this information, because of the negative comments from rector candidates, I sought clarification from the search committees who stated that they had requested these materials. The search committees collectively admitted that they, “looked at some of the submissions, but found the process too time-consuming and so

they did not look at the rest.” As one search committee chair noted, “We discovered that we could *read* four to seven sermons in the time it took us to *watch* one.” In regards to usefulness and system efficiency, the use of this form of electronic media proved costly and ineffective in the process.

Rector candidates disliked the additional “prescreen” paperwork required by some dioceses. The principal reasons were the redundancy to parish requirements. Candidates agreed that providing copies of sermons and answering brief statements about ministry and leadership were valid and provided substantive information to search committees. However, many reported that search committees often failed to note the liturgical season. Input due dates often did not account for the liturgical and pastoral demands of Christmas and Easter.

Another area of rector candidate feedback dealt with elements of the Parish CDO Profile. When rector candidates reported that they withdrew or rejected a call because “they did not fit,” a primary reason cited was that what the parish represented on its CDO profile did not match what they actually needed or wanted. In other words, the candidates interacted with the search committees based on the presumption that what the CDO profile conveyed was accurate. However, when candidates actually visited the parish, they discovered that “they did not fit.” The candidates noted that either, their own skills were not what the parish seemed to need or the parish “stated one thing on its CDO, but represented another in person.” I cannot ascertain the nature of the parish-candidate disconnect. Clarifying comments indicate that the answer lies in: one or both parties misunderstanding the parish CDO profile or that the parish failed to clearly understand exactly who they were and what they needed in the experience, skills, and theology of a

potential rector. The surveys were not sufficiently robust enough to capture any data to define this late phase speed bump. Suffice to say, transition officers should be able to validate the Church CDO profile by asking, “Do the goals of this church match the skills they say they need?” or, “Does this profile sound like the church this diocese believes it to be?” or perhaps, “The profile indicates a willingness to grow and change, but is that really true?”

Lastly, many rector candidates noted excessive redundancy in conducting “background checks” for each diocese. This is one area that might best be coordinated by the CDO in New York.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Analysis and Recommendations

As mentioned at the beginning, transition officers/consultants contribute to system efficiency and to the overall satisfaction with the process. However, diocesan transition officers can effect substantial systemic improvement by using standard terminology and improving diocesan websites. Since this is an area that directly impacts both rector candidates and diocesan transition officers, diocesan representatives are strongly encouraged to consider a common, unified approach, that uses the same terminology with a link on the diocesan main page, and information on who to contact, the status of any churches in search, and any additional diocesan requirements. As of this writing [2010], examples of exceptional diocesan models follow:

- The Diocese of Virginia
- The Diocese of Hawaii
- The Diocese of Spokane
- The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast
- The Diocese of Alabama

Each of the above dioceses is distinctly different, yet each provides an obvious and direct link from its main webpage, amplifying information on any unique requirements or

considerations, who to contact, and the status of churches in search. Of note, the Diocese of Alabama does not include the latter point. However, it clearly specifies diocesan requirements and is representative of those dioceses that prefer to “prescreen” candidates.

Diocesan transition officers can also increase efficiency and process satisfaction by providing transition guidance to rectors and associates who are embarking on the search process. By helping them to understand the CDO profile, transition officers increase the accuracy and reliability of the CDO profile process and its use.

Search committees have various tools to use in the process of screening-in the best rector candidate. Telephone interviews are one of them. Committees should be reminded of the general discomfort many priests have with the telephone interview process. The ability to communicate well in an electronic environment does not necessarily predict or measure the candidates’ personal presence in difficult pastoral situations.

Steps that search committees *recommended for elimination* include:

- Asking for DVDs/ CDs of sermons, services, etc.⁴
- Being required to submit only one candidate’s name to the vestry
- Considering only candidates provided by the Diocese and/ or receiving from the

Diocese only one candidate to consider

Despite the popular trend to appear modern and “with-it,” going electronic with DVDs/ CDs proved unnecessarily inefficient and stressful; their use is not recommended. On the other hand, maintaining a current parish website is essential. *All* rector candidates reported that they “always” used the parish website to investigate churches they were

⁴ Although “Video Teleconferences” [VTC] was an offered option, no one surveyed reported using VTC, however, the same issues and concerns with DVDs/CDs would also apply to the VTC.

interested in. Furthermore, 70% sited that the parish's website was "very important" in "affecting their impression of the parish;" and 25% stated that it was "somewhat important." In other words, only 5% believed that the parish's website had no impact on their impression of the parish! The quality and quantity of information on a search church's parish website does matter.

Questions concerning diocesan search guidelines offered an interesting insight. 64% of the search committees believed that their diocese's Search/Discernment Guidelines were either "too complex" or "too cumbersome." 11% believed that their diocesan guidelines were "very helpful," and 25% reported having "no guide." Representatives of the two extremes were: "Very Helpful"—The Diocese of Virginia; "Too Cumbersome"—The Diocese of Western North Carolina.

Both published works on search committees and survey data indicate that 6-8 members is the optimum size for a search committee, *regardless parish size*. 60% of the search committees reported a committee size of "6-8" and all of these committees reported that that size was: "just right." 20% of the respondents reported having either: "9-12" or "13 or more" committee members and all but one in that category believed that that number was "too big." Respondents in the last 20% reported having only "1-5" committee members and one-half reported that as either "too small" or "just right." Statistically this survey supports other works, which also corroborate an optimum committee size of 6-8 members.⁵

Over half of the search committees reported that they provided a slate of 2 to 3 rector candidates to their vestry and the majority also provided their vestry a

⁵ Robert Voyle and Kim Voyle, *Assessing Skills and Discerning Calls: A Practical Manual for Search Consultants, Search Committees, and Vestries as They Assess Clergy Skills and Discern Calls to Ministry*, 2nd ed., (Ventura, CA: Voyle Consulting, 1995).

“recommended order of candidate preference.” I was surprised when nearly half of the search committees reported that the candidate who actually accepted a call from their parish was *not* their first choice. As mentioned earlier, the reasons cited for this were primarily due to “finances” or the candidate decided that she “did not fit the parish.”

The good news is that often a church’s second or third “choice” proves to be exactly the right choice, as all churches in this category reported that they were “very satisfied” with their new rector. The strength of this data point alone validates a reason for search committees to provide two or three candidates to the vestry.

Clergy compensation issues appear less clear and more confusing to both search committees and clergy than all other areas of the CDO Profile system. Offering increased clarity on the compensation package is essential to efficient mission accomplishment.

Nearly all [80%] of those search committees using the candidate’s CDO Profile noted that they used the basic data provided on the cover sheet [name, address, date of birth, marital status, current assignment, and references] and the Leadership Description page. They did not use the other portions, because “they are too hard to understand” and/or they found that resumes were sufficient.

In regards to the inefficiency of candidates conducting multiple Background Checks, a different one for each diocese, the recommendation is for the CDO to submit the requisite paperwork to a candidate when notified by a diocese that a candidate is approaching that stage of the process. The confidential findings would then be sent to that diocese or any other diocese that requests the same information from CDO on the

same candidate. Since the gaining diocese normally pays this cost, the gaining diocese would reimburse CDO.

Several candidates noted frustration with Church POBs that did not note in what phase of the search process the church was engaged. The date and time noted in the Church CDO Profile: “Last Update” field offers a major indicator to a church’s potential place within the process. However, many churches take longer than others or may even have started their process over, thus carrying an “Update” date months beyond a time when a candidate might expect the church to receive names. Likewise, a church may update its information any number of times, thus a relatively recent date may have no bearing on the status of that church’s actual search process. One recommendation might be to have two dates, one, which shows the date the profile was originally posted, and one, which shows the latest update. Another or additional option would be to adopt a similar system used on several diocesan webpages:

- Currently Receiving Names
- No Longer Receiving Names
- Position Filled

Although, respondents noted frustration with CDO in this area, the transition officers are the responsible element in this system inefficiency, as the Churches’ CDO Profiles are only as accurate and as timely as the data provided.

Though still a significant concern, communication between search committees and rector candidates did not appear to be as serious a problem as anecdotal information might suggest. Candidates reported, “76-89%” of the search committees “kept them informed of where they stood in the process.” However, that means that at least 11 to

24% of the time they failed to communicate properly. Candidates also reported that they were only “somewhat satisfied” with how well search committees kept them informed.

When the search committees were asked how often they kept the rector candidates informed, only 10% said “once a month.” The rest answered, “after each phase.” No one responded with, “twice a month.” The data seems to suggest that in addition to notification following each phase, some of which can last several months, a simple monthly notice to candidates might resolve this concern.

Despite the general discomfort with telephone interviews, most search committees used them and found them beneficial for the following reasons:

- Heard what was important to the candidates
- Able to get a sense of the candidates’ spirituality and prayer life
- Able to clarify prior statements or comments made
- Gained a useful impression of the candidate
- Decided to continue or discontinue with a particular candidate

At the same time, these same search committee respondents also noted that what they disliked about conducting telephone interviews included:

- Only a few Committee Members were present
- We never really discussed the proposed questions
- One Committee Member dominated the discussion

The three things that search committee members disliked the most about telephone interviews were coincidentally among the very things disliked by the candidates. It remains to be seen, but insuring that a majority of committee members are present for all interviews, discussing the proposed topics, and allowing the candidate to respond might

resolve the substantial dislike that clergy have for the process, and concurrently improve the search committee's satisfaction with the process.

Lastly, data indicated that married, white males experience the shortest time in transition (7-12 months). Older, unmarried women and rector candidates of nonwhite and/ or different ethnic backgrounds experience the longest time in transition (19-24 months). Although gender bias, or preference, may be very real, the topic is not reviewed here. However, and perhaps most significant, search committees who *did* select this latter group reported the highest satisfaction rates! Whether the satisfaction comes from the sheer amount of time involved in the process and believing they selected the 'best' candidate or from a sense of grateful relief that the process is just finally over or because they have stepped outside the norm and discovered a true spiritual partner, the "Why" lies beyond the scope of this research and perhaps is best suited for a sociologist.

Conclusions

Despite the nearly universal perception that the transition process of The Episcopal Church is "broken," the data fundamentally rejects that perception. Although both search committees and rector candidates often felt frustration with the process and they subsequently reported parts of the process confusing or cumbersome, satisfaction with the results were mutual and statistically overwhelming. This does not mean that there are no lessons learned or room for improvement. The good news is that the 'system' does work, albeit inefficiently.

Specific areas of improvement are summarized:

- Having a “Master Plan” or generic checklist for committees and candidates to follow.
- Better communication between committees and candidates; monthly optimum.
- A simpler CDO profile, especially more clear in three main areas:
 - How the Compensation package is developed and reported and exactly what that means in actual *cash*. *Confusion over this issue was the number one reason for clergy to withdraw from a call.*
 - Clergy acquired skills and interests. This issue concerns how search committees understand and accurately interpret the candidate’s experience/skill profile.
 - Parish Profile Skills required or desired of a rector candidate. Inaccuracies and incompatibilities were not normally identified until the Site Visit or Parish Visit phase, primarily based upon inaccuracies in the church’s desired clergy skills.
- In general, clergy disliked the telephone interviews the most.
- Those clergy who were asked to provide DVDs of worship or sermons considered this “the most onerous and disliked request,” for a variety of reasons:
 - Lack of equipment or skilled personal to use it
 - Difficulty in maintaining confidentiality of the searching process
 - Facilities not suitable [lighting, sound, distance, etc.]
- Insufficient members of the search committee able to travel for site visits

- Size of the search committee frequently reported as too large [this occurred only in respondents having 10 or more committee members].

The goal of this project is to provide insight and guidance to search committees often desperate for guidance as they seek to do their best job in finding a rector who will fit who they are and hope to be. At the same time, it provides clarification and helpful assistance to rector candidates as they strive to work their way through a maze of processes. By making the process more efficient and perhaps even normalizing the phases and expectations of each phase, we can reduce the stress and anxiety among candidates and search committees alike.

PART II
SO YOU WANT TO CALL A RECTOR
OR
BE A RECTOR, CHURCH DEPLOYMENT FOR DUMMIES ©

CHAPTER 5

SEARCH COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

The role of search committee member is one of the toughest and most rewarding positions one can have in a local congregation. It is tough for many reasons, but especially because it often comes at awkward times in light of one's other commitments, and it is very demanding of time. It is rewarding in that search committee members often tell us the experience was a highlight of their lives: building strong new relationships within the congregation, meeting church leaders in many parts of the country, being challenged to rediscover what "church" means to one personally, and to have a real hand in shaping the future of one part of the church. There probably is no lay role in the church with such a long-range potential for ensuring the future of the congregation.

Loren B. Mead⁶

The Planning Phase and General Considerations

"Calling a pastor is one of the most crucial and unusual experiences confronting any local church."⁷ Remember that each candidate will invest a considerable amount of time on you, the search committee. They may spend several days and much of their precious free time in prayer and reflection as they seek to answer faithfully and sincerely your questions. Whether you elect to proceed with that individual or not, be grateful for the gift of themselves to you. Remember also that you are not just looking for a dance partner; you are looking for a marriage partner.

Some have said that calling a rector is like getting married. Both sides have to discern a connection with the other. This unique relationship is forged in faith between

⁶ Loren B. Mead, *A Change of Pastors: ...And How It Affects Change In The Congregation* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2005), 75-76.

⁷ Theodore A. McConnell, *The Search Committee Handbook: Finding A Pastor* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, Inc., 1986), 5.

equals seeking to serve God in the world. Ultimately, the search committee needs to ask: “Can I trust this candidate’s leadership to lead me and carry me when I feel lost and cannot go on?” Then the committee must ask, “Can I be there for this candidate when she needs my love and support?”

Charles Wilson’s work, *Search*, phrased the process as “a spiritual journey to find a spiritual partner who will walk with you in your greatest joys and sorrows. Their stipend is not ‘performance based,’ but rather the living the membership provides their spiritual leader.”⁸ In other words, the search process is not a “hiring” process. Those members with extensive experience in human resources, personnel management, or as corporate CEOs have much to offer, particularly when reading profiles and resumes. However, calling a rector is a *spiritual discipline*. Episcopal clergy are educated men and women who serve in ordained positions as a *vocation*.

If we consider the search process as a spiritual discipline, then we must also make prayer a central part of the search committee journey. Always open and close with prayer. It helps to rotate the responsibility for prayer leadership among each committee member. Also, and most important, each committee member should commit to praying for each and every candidate every day. Remember, each candidate will be praying for you.

The search for a rector is a search between equals. You are interviewing the candidates and the candidates are interviewing you. Changing rectors is not like changing a light bulb. What your parish needed in clergy leadership in your former rector is most likely *not* what your parish needs now.

⁸ Wilson, *Search*, 7.

It helps if each member of the search committee compiles a simple standardized biography or mini resume on themselves. Provide copies of these to your candidates before your site visits. This is one way of sharing yourselves with the candidate. Additionally, since rector candidates universally scour the search committees' parish websites, include a picture of the search committee along with their names. This allows the prospective candidates to better visualize the committee. Moreover, having a picture before them may help the candidates address the "disconnectedness" felt during the telephone interview.

Perhaps you like where you are as a church and you want to stay where you are. If that's true, then be honest and say so. This will not necessarily reflect ill of you as a church, particularly if your church has recently undergone significant upheaval or turmoil. Perhaps you have finally reached calmer waters and truly need some still waters to stabilize and rejuvenate.

On the other hand, if you know that a resistance to change is an over-riding parish concern and theology and you fail to disclose it, consider the potential impact. A new rector with a different vision may find herself entangled in a tumultuous relationship with vestry and congregation; or perhaps the rector will find himself frustrated, anxious, and even depressed. The point is, be honest about who you are and trust the Lord to send the right priest.

Some dioceses offer or recommend the use of a transition consultant or "transition coach." Consultants serve as independent advisors or transition coaches who offer their experience and expertise in helping the search committee organize and define their roles, developing the parish profile, resolving conflict, advising what to expect, and so forth.

Consultants can also help the congregation and the search committee to identify their fears and concerns, their gifts and strengths. Some consultants offer their services for free, while others do this for a specified fee and or time period. The consultant is not there to do the search committee's work nor determine the best candidate. However, a consultant can facilitate the search committee's activities and usually expedite the search process. If you use a consultant, determination of fees, payments, and expectations must be clearly stated. The diocese transition officer is the best place to start for transition consultant recommendations.

The use of transition officers or transition consultants can help search committees deal with stress and uncertainty. The transition search process is already a time of uncertainty, a time when numerous fears can arise among members of the congregation and particularly among members of the search committee. These fears commonly include:

- What if no one wants to come here?
- What if we choose the wrong person?
- What if the congregation doesn't like our choice, will they dislike me, stop giving, or stop attending?
- What will happen if we need more time or need to start over?

The search committee needs to be aware that these and many other fears can cause anxiety and a pressure to act, even when the action is inappropriate or driven solely by expediency. These are times when the search committee needs to slow down or even pause to remember that this is a hope-filled, holy journey in the midst of a Christian community.

Research from the Alban Institute has indicated that 13-18 months is an optimal window for a search process, because “if it takes less than 12 months, there isn’t much time to take care of the qualitative issues [of direction finding and self-study]. If it takes more than 18 months you may run into leadership overload or depression.”⁹ As Episcopal priest and consultant Loren B. Mead notes,

You *can* act quickly...but it is like the married person suddenly widowed—sure, there are possible matches out there, but many of the hasty marriages formed at such a time result in plenty of regrets and miserable matches. ‘Marry in haste: repent at leisure’—the old say is worth paying attention to.¹⁰

The Subject of Interims
Or
The 11th Commandment:
Thou Shalt Not Allow an Interim or Associate Minister Consideration
as a Candidate in the Parish Search Process

Ministers trained in Interim Ministry as a professional vocation, as well as transition consultants see innumerable successful and less-than-successful rector calls. These same transition specialists are *universal* in their firm belief that an interim’s “contract should state clearly that the interim cannot be considered as a candidate for a permanent position in the congregation.”¹¹ These same consultants caution that the

⁹ Mead, 21.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Roy M. Oswald, James M. Heath, and Ann W. Heath, *Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions, With a Forward by Robert T. Gribbon* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2003), 21.

pressure to consider the interim can come from all sides: the interim, the congregation, or even within the search committee itself.¹²

An Interim is an ordained priest (presbyter) contracted to perform priestly duties for a *specified* period of time. Many interim priests are specifically trained for this unique ministry and see this as their vocation in ministry. Professionally trained interims are adept in helping parishes handle the grief and loss that occurs when a long-serving rector moves on or dies. Trained interims can also help with mediation and healing when the relationship with the former rector ended badly.

However, not all interims are specifically trained in these areas, some are merely priests seeking temporary employment. Either way, an “interim” is just that—an *interim*, one who fills an interval of time specified by a contract. Thus, *the interim is not a candidate in the search process*. As parishioners grow comfortable with the interim or find the attentive ear and necessary healing in her, it becomes exceptionally tempting to include the interim in the search process.

Often interims grow comfortable in their position and begin to envision themselves as the rector, assuming that a successful interim ministry equates to a successful rectorship. Sometimes interims are anxious about “where they will go next.” Sometimes interims are themselves in search of a permanent position and respond out of fear that their own search is going slowly and a type of, “better the bird in the hand, than the one in the bush” mentality sets in.

The congregation often emotionally clings to an interim minister who is helping them through uncertain, difficult, and/ or healing times. The congregation may begin to

¹² Voyle and Voyle, *Assessing Skills and Discerning Calls*.

see the interim as a the glue holding them together or the bridge that links their past with their uncertain future. Often, the interim offers a sense of stability in unstable times.

The interim may be a good resource for spiritual direction and/ or guidance to the search committee. He may also provide occasional pastoral support if discord or disruptions occur within the committee. However, *the interim must never be a part of the search committee, nor should the interim have any input into candidates.* The likability and influence of an interim should not be allowed to intrude or insert itself within the search committee process.

The search committee may grow discouraged with the search process or seek an exit from a complex environment; and calling the interim as the rector offers an efficient and expedient resolution to the search committee's problem. Regardless, the interim minister is hired for a specific pastoral ministry for a specific period of time. Interims bear few, of a rector's actual duties, something the congregation, the search committee, and even interims tend to overlook. Instead, interims serve to promote a necessary healing, a healthy self-assessment, and a healthy transition. By themselves becoming a candidate for rector, the interim does several things:

- Loses the objectivity of the interim role.
- Violates the necessary boundaries in a healing relationship.
- Prohibits the congregation's ability to make a clean transition from the past, because of the interim's connection to the past.
- Often limits or eliminates the need for an intentional and necessary congregational self-study and analysis. Many churches do not realize that they are not really who they think they are until they go through this process.

- Generally blinds the search committee to the qualities of other candidates.
- Allows the congregation to place unnecessary pressure on the search committee to pick the interim.
- Limits the freedom of the search committee to perform its task.
- Induces the potential for serious discord within the search committee.

Although the interim helps a parish press onward and build bridges to the future, the interim is still part of the past. Hence, Charles Wilson states that, in an unexpected way, including the interim in a search process actually “limits the search committee’s freedom to act and pursue an open search process.”¹³ In short, you cannot drive looking in the rearview mirror. Your former rector and your interim are your past; you are concerned about your future.

As with interims, most dioceses prohibit *Associate Clergy* from being considered as rector candidates, because the same concerns with interims are also true for well-liked associate clergy. Associate clergy serve at the pleasure of the Rector. Often, to maintain the flow of vital parish programs, a parish will retain associated clergy until a new rector is called.

During Interim periods, associate clergy can greatly assist as either an Interim/Priest-in-Charge or as Assistants to the Interim. However, for good or ill, associated clergy are also a part of the parish’s past and should not be allowed as a candidate in the rector search, for they also limit the search committee’s freedom; and, both the parish and the search committee deserve the freedom to envision and even re-vision without ties to the past, beloved or not.

¹³ Wilson, *Search*, 15.

The search committee needs to establish this criterion clearly, in writing, at the very beginning of the process. It helps greatly if the search committee and vestry use all means possible: community forums, parish newsletters, etc. to inform the parish that no interim or serving associate may be a candidate. In other words, the search committee and vestry must make this known to the entire congregation and *keep reminding them!* They will forget this on a weekly basis. There are numerous good reasons for this commandment—primarily because you want a healthy and successful search process.

Reasons routinely cited to violate this 11th Commandment:

- Yes, it's more expedient.
- Yes, you just “love” the Interim/Associate.
- Yes, she helped you through a difficult time.
- Yes, you'd rather bypass all that self-study, parish profile nonsense, because you know perfectly well, “Who you are.”
- Yes, it will save money.
- Yes, you'd rather have a ‘known’ commodity rather than take your chances on the Holy Spirit.

Reasons *why* the Interim (or Associate Clergy) must never be a candidate:¹⁴

- “A person who has served as an interim may have an unfair advantage over other candidates because she is already known and liked by some members of the congregation.” It prohibits an equitable, in-depth consideration of *all* qualified candidates.
- “When the interim is not the final candidate for rector, his advocates become alienated,” often becoming angry and disruptive to the parish and the process.

¹⁴ Oswald, Heath, & Heath, *Beginning Ministry*, 22.

- “When the interim is not the final candidate, effectiveness and performance of the interim’s vital ministry are often jeopardized for the remainder of her contract.”
- “Members of the congregation may not like the interim, but hold their counsel because they trust that the interim is under contract for a specified period of time.”
- Even healthy parishes periodically need to review and assess who they are, where they are going, where they would like to go, and whether they need to slow down or change directions altogether. This is a healthy, parish-building process, a time to identify areas of strengths and areas needing further growth or attention.
- “Interim leadership styles may not prove appropriate or effective in a permanent relationship.”
- “An interim’s congregational relationship is sometimes based on its vulnerabilities during the transition, which can lead to inappropriately influenced decisions.”
- Considering an interim may even violate the trust and ethical relationship established through the interim’s contract.
- *Interim ministry is a special vocation and should never be “training wheels” for rectors.*

To reiterate this essential caution, experienced consultants are unanimous in noting that while reports do exist of occasional former associates and interims who have succeeded as a rector, the majority of cases ultimately proved painful and destructive to all parties, and at the very least retarded the parish’s trajectory of growth. The negative results from calling the parish interim or associate leave that failing interim/associate-

turned-rector shaken and uncertain about his own ministry skills and abilities; the parish is left distrusting the diocese, the search process, and interim ministry in general; the parish's healthy ministries falter and fail; and the turmoil causes membership to spiral into an unhealthy decline.

Failure to accept this 11th Commandment, inevitably leads to dissension, division, and wounded feelings that can scar a parish and hinder a healthy transition process. The search committee must remember that they are looking for the parish's next spiritual leader, counselor, and fellow Christian traveler. They are depending upon the Holy Spirit to guide them to a candidate who is looking for a parish whose spiritual needs she can best fulfill and with whom she can journey and share the church's ministry in the world.

There is one last caution about the interim time between rectors. The search committee and *the vestry should consider very carefully before starting a new ministry during the interim time* that requires substantial facility usage, financial support, or draws support only from one interested segment of the parish or one that requires continuous broad-based support from the parish and a personal commitment of time for the rector. If at all possible, it is always best to place that program on hold until the new rector has been installed and been able to spend a year with the congregation. To develop an entirely new ministry, which will involve the rector and/ or a substantial financial or congregational support is unfair to the rector who will be expected to ensure the ongoing success of a process of which he may have neither the knowledge nor the skills with which to succeed.

If you do start a large ministry program like that in the interim period, you *must* inform prospective candidates. To do less is dishonest and may place the new rector in a failing situation over which he may have no control.

The Size and Nature of the Search Committee

As mentioned earlier in this work, statistical analysis indicated that *regardless the size of the parish*, 60% of the search committees who were very satisfied with their results reported that a search committee size of 6 to 8 members was “just right.” Moreover, the committees’ perception of satisfaction with their results and the size of their committee noticeably dropped off when deviating from this idealized number by either going larger or smaller.

Likewise, the majority of recommendations and guidelines from diocesan transition officers, the CDO, transition consultants, and published works on the pastor search process indicate that a committee size of 8 or less is optimal. There is a substantial amount of work that must take place, which is why a higher number like 8 is helpful. In addition, a large church with many ministries, or churches with a diverse congregation, may also find the higher number more helpful and representative. However, with a smaller number around 5, you increase the group’s cooperation and cohesion and insure the ability for each voice to be heard. As Oswald, Heath, & Heath plainly recommend, “*The best size for a decision-making group is seven (plus or minus*

two).”¹⁵ Similarly, John Vonhof, writing for the Alban Institute, notes that eight members is optimum, *regardless the size of the congregation*, because,

“With more than eight on a search committee:

- *Pros*: You may gain a larger cross section of the congregation, with more skilled people to share in the tasks of an effective search.
- *Cons*: Discussions, conference calls, and decision-making become more difficult to manage, and the meetings will have to be very structured and may last longer.

With eight or fewer on the search committee:

- *Pros*: Discussion, conference calls, and decisions can be better managed, meetings can be less structured, and greater intimacy is possible.
- *Cons*: More work will have to be done by fewer people, there may be less of a cross section of the congregation represented, and some skills may be less available.”¹⁶

Of equal concern with the size of the search committee is the representation or “make-up” of the search committee. Transition consultants collectively agree that the “The search for a new [rector] is neither the time nor place for an individual to attempt to remake a church, nor is the search committee the training and educational course for new members.”¹⁷

The search committee is *not* a vehicle to engage a member who has drifted away from the church! A search committee works best with fully active and engaged parish

¹⁵ Oswald, Heath, & Heath, 23.

¹⁶ John Vonhof, *Pastoral Search: The Alban Guide to Managing the Pastoral Search Process* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1999), 3-4.

¹⁷ McConnell, 19.

members, well aware of the church's history, present state, and future aspirations. Thus, a role on the search committee is not the place for infrequent attendees or for those who do not participate in the regular parish life. Likewise, the search committee is not the appropriate place to engage members new to the Episcopal Church. Members should have a fundamental working knowledge of our organization, polity, theology, practices, and traditions.

Ideally, the parish wants the search committee to represent a reasonable cross-section of the membership—in gender and in age, potentially even including a youth member (age 16 or older = “a confirmed adult communicant in good standing”).¹⁸ This is true because, as Oswald & Heath make note, “It is important to remember that the search committee not only represents the aspirations of the congregation in the discernment process with candidates, but also *presents and represents the congregation to candidates* during their meetings.”¹⁹ [emphasis added]

Despite their representative differences, search committee members must however, avoid factionalism or a sense of collective representation. Members should openly acknowledge that each has a perspective and may in fact dwell most comfortably within a particular church generation, social strata, or congregation, for example the early morning Sunday service versus the main Sunday service, or Rite I versus Rite II. However, they are not serving on the search committee as delegates or representatives of any particular group or faction within the parish body. Above all, the committee members must be grounded in prayer and trust the Spirit to guide them as a “group” journeying together with a common goal.

¹⁸ Canon I.17. Section 1.b, *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*, 55.

¹⁹ Oswald, Heath & Heath, 23-24.

Despite a desire for diversity, the parish should not compromise the quality of the search committee, whether in spiritual gifts or in willing commitment, simply to have equal representation. Thus, when selecting search committee members, the vestry *does not want to pick*:

- Staff members or their spouses.
- The highly talented, organizer who does not have the time to participate fully.
- The Interim, any Associated Clergy, or retired clergy members of the congregation.
- Highly opinionated or special interest people who cannot or will not listen to other positions. *The ability to listen and to compromise wisely are search committee virtues!*

Conversely, transition process experts are equally universal in noting *four attributes* desired in *all* search committee members:

- 1) The ability and the willingness to commit an intensive amount of personal time to committee meetings and business, normally for a period of up to 18 months. Members who are otherwise too busy, who travel frequently, or have significant health issues are not the best candidates. Members who are also engaged in various other parish ministries should be encouraged to temporarily lighten their load in order to focus on the search committee.
- 2) The ability to maintain *confidentiality*, even in regards to spouses and best friends. The issue of confidentiality is not only important for the candidates in your search process, but also within the conversations and

deliberations of your search committee. Members must feel free to express their thoughts without fear that their comments will be related to others, regardless of who that person might be. Trust is essential and confidentiality depends upon trust.

- 3) Have the gift of *flexibility*, not everything will go as planned or desired.
- 4) As mentioned earlier, the ability to *listen* with an open mind and heart to each candidate, seeking discernment through the Holy Spirit.

Above all else, and within the bounds of confidentiality, the search committee must keep the parish informed. All too often, in the absence of any real knowledge, member speculation, fears, and suppositions will create “knowledge,” often of the most bizarre variation. Not only can this lead to tension and division within the parish, but it can also place the search committee in a defensive position rather than a proactive one.

A substantial part of the search process is also a community *building* process. The search process can be a powerful soul-healing time for a congregation. Specially trained Interims and some Transition Coaches/Consultants can help with this. If necessary, search committee members need to remind themselves and the congregation not to expect the new rector to solve parish problems, whether wounded feelings, unresolved grievances or restrained factionalism. These and similar issues must be addressed and resolved *before* you call a rector. If necessary, stop your search process and take the necessary time to heal, before re-engaging the process.

The search committee must continuously remind the parish what the search process entails and inform them of the phase they are in at the time. These are opportunities to instill joy, hope, and excitement. For example:

“We are very excited. We have over 50 stellar resumes (or, the Bishop just gave us 5 top-notch candidates) and we will spend the next few weeks reading and assessing the materials we have on these amazing people before we proceed with the next step, which will be to ask for further information from about 5 to 15 of these candidates.”

The search committee must help the parish understand that this is a *spiritual* journey of discernment and that this is an exciting time for parish-wide reflection and discernment. Rather than a time of fear and anxiety, it should be offered as a rare gift of reflection and hope.

Lastly, the search committee works for the vestry. Occasionally one or more members of the search committee are also members of the vestry. Given the confidential nature of the search committee’s work and the fact that most searches cross over a calendar year and/or the appointments and elections in a “church year,” some members of the vestry will change during the search and call process. A close and healthy relationship between the search committee and vestry remains crucial for a smooth search process and clergy transition. The search committee should not rely *solely* on Vestry Representatives to ‘report back’ to the vestry. Remember that the *vestry* will make the final decision on a candidate. The more informed the vestry remains throughout the process the less chance for discord at the end.

When the vestry changes its membership, the search committee should schedule a formal “review and update session” with the entire vestry, either as part of a Vestry Retreat or a specifically scheduled meeting. Transition consultants will also caution that any vestry members that are a part of the search committee should normally not be

members who would rotate off the vestry during the approximately 18 months of the search.²⁰

Lastly, the search committee should also request from the vestry a clear, concise objective or mandate as to what exactly the vestry expects, and how much of the parish's money are they authorized to spend. After all, if you don't know what you're doing, how do you know you've done it? For example:

The search committee is to provide the vestry with the best three candidates for rector, listed in recommended order, along with their reasons. Furthermore, the search committee is authorized to expend \$ _____ in accordance with the guidelines addressed in the attached budget memorandum.

Shaping the Parish Profile

Never presume that just because your former rector was either awesome or a disaster, that you want either more of the same or the opposite. Regardless the "goods and others" about your former rector, you, St. Swithins, have changed as a result of that leadership.

This step is critical! Before you can describe what you are looking for in a rector, you need to know who you are. What are the strengths of your church and what are the areas you need to improve upon. In what kind of programs does the church engage? The task of the parish self-evaluation or self-study is to determine just where you are, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and where you need to grow or to redirect your

²⁰ Mead, 30.

paths. Throughout the process, the parish should spend a considerable amount of time in reflection and seek discernment through the Holy Spirit on how best to answer these challenging concerns.

The committee should list as many church programs possible, then collectively assess the apparent viability of these programs.

- Are these programs managed by a single person as their personal ministry or by a group of parishioners?
- Has this program declined, grown, or remained stable over time?
- How many of these programs required the continued support and/or oversight of the former rector and what impact has the rector's departure had on them?

Parish self-study and analysis helps the search committee frame proposed parish priorities and needs. Once this committee-led, parish-wide analysis is done, and you are clear about who you are and what you are looking for, *then* the committee can begin to determine what experience and skills are required in your *next* rector. These requisite experience and skill sets become the datum, the benchmark, against which all candidates should be measured. Rector searches that result in weak or ineffective matches predominantly arise when the committee “fell in love” with a candidate that met few, if any, of the experience and skill needs of the parish.²¹ The results are disharmony and pain on all sides—rector and parish. Worse, members of the vestry and search committee are often excoriated.

The Search Committee does not *start* with characteristics, traits, and qualifications. If you start this process before your profile assessment, you will merely

²¹ Buntly Ketcham, *So You're on the Search Committee*. In collaboration with Celia Allison Hahn (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2005), 5-6.

end up with a laundry list of expectations no one could possibly fill. Worse, they could be in opposition to what you really need!

Sometimes the self-study, profile-building phase impacts and changes the congregation by making it more aware of who they are, but also where their community is really going. For example, in developing the Community profile, the congregation considers such things about the local town or community like: “what the trends are in demographics, what is happening to the economic base, what kinds of people are coming in or going out, what age groups dominate.”²² Often in the process of looking at the surrounding environment, the congregation recognizes that “the way we’ve always done it,” may not work and that the congregation requires a different type of leader to deal with a completely new and different type of environment.

The parish self study or profile-building phase is also community-building time within the parish membership, a time to generate interest by involving as many of the parish members as possible. The time in which a parish builds its profile is also a time when the parish may come to realize that its perception of itself is not accurate and needs to change. Perhaps the church demographics have changed, its age, economic, ethnic, or educational profiles have changed. Perhaps the demographics or economy of the town and surrounding area have changed. Sometimes it takes a parish-wide self-study of this sort to come to the awareness that our parish self-identity, which we have all taken for granted, has in fact *changed*. As a result, the parish realizes that it now needs a different type of leader, with a different skill set than before.

²² Mead, 33.

In Theodore McConnell's work, *Finding a Pastor*, he notes that "Realism in assessing a parish's strengths and limitations is a necessary and vital step in conducting a successful search ...*One of the most common failings of churches is to think more highly of themselves than they ought.*"²³ In short, in the process of building a parish profile the search committee must be brutally honest in asking, "Who are we?" In asking, "What are our 'goods and others'?" "Are we happy where we are?" "Do we really *want* to change, and if so, why and in what direction?"

Search committees that work closely with their consultant and/ or diocesan transition officer report the highest satisfaction with the results of their efforts. Most transition officers and consultants do this job on a regular basis. They know the pitfalls before you can even spell the word. Often they provide an accurate view of who you are and if your process has bogged down, why and what to do about it. They can also be a source of strong potential candidates, which can save considerable time and energy.

One place to start is with the parish mission statement. Most parish "mission statements" are rather bland. If you can replace the name of your church with any other, or even a church of another denomination, then your mission statement is probably ineffective as guidance for the search process. Functionally this is not necessarily a bad thing. Optimally the mission and ministry of any church, regardless the denominational affiliation, is to know Christ and to make him known as we (collectively) seek to serve him in this world. However, that may not help your search process.

One area that transition consultants recommend is that you create a mission statement specific to your church. What best defines who you are as a congregation? What is your congregation actually doing in Christ's name? Do they conduct a prison

²³ McConnell, 28.

ministry? Run or support a food pantry or homeless shelter? Have a centering prayer group or conduct weekly Bible studies? Run a Preschool or Child Care Co-op? And so forth. Ultimately, the each member of the search committee must ask themselves, “Who would notice or care if St. Swithins were not here?”

The purpose of all this is to clarify the parish’s purpose or mission so that you can establish clear goals toward that accomplishment. Goals are merely the achievable and measureable plans or steps you need to take to fulfill your mission statement. For example:

As a search committee, you have a *mission* to provide your vestry with the best-qualified candidate(s) for rector of St. Swithins. Your *goals*, the plans that enable you to fulfill your mission, involve: developing a parish profile, getting that profile posted with your diocese and CDO, communicating with candidates, evaluating candidates and discerning how well their gifts complement your needs. So part of the process for defining goals is to consider the things that you do now and to answer some basic questions:

- What are we doing that needs to be: stopped, maintained, improved, or started in order to attain our goals?
- What Ministry Skills and Experience does our rector require to work with us on these goals?

One of the most common tools used by search committees to develop a parish profile is through the use of parish surveys. Transition consultants often provide or recommend a survey of their own, sometimes they are free and sometimes they are fee-based. What is important to remember is that survey data is always just data. It should

never be used as the search committee's sole input or to create parish policy. What matters is how you interpret and use the data.

Common considerations include: Did the general data uncover some trends or projections? Did some of the responses surprise you? Why? Do those responses indicate a desire or willingness to consider change? Remember that desire and willingness are not the same. You must also always ask whether survey respondents really understand the requirements, commitment, and implications of particular ministries.

For example: A parish survey asked what type of worship the participants wanted. Many respondents indicated that they wanted “contemporary” worship, but what does that mean?

- Do they understand the difference between contemporary and praise?
- Are the respondents Rite I people thinking of Rite II?
- “Why” do they want contemporary worship—is it for them or do they think it will attract new members?
- And even when you discern what the majority meant, are they actually willing to support that change?

An aging parish noted that they wanted to encourage more Youth Programs.

- What does “encourage” mean? Is that an actual offer of the commitment of time, talent, or treasure?
- Does that indicate a willingness to go beyond their current level of participation with youth or do they just want to add more programs with the expectation that ‘someone’ will do it?

- “Why” do they want more youth programs, are the current ones failing?

As you can see, surveys merely begin a lengthy discernment process. However, digging into these sorts of issues offers a healthy opportunity for the membership to wrestle with important concerns as they ultimately discern who they are and what God is calling them to be.

The importance and *accuracy* of the parish’s self-assessment and the parish profile cannot be overstated. A great deal of the parish’s resources not to mention personal time will be spent in the development of the parish profile. These efforts will lead to failure if the church presents an inaccurate or false picture of itself to a potential rector. As one consultant noted:

We learn from failures—those situations in which a matching of pastor to congregation did not survive the first 18 months—we see that the view of reality presented to the candidate in the self-study (and later during a personal interview) turned out to be different from the realities the pastor faced upon arrival.²⁴

Thus, it is essential that the search committee find some way to validate their profile.

The parish profile cannot just be your representative opinion. Is there agreement on your profile analysis between your vestry and your congregation? Does the diocesan transition officer agree that your profile properly represents St. Swithins? If not, where has the process become disconnected? These issues or concerns must be resolved. This is an area that a transition consultant and/or trained interim can help.

Realistically, not everyone will agree with the profile that the search committee has developed. However, the finished profile and what the church needs in its leadership cannot be based upon a *compromise*. The search committee’s goal is at the least a *qualified* agreement. A profile of compromises reflects a conflicted parish. These issues

²⁴ Ketcham, 5.

require resolution first, even if it means standing down the search committee, and putting the search process on hold until the necessary issues are discussed and dealt with. If the issues are significant, special interims trained in mediation and in how to guide a conflicted parish should be sought.

Lastly, consultants will constantly stress that no candidate will fulfill all of the desired characteristics and so the committee may have to develop and prioritize a list of the most desired characteristics and a second list of other desirable characteristics. The committee might group the desired characteristics in particular areas (e.g., liturgy, education, outreach) and rank the areas in importance as well as skills within an area. For example, “the committee might rank liturgy as the most important area but rank preaching above skills in liturgical music.”²⁵

*You must present what is “true,” not what the parish “wishes” to be true!*²⁶

The Parish CDO Profile

Now that the search committee has finally completed the parish profile, the committee must collate the data for the Parish CDO Profile on the CDO Webpage, so it’s time to do a last quality assurance check. Your CDO Profile “Stated Goals” become a type of shorthand for what St. Swithins believes it needs to get from where it is to where you discern that it needs to be.

²⁵ Oswald, Heath, and Heath, 30.

²⁶ Ketcham, 6.

The diocesan transition officer is the best resource here. One last time you need to ask, “Who and what do we say that we are *now*?” And, “Who and what do we say that *we want to be*?” By clarifying where you view your church in the present, and where you want to be, you can see what trajectory your church must take to get from “here to there.” Now, look again on the first page of your CDO Profile at your “stated goals.” Your stated goals should reflect the trajectory that will get you from “here to there.”

For example, if your Christian Education program is failing but you want to turn that around and make it grow, a stated goal would be to find someone with a love of and experience in Christian Formation.

Or, if you currently have limited ministry outreach and you want to expand outreach to the community, then a stated goal on your CDO profile should say that you are looking for someone with a passion for and an experience with outreach.

If you do not list these goals, goals that reflect who you say you want to be, candidates may presume either that these goals are not very important to you or, worse, you do not know what you want. Either way, the situation reflects a failure of intentional spiritual discernment in your congregational process. Checking whether your goals mirror where you want your church to grow, reflects thoughtful prayer and discernment of God’s intention for you. This is not some administrative checks-and-balances procedure. If there is a disagreement between stated intentions and stated goals, perhaps more prayerful discussion and reflection is called for before you begin.

This process can take a substantial amount of time, so be patient, as God is patient. It also means that you, the search committee, will be under constant pressure, possibly even harassment by parish members who cannot understand why, “it takes so

long.” Simply tell them that it is a process of prayer and discernment. Remind them that “the Spirit blows where it wills” [RSV, John 3.8] and ask them to keep praying for you and your efforts.

It should come as no surprise that parishes are almost universal in wanting someone with good preaching skills. Although most members will not routinely interact with their rector via regular pastoral care situations, nearly everyone will interact with the rector as the liturgical leader and via the pulpit. Homiletic skill cannot be overlooked. However, preaching skills are not the only skills the parish needs.

Now is the time to go back to your benchmark: Skills and Responsibilities list. Does your parish need a priest who is comfortable and skilled with visitation of the elderly, sick, and dying? Does your parish desperately need a good administrator? Does your parish need a skilled educator to get your Bible Studies and formation programs on track? Do you need a rector skilled in mediation and conflict resolution? Or do you need one comfortable with public speaking in numerous community events? Do not forget these critical areas you have previously identified. You may “fall in love” with a candidate, but if he does not match your needs, you need to look elsewhere.

Consider the Responsibilities and Skills in your CDO Profile and ask, “What Responsibilities and Skills do we *say* we want in our new rector?” Look again at your “stated goals.” Do the goals you state in your CDO Profile reflect the responsibilities and skills you desire? Will the skill set you desire help the parish to achieve its goals?

Recall from above the desire for someone who “loves Christian Education” or has a “passion for Outreach.” Do the Responsibilities and Skills listed in your CDO Profile match your Stated Goals? Christian Education requires someone who loves to teach and

interact with others. Experience in the classroom or the military provide examples of professions that place a heavy emphasis on both teaching and mentoring. Do you list that you want someone who likes to work with children or youth and has some experience in these areas?

Likewise, the area of Outreach requires the ability to organize, train, and lead others and a desire to work with other organizations. Outreach also often requires the ability to formulate and convey a vision and then empower others to fulfill that vision. Are you actually looking for someone with those skills or experience?

Again, the Responsibility and Skills you desire should be congruent with the “Stated Goals” in your Parish CDP Profile. If they do not match, then you appear confused and conflicted. Candidates may perceive you do not know what you want. As with the profile’s “Stated Goals,” if you find that your Goals and the desired Skills appear disconnected or mismatched, it may reflect a need for further discernment. Continually ask yourselves, “Where is God in this?” “Where does our Lord want us to go?” “Are we in sync with God or fighting the Holy Spirit?”

Remember, prospective candidates look at your parish profile to determine whether they might be a good fit and whether they have the skill set for which you are looking. Why is this important? Let me provide the following true example:

The parish of St. Swithins stated that their *first* goal was to increase their children’s and youth ministry programs, however, they listed no required educational skills or experience in this area on the parish CDO profile. During their search process, the search committee selected a rector whose resume and personal CDO profile clearly indicated that he had no ministry experience with

children or youth. When the new rector failed to expand this ministry area, the congregation grew frustrated and angry with the rector. Who is at fault here?

To a certain extent, both are at fault. The rector bears responsibility for not clarifying this incongruence and for applying for a position that his experience clearly did not match. However, the search committee bears the greater burden for accepting and pursuing a candidate who lacked the desired skills. Moreover, the search committee's actions implied to the candidate that, despite his deficiency, he remained an acceptable candidate. In this case, the search committee failed their congregation by not remaining focused on their stated goals.

The lesson learned here is: do not deviate from your stated goals. Be clear about who you are and what you are looking for. Be patient and listen for God's guidance. If it means taking more time to rewrite or start all over, then do so. This is a marriage, not a single dance.

The greatest asset the search committee has is the diocesan transition officer. Work closely with your transition officer and transition consultant when using the CDO Program office format to build your Parish CDO Profile. These individuals are specially trained on this program and will save you enormous amounts of time, so use their experience and skill, besides, you need your energies for other things.

Remember that the vestry is responsible for the financial management of the parish. Both the vestry and the search committee must be clear and in accord on what your Stipend, Housing, and Benefits package actually offers. This can be like reading Greek to most people in the parish. Talk to your transition officer about your diocesan

guidelines and expectations. *Know what you can afford!* If “Housing is Provided,” consider ahead of time the additional monetary cost if the rector does not want to use provided housing. Know going in if you cannot afford it or perhaps consider various financial compromises like offering an annual equity allowance to offset some of the equity a homeowner might accrue.

Know the actual *cash* value of the stipend and benefits, not the monetary *equivalent* or ‘pension value’ on paper. *The majority of calls that fail at this late date occur over simple financial misunderstandings!* For example:

Assume the Compensation (Stipend + Housing) you put on your CDO Profile is \$90,000 and you show that “Housing is Provided.” Assume you “value” that annual housing benefit at \$32,000. Do you believe that you are offering the candidate \$58,000 in actual *cash*, with the ‘value’ of the housing *included* in that \$90,000? Or, do you add that \$32,000 housing *value* to the \$90,000 in actual cash for a total Compensation package that values \$122,000 (on top of which goes 18% in pension and 7.65% in SSA)? Or, does the \$90,000 already *include* pension and SSA?

You can see how complex the problem is and why it needs to be clearly understood, and perhaps why it is significant enough to cause a break in a relationship with a candidate. When in doubt, remind the concerned with what scripture says:

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

[1 Timothy 5:17-18]

Considerations for the Search

Confidentiality Begins NOW! You are not “keeping secrets.” You are safeguarding the confidentiality of prospective candidates. Most search committees report that this area presents the toughest challenge to committee members. Remind the parish that many candidates do not want anyone to know that they are exploring other ministry options. In many instances during the discernment of the search process, candidates will discover that where they currently are, is exactly where he or she should remain. Should their current church discover that the individual “was in the search process elsewhere,” such information may destroy an otherwise healthy relationship. It is unworthy of the church’s trust to violate that confidence in any way.

Just like the U.S. Military Intelligence system, you are entrusted with privileged, confidential information *solely* for the purposes of your work on the search committee. It is *unethical* (and potentially illegal) to share *any* information about any candidate with friends, family, or *spouses*. Just as you cannot “share” nuclear launch codes with your spouse, you may not share candidate information either.

The committee must securely keep a record of all contact materials and safely destroy *all* materials when the search has concluded. Committee members must understand this from the very beginning and be willing to abide by this process. If they are unwilling or believe they are unable to abide by these conditions of confidentiality, they must be replaced.

Once the search committee understands and agrees to comply with the necessity of confidentiality, the primary concern for the committee is to make the process *equitable*

and fair for the candidates. Making the process equitable for the candidates directly impacts the committee's level of effort and energy.

The greatest *unnecessary* challenge a search committee will have is trying to compare “apples to oranges.” Strive at all times to ensure that you compare the candidates equitably. Always ask the candidates the *same* questions. This will prevent disagreements, arguments, and hard feelings among your search committee and it will clarify how the candidates compare to one another on various issues. As an example:

Several members of the St. Swithins search committee “did not like” the answer that a particular candidate gave to one question, while others had no difficulty with the answer. As a result, unhealthy animosity developed within the committee and the Interim Priest was approached for pastoral guidance.

When the Interim asked how the “other” candidates responded to the *same* question, the committee looked blank and said, “We did not ask the other candidates that question.” Of course, the problem is how do they know that the other candidates would not have answered the question in the same way, or perhaps even in a less desirable way? The committee simply does not know.

The search committee wasted valuable time debating the issue about this particular candidate, when ironically this one question (issue) was the only negative against that particular candidate. The search process, the commitment of committee member time, and the unexpected hurdles along the way are substantial enough without adding unnecessary roadblocks. Moreover, although disagreements will occasionally arise among the search committee members, the committee wants to eliminate and not create potential disputes. Equity toward all candidates in regards to questions, time, and

commitment, helps to ensure that the right candidates emerge from the process; be fair to each candidate and to you.

Shaping the Search Process

The search committee's primary consideration at this point lies in determining: What do you *need* to know, what do you *want* to know, and why? Now that you have successfully conducted and collated parish surveys, shaped and posted your CDO Profile, and posted a Profile on your Parish Webpage, you're ready for the "search" part of the Search Process. Now is the time to determine what you need and want to know about the candidates. What is important to you and how will you get that information? At this point your process will be like a funnel, a constant narrowing of candidates until you find the one you believe called to serve your church. Many techniques exist to help you attain the most insight without unnecessary administrative burden to you, the committee, and to your potential candidates.

Ask how many levels or graduated steps will we go through? What is the purpose of this particular step and what information are we trying to gain? These graduated levels include, but are not limited to requesting:

- Written responses to a set of questions or an analysis of a particular situation
- Copies of sermon(s)
- Telephone interviews
- Site visits to the candidates
- Visitations by the candidates to your church

Electronic or Paper

Before you begin, consider Electronic or Paper. In an increasingly electronic and “connected” world, a paper or electronic process may be an intentional choice. A combination of the two generally works well for both parties—the search committee and the rector candidates. This allows full participation of all members of your search committee and any candidates who are electronically challenged or simply “not connected.” Electronic communication is particularly efficient for verifying receipt of materials and for providing status updates. *From a pastoral perspective, always provide written responses to candidates when they are negative.*

Conversely, do not get carried away with technology. When asked, *clergy disliked the requirement to provide DVD/CDs most.* Reasons given included: lack of equipment, lack of trained personnel to operate the equipment, and difficulty in maintaining confidentiality within the parish. Search committees also admitted that they, “looked at *some* of the submissions, but found the process too time-consuming and so they *did not look at the rest.*” Although one might presume that modern, electronic media is more efficient, in actuality electronic media, like DVDs/ CDs/ VTCs actually prove to be costly, more time consuming, and generally ineffective. Remember, most members can *read* five sermons faster than they can *watch* one sermon of equal length.

Thus, search committees should use electronic media, like email notifications, when it offers opportunities for process efficiency. Do not ask for video-teleconferences, videotapes, CDs or DVDs with or of the candidates. Why? For the following reasons:

- Many candidates do not want their congregations to know that they are in a search process. Suddenly trying to acquire telecommunications equipment or video cameras and/or suddenly taping services or sermons when that is not the norm in that priest's church raises serious questions from among the priest's congregation.
- Successful filming depends on several factors:
 - The quality of the camera
 - The skill of the cameraman
 - The size and shape of the church
 - The acoustics of the church
 - The lighting of the church

This means that the quality of the product can vary wildly. A priest with a poor product due to any of the above reasons is automatically at a technological disadvantage. Remember, you are trying to be *fair and equitable to all*.

- Some rectors do not have ready access to this type of equipment, which can add unnecessary time and expense for them to seek out and acquire this equipment, especially if they are located in rural areas.
- Some candidates are naturals with technology and others are technically challenged, do you really want that to be the determining criteria for your priest and confidante?
- Lastly, your time is valuable too.
 - Setting up and conducting a video teleconference can take up to twice as long as a simple telephone interview.
 - Most people can read five or six different *written* inputs in the time it takes

to *watch* even one, 1-hour DVD (if they even really watch it). *Do not waste your time* or that of your fellow committee members

- Winnow down your candidates through other less time-consuming means than watching videotapes and DVD. Save the face-to-face for the “in person” quality time of the candidate site visits.

Remember that your committee’s upcoming site visits are your opportunity to observe the candidate “live” in their home environment. Do not waste their time and resources or yours with glitzy technology.

Clergy Contact

“What we got here... is... *failure to communicate!*”

[Road Gang Captain, *Cool Hand Luke*, 1967]

The single greatest complaint that clergy have with the transition process is the exceptionally poor communication with search committees. Clergy unnecessarily put their lives—their families, vacations, and education on hold waiting for input from search committees.

Regardless their publishing date, an analysis of nearly all published work on church deployment notes a startling, single, common thread among these works: *the failure of the search committee to keep the search candidates informed in a timely fashion*. As noted in the Introduction, this was the major complaint of every respondent to the *Episcopal Life*, “Unemployment Blues” article. Compassionate, proper, and timely

communication appears to be the single biggest complaint about the transition process in the Episcopal Church. Although this traditional area of weakness still exists, analysis indicates that this area has seen marked improvement, yet it remains a fundamental concern for the process. Several transition consultants recommend that the search committee designate a Candidate Contact Secretary or Representative as a separate position from someone who is the secretary for the search committee. You do not want to lose a good candidate because you failed to acknowledge him and keep him informed. Thus, for a large church with many candidates, you may need more than one Contact Secretary.

Whenever candidates make direct contact with your church in any form, the Candidate Contact Secretary should *immediately* send a postcard or letter acknowledging receipt of that contact and note the approximate date you will actually attend to their input. Make a copy for your records. You may send an email, but always back-up email up with a *physical* paper trail, noting that you sent an email. This lets the candidates know that you are technologically savvy *and* that you have your administrative “ducks in a row.” This is the kind of place someone would like to serve in.

The majority of search committees reported that they followed up after each phase of their process, but few noted that they communicated at least monthly. A Contact Secretary can assist this process with a simple, monthly generic email to the effect:

The Search Committee of St. Swithins continues to wrestle with the discernment process as we work to find our next rector. We want to assure you of our continued interest in you as a candidate and of our continued prayers for you in your own discernment process. As soon as [we are ready to proceed to the next phase/ have reached a decision/ etc.], we will contact you. Until then may the Lord bless your ministries and may you remember us in your prayers.

The following inputs have been collated from survey comments, samples, and various published sources as recommendations for the search committee.

Basic Communication Guidelines:

- A simple postcard or personal note saying we have received your material
- Initial Screening, those continuing on and those dropped from consideration.
 - If screened *out*: A letter informing the candidate that they are no longer under consideration is *mandatory*. Etiquette, courtesy, and Christian decency require it. The search committee should establish a 24-hour rule on this. Waiting a week or more is inexcusable. Send a kind, simple “form letter” thanking them for participating in the search; you are continuing with other candidates and you extend your best wishes for them in their own search.
 - If screened *in*: Send a simple letter thanking them for participating in the search; you look forward to continuing the discernment process with them and provide your proposed timeline. Indicate *when* you will contact them next (2-3 weeks maximum).
- Maintain contact thereafter at least every *month*, even if just a simple postcard that follows an email. It helps to provide some input: we’re are doing reference checks, waiting on background checks, preparing questions for the next phase, *which we hope to start by_____*. Keep your candidates informed!

- Always, make contact *after* any event or phase of the process, (telephone interviews, site visits, parish visits) thanking them for taking time from their busy schedules, and informing your intentions and proposed schedule to the next event.
- *Never*, inform candidate finalists that you have filled the position *until* all approval authorities have concurred and *all signatories have signed the contract!* Should something fail at the last minute, hopefully you have an equally qualified 2nd or 3rd choice, who may later prove the “right” choice after all!
- All search committee members and vestry members must maintain absolute confidentiality about the selected rector candidate *until the paperwork is complete*. How embarrassing to talk about the “new rector” when it later turns out to be another candidate. It embarrasses and discredits the speaker and violates the confidentiality of the process.
- Once your new rector has been fully vetted, approved, and all signatures obtained, then, and *only* then should you make calls to the final candidates not chosen. This will not be easy, but it must be done and done expeditiously. You have established a relationship with these individuals and there will be serious disappointment and grief from various parties. *Always call the individuals first, and then follow with a hand-written letter.*
 - Consider the possibility that some of these very qualified candidates have experienced this moment several times, “always the bridesmaid, and never the bride.” A positive, pastoral response is welcome.

One consultant offers this advice:

A coldly worded, ‘This is to inform you’ letter is both tactless and shows a lack of human consideration upon the part of the writer. One of the nicest rejection

letters that we have seen in recent years was sent by the chairman of a search committee that had received over one hundred names and applications. At the bottom of a factual and courteous letter, he had penned a simple sentence: “It was awfully hard making this decision because there were so many fine candidates, including you.” That small note was a gesture that made it easier for people to take the bad news of the letter and to end the matter with an impression that they had been dealt with in a humane way.²⁷

Consultants also strongly suggest limiting *individual* contact between a single committee member and one candidate to avoid over familiarity. The committee as a collective group should be the primary means of interaction and informational sharing with the candidates. As Oswald and Heath note, “The committee member should guard against developing a personal relationship with a particular candidate, which might be misleading to the candidate, create an unfair advantage later, or put the committee member in a compromised or awkward position.”²⁸

One last reminder, “all candidates should have a clear idea of where the search committee is in its deliberation process and of their status as candidates.”²⁹

The Process of Sharing Information

The goal of the search process is to find the best spiritual partnership or marriage possible. This happens when both parties are treated as equals and both openly share aspects of who they are and what they desire. As previously discussed, rector candidates

²⁷ McConnell, 51.

²⁸ Oswald, Heath, & Heath, 42.

²⁹ Ibid., 40.

have CDO profiles, resumes, and responses to questions, telephone interviews, and visits to represent them; while search committees have Parish CDO Profiles, parish webpages, diocesan information, and their own representation on the various interviews conducted. Additionally, search committees are increasingly using the candidates' current parish webpages and personal Internet *blogs* as well as popular electronic social networking media like *facebook* and *twitter* to better understand the candidates. Candidates also appreciate search committee efforts to increase a potential connection with the individual committee members and church via photos, committee member biographies, and with Parish Information Packets.

Take the time to develop a quality Parish Information Packet because, "A quality package will invite a quality response."³⁰ Just as search committees have difficulty understanding just what information clergy CDO Profiles convey, likewise clergy have difficulty in understanding what the Parish CDO Profile has to convey. Like a resume, the Parish Information Packet conveys information and seeks to establish a rapport.

Prospective candidates may receive many information packets from different churches. Will your packet stand out as thorough, well organized, informative, and interesting? What do the style, presentation, and organization of your information packet say about your church? Although search committees are strongly discouraged from asking for electronic media like DVDs from rector candidates, this form of media offers an excellent media source for search committees. If the resources, time, finances, and necessary skills are available to create a video presentation of your church, this is an excellent way to show something of "who you are" to your prospective candidates. Even

³⁰ Vonhof, 29.

a simple collage of church pictures taken by a variety of parishioners and downloaded to a CD or linked on your webpage can be informative.

Items to consider for inclusion in your Parish Information Packet should encapsulate much of what you discovered during the parish surveys and profile building phases. Consider the following questions from Vonhof's, *Pastoral Search*.³¹

- What is unique about our congregation?
- What is unique about our opportunities for ministry?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of our congregation?
- Are we open to change? How do we convey our openness or lack of openness?
- What are the congregation's interests?
- What are the needs of the surrounding community?
- What our involvement in our community?
- What challenges can we offer to a pastor?
- What in our past is especially useful as we look ahead at new challenges?
- What do we consider our vision and our mission, and does our congregation own them? What core values form our ministries?
- What is our view on outreach, and do our actions support this view?
- What are our outreach ministries? Are they the ministries of individuals, large segments of the congregation, or the entire parish?
- What ecumenical ministries is our church involved in?
- What ministries need to be started or developed more fully?
- What would we anticipate as our needs over the next five years?
- Is our church willing to learn from and follow the leadership of a new rector?

³¹ Vonhof, 22, 26.

- What professional qualities and attributes are looking for in a rector?

As a reasonable place to start, the Parish Information Packet can be presented with the classic, three-hole punch, report presentation folder with inside pockets on each cover. Inside the packet, using church letterhead as the first page, add a cover letter to introduce the packet, explain the contents, and explain what happens next. Much like an Annual Report, use a separate page for each ministry area: Worship & Music; Christian Formation; Outreach; In-reach; Pastoral Care; Ecumenical Activities; Community Program Support or Involvement, and so forth. Areas you should address include:³²

- *Our Worship Style*: Identify your worship style. Is it traditional, contemporary, or a mix? Do you use hymns or praise songs?
 - You might even specify if you are using a particular hymnal: *1982; Wonder, Love, and Praise; Lift Every Voice and Sing*, etc.] Is the main source of music an organ, piano, or keyboard?
 - Do you have choirs or praise teams or both? Do you have a band or use musical instruments in worship? How many weekend services are held, when, and what style—Rite I, Rite II, Contemporary, Praise, etc.?
- *Our Congregation*: This section features information about the diversity of the congregation, including the number in worship, church growth information, age make-up of the congregation, percentages of members living different distances from the church, the ethnic percentages represented, and the mix of occupations represented.

³² Vonhof, 29-34.

- *Our Strengths and Weaknesses*: Be honest; use the results of your self-study and internal surveys. You should be able to list at least six strengths and four weaknesses. Note any unique challenges facing the congregation.
- *Our Pastoral Ministry Needs*: Identify your pastoral ministry needs in the areas of worship, leadership, congregational care, fellowship, and outreach. Consider making a statement section using this format: “Because...., we need....” It can be useful for candidates to hear about your pastoral needs in your own words.
- For example, “Because we have a large number [over 20] of beloved members who are aging and homebound, we need a priest who enjoys homebound and hospital visitations.”
- This is a very real need, not all priests are particularly adept in this area of ministry. If they are not, this helps those particular candidates realize that in all probability they are not a good fit.
- *Our Ministries*: List all the ministries of your church with a brief sentence or two about each. Consider Youth Groups, Vacation Bible School, Sunday Christian Formation*, a Preschool, Bible Study Groups, fellowship groups, outreach programs*, and youth and adult choirs. (*May be broken out into solo categories)
- *Our Facilities*: Describe your facilities. What is the seating capacity within the nave of your church? What is the facility-driven limit to your choir size? How many classrooms do you have? What is the dining capacity of your fellowship hall? How historic or modern are your facilities? Are you currently engaged in a Capital Campaign, or planning one within the next 5 years? What is the capacity of your church parking lot? Does the church own any other property? Have the

facilities been adequately maintained? Consider including photos of the church facilities.

- *Our Finances*: What is the annual budget? Is it usually met? Do you have an endowment and how is it being used? Describe trends in giving patterns over the past five years. Are there any outstanding debt obligations and if so, what are the anticipated time frames to pay off the debt?
- *Our History*: Write a page or two about the history of your church. In story format, tell what happened. Have there been areas of special focus? What events have shaped the congregation, the mission, or the vision?
- *Our Community*: Describe your community. What type of neighborhood is the church located in? What similar churches are nearby? What varieties of public schools are available? Are there colleges or universities nearby? What opportunities exist for culture, sports, and outdoor activities?
- *Our Search Committee and Vestry*: List the members of the search committee and vestry with a few sentences about each person's role in the congregation and what they like about their church to personalize who they are.
- *Additional Materials to include in the Parish Information Packet*:
 - Two or three recent service bulletins
 - Two or three recent church newsletters
 - A church directory, if you have one with photos
 - Brochures about the church's ministries
 - Brochures about the church's special Christmas, Easter, or musical programs

- A DVD or photo CD of various church activities:
 - Youth Group
 - Fellowship Groups
 - Sunday School
 - VBS
 - Choir Practice
 - Facilities
 - Bible Study Groups
 - The Rector's Study
 - The Church and Chapels
 - The Rectory
 - Special services or programs

The Phases of Screening In the Candidates

At this phase, you are not screening out. You are screening in.³³

Charles Wilson

And now the Dating Game begins! Remember that this is not a competition. You are seeking to share yourselves and your parish with these wonderful candidates. You want to learn as much about them as they you. This is a two-way street between *equals*, not between superiors and a subordinate. Just as you are trying to discern which among

³³ Wilson, 37.

many is the “right one,” the candidates are also looking at other churches with the same purpose.

As a search committee you have access to the candidates’ Clergy CDO Profiles, many of which will be supplied directly by the CDO upon request for computer matches with your Parish CDO Profile; seventy-five to 150 profiles are normal. These profiles include the candidates’ “Ministry Skills and Experience” as well as a page on their “Leadership Skills and Style” in 30 different leadership areas. These resources are useful but they are also only as accurate as the candidates’ self-assessment, as well as their understanding of how to use the computerized matrix. There is another potential drawback in that the candidates can ‘adjust’ their profiles at any time. It is conceivable for a candidate to tailor his profile so that it better ‘matches’ a specific church’s profile. On the other hand, a candidate could discover that a church needs a certain set of skills that she knows she has, but has failed to emphasize. The candidate may use this opportunity to correct her profile to reflect.

The main point is not to eliminate a candidate solely on the basis of what a CDO profile says, as there may be errors, misperceptions, or misapplications of some elements. Rather, the CDO profile merely provides another insightful, evaluative tool that can be used in conjunction with other materials like resumes, answers to specified questions, submitted sermons, and even correctness and punctuality of correspondence.

The search committee should remember that, “It is not unusual for over half of an initial list to self-select out of the process after initial contact with the parish.”³⁴ Many potential candidates will do so because they are content with their current position and not actively searching, some because they prefer a particular geographic region,

³⁴ Voyle & Voyle, 44.

compensation package, size or style of ministry. Most of the profiles provided by the CDO *should* have taken these specific limiting factors into account. Hence you are more likely to experience candidate withdrawals from individuals whose names were submitted by others than themselves or CDO.

As soon as you have a proposed search timetable, share that proposed schedule with the candidates, with particular emphasis on the site visit windows and projected future visits to the parish. Be attentive to the Church Calendar! Expect slow responses during certain times, especially from priests in solo ministries who may already have their hands full. Remember the time pressures of VBS, D.Min. programs, continuing education, Catechumenate preparation, or simply much-needed vacation time. Priests are particularly busy during all of the Principal Feasts [*All Saints, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday*], Holy Week, Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of Lent and Advent. Be patient and work around these issues. It will be worth it. The committee's sensitivity to these things indicates to the candidates that you are a perceptive, thoughtful, and caring church.

This is also the time to send to the candidates your Parish Information Packet. If desired, ask for short and simple inputs to 1-3 questions that allow the candidates to share something of their personality, hopes, and dreams. Keep this short and simple, you don't want to read tomes and the candidates don't have the time.

Do not ask controversial topics. These warrant significant, detailed, and lengthy responses. At this phase, you are trying to learn about the candidates—what they feel, how they think, how well they can concisely articulate a point, and even observe their administrative skill and attention to detail.

Ask for a sermon (no more than two) either of his own choosing or from Easter, Christmas, Pentecost, and/or the seasons of Advent or Epiphany, or the Season after Pentecost. You are interested in how well she expresses core theologies of the church. Remember, if your candidate is an Associate Priest, it is quite likely that he has not preached a Principal Feast. Parishes generally expect their rectors to preach these major events, which means that associated clergy may not have one “on the shelf.” Do not put them in the position of trying to “write a sermon” for you. Simply ask for a sermon in that season or to submit one of their choosing.

Do not be surprised if many of those candidates you “screened in” and contacted withdraw. They may no longer be in search or may have decided to continue with another church. Regardless, send a Letter of Acknowledgment and thank them for their ministry and consideration. *If you have no response from a candidate*, send an email and call (*always* on the number they listed as preferred) and confirm that she received your mailing and is or is not interested. It has happened that a candidate simply did not receive any information and did not know he was under consideration. Review the materials the candidates have returned to you. Determine your methodology for review, then pray for discernment and ask:

- Who *is* this person?
- Do I want to know more about her?
- Why does he intrigue me?

Throughout this process, search committee members are trying to learn as much as they can about the candidates—their experience, skills, spirituality, and ability to address the needs of the parish. Likewise the candidates’ contact with the search committee and its

process helps the rector candidates discern whether this is a spiritual community in which they can minister.³⁵ Remember that the search process is like going on a date; it is not a “job fair.” The search committee wants to share as much about itself and the parish, as it learns from each candidate. This is a *mutual* discernment process between equals.

Consultants also counsel, “Do not be surprised if some who look outstanding at this point slip out of contention later. Also, some who do not look outstanding yet may show surprising strength later. Be open to what is happening.”³⁶ This is important because often the search committee will “fall in love” with one candidate or one candidate in particular will stand out.

When this happens, what does the committee do? Proceed on as planned or bypass the system and go right to that “stand-out” candidate. Consultants recommend that you continue with the process. By doing so, the committee assures that all qualified candidates have been thoroughly considered and it eliminates the potential problem of the delays and effect on the committee process if that standout candidate withdraws or proves unsuitable. However, *if* the parish has a *unique* set of requirements that this *sole* candidate meets, the committee may desire to discuss the situation with the diocesan transition officer, and fast-track the process of discernment and information-gathering with this one individual. However, consultants agree that this should be used rarely, if ever.³⁷

It helps the search committee if one member keeps a record of the general *characteristics* (personal data, experience, skills, ministry gifts, etc.) of the candidates

³⁵ Oswald, Heath, & Heath, 43.

³⁶ Mead, 36-37.

³⁷ Oswald, Heath, & Heath, 47.

you have selected. This allows the committee to look for unintended bias and to validate that the characteristics you need in your rector actually match the characteristics and skills of the candidates you are selecting. It is also easy to “fall in love” and to forget what you *need*.

For example, a review shows that all of your selected candidates are young, white, married men with children. Is that in fact your *criteria* for a rector or do you want the best spiritual partner for your church? Perhaps the answer is “Yes” to both, however, you should at least be aware of the process.

Or perhaps, you notice that all the candidates your group has selected are fun loving, enthusiastic, and somewhat disordered individuals who profess a weakness in administrative and management skills. This is not necessarily a weakness nor uncommon among clergy, however, it is a problem if one of the critical skills you *need* from the rector in *your* church is a strong administrator with a depth of management experience.

Taking the time to actually track this information will help you to validate your own profile and determine that you are “on track” and have not just “fallen in love” and forgotten what you needed in the first place.

Always, always, remember to start and end with prayer. Remember, that you are engaged in a spiritual and *holy* pilgrimage. This is a *spiritual* journey and a “calling,” not a human resources process or corporate “hiring.” You are literally doing God’s work in this world.

It is essential that the search committee make decisions as a *group*. There should be no “winners” or “losers.” Make certain that the voice and opinions of any introverts in the group are heard and attended to—often, they see what others do not.

A standard screening process proceeds through several, ever-narrowing phases: solicitation of written materials [sermons, answers to questions, etc.], telephone interviews, reference checks, site visits to the candidates' parish, and lastly the parish visit by select candidates and their spouses, as applicable.

In general, consider allowing one month, *from the time of receipt*, for the candidates to respond to questions. From the committee's perspective this equates to about 5 weeks. Remember to allow more time around Major Feasts, particularly Christmas and Easter. Also, account for clergy who may be on vacation. A week after the mailing, it is a good idea to call the contact number for the candidate to verify that they have indeed received the questionnaire package and that the candidate is not on vacation or absent.

Although rarely done, and not generally recommended, should the committee desire "blind" evaluations, evaluations without reference to the demographics of the respondents' age, sex, marital status, race/ethnicity, etc., then *clearly specify your intent*. Ask them to refrain from using descriptive elements that may violate the committee's intent.

The instructions to your candidates must be clear. The candidates *want* to please you. To validate your own instructions and to avoid conflict within the search committee each committee member must understand what the questions mean *before* trying to evaluate the responses received.

As the committee frames specific questions, members should discuss how *they* understand the question and how they might understand and answer it. Nothing will spoil your committee's peace and sanity faster than the inability to reach a consensus on the

candidates because one or more candidates interpreted the questions from a valid but different perspective than the committee had anticipated. *Do not compare apples to oranges!* If necessary, contact these “different perspective” candidate(s) and ask for their response from the intended perspective. This caution only applies when a candidate(s) interpreted the question(s) in a different, *but equally valid*, way than the committee intended. The committee has no *obligation* to accommodate the candidate who fails to answer the question.

As candidate responses come in, immediately send written verification that you have received their materials, then determine how you will evaluate the many inputs received. Be on the lookout for these common committee evaluation situations:

- The member who rates everyone highly—everyone is perfect!
- The member who rates everyone poorly—no one is good enough.
- The member on the fence—everyone is ‘average’.
- The member with biases—I like everyone “just like me” or I dislike everyone not like me, especially minority candidates.

The telephone interview phase traditionally follows the use of: Clergy CDO Profiles, resumes, and the input of sermons and answers to generic questions. Although search committees and consultants generally view the telephone interview process as an effective and economical way to learn more about the candidates, the candidates generally dislike them. However, the telephone interview can help to reveal which candidates do not have the *experience or skills* that the congregation needs. Additionally, telephone interaction with the candidates may reveal unacceptable personal traits such as a failure to listen well, an evasiveness or avoidance in answering some questions, or

stiltedness. However, the committee members must ask, if these attributes are a function of the candidate or a function of the artificiality of a phone conversation and the inability to interact face-to-face? Many candidates cited discomfort with this phase because they could not interact directly, face-to-face with those on the other end of the conversation.

- When conducting telephone interviews, consider the following recommendations:
Use a speakerphone so everyone can hear.
- If you intend to tape the conversation, you *must* inform the candidate and ask the candidate's permission.
- Identify by name, which committee members are listening.
- It is generally helpful if only one or two different members speak.
- Use the same interview questions for all candidates.
- Keep it short. It's just a screening device; 30 to 45 minutes is sufficient.
- Cover only one *significant* topic.
- Have committee interview training beforehand.
- "Field Test" your questions over the phone with another pastor, the interim, transition coach, etc.
- Allow time for the candidate to ask *the search committee* questions too.
- Allow at least 30 minutes between interviews to discuss the previous call and to discuss the upcoming candidate.
- If you fall behind, call the next candidate(s) and let them know. You may have to reschedule for another time.

Remember you have no eye contact, no visual clues, and no body language to help interpret what you hear. Most priests reported discomfort with "faceless telephone

interviews.” Forwarding a group photo of the search committee is not only thoughtful, but may also provide better interview responses.

Another useful resource available to the search committee is the use of references. Reference checks offer a deeper knowledge of the candidates, their personality, work habits, spirituality, and their ability with general and specific ministries. Before the committee contacts the references provided, they should consider who the reference is, what type of information that reference is most likely able to provide, and then shape their questions for that reference accordingly. Additionally, the committee may always consider asking candidate-referred references for additional reference you might contact.

Again, one note of significant *caution*, many candidates do not wish for their congregations to know that they are in a search process. Indeed, some candidates may discern that they are best suited to stay in their present church. However, if a congregation discovers that their clergy is looking elsewhere, the delicate balance of trust feels violated and continued ministry in that church becomes difficult. Thus, contacting anyone *within that congregation* without coordinating the contact with the candidate first violates the candidate’s confidentiality.

Ultimately, the one phase in the screening process that offers the greatest insight into each candidate is the search committee site visit to the candidates’ churches. Observing the candidate within the context of her own parish, finally allows the committee to engage the candidate within the spiritual workplace. This means that site visits need to occur on *weekends*. Clearly, it takes a dedicated visitation team to travel 4 to 6 consecutive weekends.

The principal purpose of the search committee site visits is to interact personally with the candidate, to observe his liturgical and homiletic style, and to observe how she interacts with members of her own parish. Site visits serve two distinct purposes: First, working from what they know on paper and/or phone interviews, it offers the search committee the opportunity to meet and interact with the selected candidates on a *personal* level. And, based upon that interaction, the search committee can collectively determine the candidates with whom they desire to continue. Second, the site visits offer the candidate an opportunity to gain a more representative and interactive impression of the calling church. In order to serve both purposes, as many committee members as financially possible (approximately 2/3 of the committee) should visit the selected candidates. When at all possible, the *same team should travel to all candidates*. Some search committees divide the list of candidates among two (or more) site visitation teams. With no cross-team membership, the concerns and issues of one team may not be the same as the other so candidates will not be equitably judged. Problems can arise when one team proves more persuasive about “their” candidates than the other team or, worse, divisions within the search committee may arise over which team had the “best” candidates. Without at least two people to serve as common denominators between different teams the committee has no real way to determine which candidates really were the best.

One area that visitation teams should be cautioned against is the quality of facilities or lack thereof between the candidate’s churches. Remember that vestries are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all parish buildings, not the rector or associate. Some priests may serve in large, new, or modern facilities, others may serve in

small, poor, rural, or historic buildings. The visitation team should consider if the facilities are clean, if the congregants seem pleased or proud of their church, and if the worship service conveys a sense of wonder and love for God.

Your parish financial resources will often dictate how many members will go on a site visit. Most consultants recommend 3 to 5 members. Three may be too few and five or more members may become painfully obvious in some churches. Remember that this is the candidate's first opportunity to interact with and learn about you as well. A visitation team that represents the balance and diversity of your congregation is helpful.

If the parish budget is limited, as the process begins, explore the ability of members (committee members or congregants) to donate some treasure as well as time to this critical ministry. Note however, that the willingness to help underwrite search committee expenses is not a *quid pro quo* for the right to approve or disapprove any particular candidate. This must be a freewill offering with a willingness to trust the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Coordination of site visits is important, do not visit on Major Feast days; the priest has too many things going on to focus on a search committee team. If the candidate is an associated priest, *make sure you are visiting on a Sunday when that candidate will be responsible for worship and preaching.*

Some candidates, generally associated clergy, may be quite open to acknowledging a visiting parish search committee. They may openly recognize your presence and encourage interaction during fellowship or participation in various Sunday education programs. This is great, but not the norm. For the most part, many clergy are still discerning whether they are called to stay or to go, and even if they are determined to

move, it may be months or years before they do move elsewhere. In the meantime, their effectiveness requires an unperturbed level of commitment and trust within the parish. The site visit teams must be aware of this and act as circumspectly as possible to not draw undue attention to their visit.

Most site visits provide a time for uninterrupted conversation, and essential questions and answers. Many teams arrive on a Saturday and spend the afternoon with the candidate, followed by dinner with the candidate and her spouse at an appropriate place. Some teams will arrive for worship on Sunday, followed by a lunch with the candidate and his spouse, and then formal questions. The spouse should not be involved in the professional interview of the clergy; however, the spouse and children must be considered. As one consultant notes:

During the search process, an easily overlooked factor in communications is the candidate's spouse and children. Clergy candidates have spouses with their own careers, family issues, and children with their unique needs and school and sports commitments—the same as the rest of us. You must consider the needs and interests of the spouse in the materials you prepare, the manner in which you present your church.... Be sensitive if he or she does not desire an active role in the ministry of the church.³⁸

During the site visit, committee members should notice parish bulletin boards, flyers, service bulletins, and ask what is going on in the parish? What attitude does the parish convey—welcome, excitement, outreach, community-building activities, youth programs, etc. Are these the types of ministries that you have or need in your church? Are these the types of experience and leadership skills you need?

A word about *liturgical style*, you are trying to find Cinderella, not her sister. Remember that as the congregation's spiritual leader, the rector is responsible for the liturgy and music in the congregation. However, priests generally reflect the liturgical

³⁸ Vonhof, 46.

worship style of the congregation. A priest may have a preference for ‘Low Church’ liturgics, but serve in a ‘High Church’ environment. Many priests are trained in the full spectrum of liturgical styles of worship from casual ‘praise’ to formal Anglo-catholic while some have only a limited experience with any style other than the one they are in. If there is a *significant* difference between the worship style in your church and the worship style you observe, this is a legitimate concern and should be addressed. In most cases, the Anglo-catholic liturgist will be unhappy and feel spiritually unfed in a church that only celebrates a service of Morning Prayer and vice versa. Both parties need to understand and be aware of this.

An important liturgical note! If your church routinely celebrates a “Sung Eucharist” and has a rich choral tradition, perhaps occasional Choral Evensongs, be clear that you are looking for a priest who has the *necessary experience and skill set*. To expect a “singing-challenged” priest to sing the Holy Eucharist routinely is unrealistic. It places a burden upon the priest to perform adequately and it can become a source of irritation to congregants. This is case of Cinderella’s sister—you’re trying to stuff the wrong foot into the shoe!

The *Positives* of site visits to rector candidates include:

- The committee enters the candidates’ comfort zone, a place where candidates have some measure of control and can be judged within their context.
- The committee has the opportunity to observe the candidate “in action” on a Sunday—how the candidate leads and coordinates the worship, how well he connects the sermon with the lectionary readings, and how well the sermon connects with the people.

- The committee can also observe how the candidate interacts with the parishioners.
- The committee members can observe the candidates' current worship and office space, community environment, and make a broad assessment of whether the candidate will thrive in your environment.
- Search committees should also be aware that not all clergy are looking to stay in the same environment, some are in search because they do *not* fit well where they are—perhaps the town is too small or too big; too rural or too urban; not diverse enough, too far from family, etc. If there are *major* differences, between your church environment and the candidate's, talk about these differences.
- Based on family work, sports, and activity schedules this may be the only time to meet the spouse and family of a married priest.
- If the congregation is aware that their rector or associate is in search and that a team is coming, the committee members may feel free to observe the candidate teaching a Sunday morning program and may more freely talk with parishioners. However, the committee should never “interview” parishioners. “For different reasons, answers to such questioning can be skewed.”³⁹

The *Negatives* of site visits to the rector candidates include:

- Sending multiple individuals to various places can be costly.
- Sending too few committee members leaves the rest of the committee at the mercy of the impressions of a “few.”
- Must be conscious of the differences between a candidate that is currently a rector or priest-in-charge and one who is an associate. Associates have little if any

³⁹ Elizabeth R. Geitz, *Calling Clergy: A Spiritual & Practical Guide Through the Search Process*, (New York: Church Publishing, Inc., 2007), 78.

influence on the maintenance of facilities, on the order and style of worship, or on parish fellowship procedures. As a result, comparing rectors and associates is a little of the “apples and oranges” dilemma.

- The candidate may not wish the parish to know that she is in a search process elsewhere. The visitation team must be sensitive to these situations and demonstrate wisdom on how best to interact with the congregation on Sundays.

The size of the congregation visited often makes this a major challenge.

In general, the “goods” outweigh the “others” in the visit. Unless finances significantly limit your church’s ability, site visits offer an opportunity to see how “other” Episcopal Churches worship and function and provides the most useful insight into the potential candidates. Committee members usually find the site visits the most interesting and enjoyable, informative, and exciting journey part of their search committee ministry.

The last major phase of the Searching Process involves inviting the final 3 to 6 candidates to visit your church and community for a parish visit. Always include the spouse in these visits. Given families’ busy lives this may prove challenging at times. However, a spouse not fully aware of what he is getting into or unable to find employment can place an irreparable strain on the rector’s relationship with the church and the community.

In general, lodge the candidates in a nice nearby hotel and pay all of the expenses. The candidates need space and quiet time too as they review their notes and record their thoughts and impressions of you. Once a candidate accepts your call, she may appreciate staying with a parish member while she makes the necessary contact with local schools or perhaps considers buying a home.

Under no circumstances should you ever have the candidates preach a sermon or lead a Sunday service in your church! Many dioceses expressly prohibit this practice, for good reason. Why? Because effective liturgy is actually very complex, it takes a great deal of time, energy, and practice to make the worship experience flow smoothly and without apparent effort. Visiting clergy are unfamiliar with your worship space and everything about it—its dynamics, movement flow patterns, what liturgical roles are done by what individuals, and so forth. For example:

It's like asking a Formula One driver to drive a course he has never seen, against drivers he has never met or driven against, and oh, you've decided to make some 'modifications' to his car, but you haven't told him.

Despite their busy lives, search committee members must remain faithful to their commitment and make every effort to be available and to interact with the visiting candidates and their spouses. The candidates have disrupted their busy lives for you, so you may have to make some sacrifices as well. Thus, you should never make a videotape of the candidate so that missing members can watch it later. Not only does it add extra stress and work to the search committee for a product that will in all likelihood never be watched, but if the missing committee members do not have the time to participate in the activity, what makes you think they will have time to watch a tape of it? Not to mention that the purpose of the process is *interaction with* the candidates?

Search committees and vestries should also never ask a visiting candidate "to preach." Some members may believe such activities are good indicators of future performance, however, that was one of the main purposes for the search committee site visitations. Asking a candidate to preach indicates a lack of understanding about the

purpose and role of homiletics in worship. It's like asking Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to conquer Mount Everest (along with Nepalese guide: Tenzing Norgay), to climb the Rock Wall at the local YMCA. You already know he can 'climb' and the YMCA cannot replicate the conditions of Mt. Everest, neither can a "simulated preaching exercise" replicate the spiritual dimensions of a Sunday sermon.

On the other hand, you are looking for a spiritual leader and one who is proficient in prayer and biblical studies. There is nothing wrong with asking the candidate to lead the committee members in Morning or Evening Prayer or Compline or in leading a one-hour biblical discussion on some predetermined passage of Scripture, about which you have notified the candidate in advance. This is one time when you may consider using different passages for each candidate. An hour's repetition on the same passage over and over is like seeing the same cartoon over and over; it loses its impact after the 3rd time.

The candidate should see *all* of the church property, including church offices and worship spaces, the service register, and annual report. If your church has significant challenges with the organ or physical plant do not minimize the situation. This should not be the first time the candidate is aware of this and you are certainly not the only church addressing these issues. The candidates are well aware that the vestry has responsibility of this area, however, they need to know all of the challenges facing your church. This also includes area demographics. Some churches decline because the population around them declines or the demographics have changed. These are challenges that your church is facing and you require a rector with the experience, skills, and *desire* to handle them.

Provide a tour of the area—schools, local arts, and entertainment options, access to sports facilities, parks and recreation. Sometimes someone other than a search committee member, often a vestry member, may provide this service. If the candidate has school age children, provide information on your area school district. If members of your congregation are teachers, school administrators or board members, you may arrange a meeting with these individuals to answer specific questions. Again, someone other than a search committee member may provide this service.

Take the candidate to a popular local restaurant that reflects some of your area's charm. A member of the church may be willing to host the candidate and his spouse for dinner with the search committee to allow an informal opportunity for interaction. This may also take place at a local restaurant, but be cautious of an overly loud environment and seating arrangements that only allow one or two to actually converse with the candidate. Remember that the parish visit is also an opportunity for the candidate to get to know you too. In the "dating game," this equates to meeting the bride's parents.

The Basics of Interviews and Questions

The following section deals with how to frame and ask questions of the candidates that can be used in telephone interviews, during candidate site visits, or in the latter phase, the parish visit. These fundamental principals apply to all verbal interviews.

As a search committee you should have a clear statement for *what you are trying to accomplish in each interview phase*. Again, if you don't know what you're doing, how do you know you've done it? You are looking to develop a list of questions that will take

you deeper into the candidate's personality, theology, and leadership philosophy. This list should include questions asked of *all* candidates.

At least half of the topics and questions can be sent to the candidate in advance to allow them opportunities to consider their answers. This is particularly important for introverts or individuals who prefer to carefully consider and weigh responses to the events around them. On the other hand, a body of unprepared issues can “provide insight into the candidates’ general approach and outlook.”⁴⁰ In some cases, you can see how well they “think on their feet.” For example, “Tell us about your theology of tithing.” This can be answered as simply or detailed as desired. The committee can discover whether the priest believes in tithing and if so, does he tithe to the church. You are interested in how she reflects and displays leadership for parish stewardship.

Always, *always*, ask the candidates the same basic questions. The search committee's goal is an equitable process that compares like to like, apples to apples. *Never ask a question that you would not be willing to answer!* Remember that your time together is limited and precious and *both* parties need *equal* time to share. You do not want to ask a question that requires an overlong answer and consumes a great deal of time.

Therefore, the committee should not ask questions that require a dissertation to respond. Doing so puts the candidate in a difficult position. He wants to please you by answering the question, but he also doesn't want to appear to “hog the conversation.” This can become a no-win situation for the candidate. If the candidate defers the question or gives too short a response, it makes her appear shallow, indecisive, or unconcerned with your issues. On the other hand, if the candidate answers fully it may require all of

⁴⁰ McConnell, 46.

the time allotted and make him appear to be an overly verbose personality. Using our dating analogy, if you really are interested in your “date,” would you do that?

As a committee, you want to ask questions that will help you understand who the candidate is as a person and a priest. You do not want to waste your time on what you already know. To provide some specific insight into what this means, some examples follow of “good” questions, followed by less than desired questions and the reasons they are not as effective.

A good question might be: “Tell us about your prayer life.” The priest can choose to discuss this issue at length or answer briefly about her prayer life. A priest is called to be a spiritual leader and teacher for the congregation, how he responds about his own prayer life offers an insight into how he will lead a congregation. Less desirable questions might be: “Tell us about your spiritual journey.” This question begs a lengthy answer, difficult to answer in a brief way. Often a well-intentioned committee might ask: “Why did you become a priest?” This question is appropriate during the diocesan discernment period when extensive time is spent with Commissions on Ministry and parish ordination discernment committees who have hours to discuss these issues. The problem this presents a priest is how to answer so complex an issue briefly. The simplest and most direct answer is, “Because God called me.” Yet, individuals looking for something deeper will be disappointed and may even presume the priest is being evasive. Unfortunately, the answer you really want to hear could take days. Complex questions of this sort leave both parties frustrated.

Another consideration for the committee is the nature and manner of the questions asked. Do not frame open-ended questions on large, controversial topics that require

lengthy candidate responses. Again, examples of good questions, followed less desired ones follow:

A good question might be: “Share with us how you minister to gay congregants” or perhaps, “How do you respond if a partnered gay couple wants you to marry them?” Again, the priest can choose to discuss this issue at length or as briefly as desired. Specific questions of this sort help provide insights into the priest’s theology and his pastoral methods. Less desirable questions on the same subject might be: “Tell us what you think about Bishop Gene Robinson.” An adequate response to this broad, open-ended question could take a substantial amount of time and may not provide any insight into the priest’s theology or pastoral presence. “The committee should also avoid asking questions that will elicit opinions or yes-no answers.”⁴¹

The committee always wants to ask *proactive* questions about *real* events, not the suppositional, hypothetical, “What if...? What would you....? Essentially all questions should be directly related to the position of *rector*. The committee is interested in how the candidate will perform her ministerial duties. Examples follow:

- Ask for examples of ministry projects that proved successful and those that were less successful. Can the candidate identify why one was a success and the other less so?
- What do you like best about being a priest?
- What things have you found difficult about being a priest?
- What style of worship do you enjoy?
- What is your leadership style?
- What expectations do you have of a vestry?

⁴¹ Oswald, Heath, & Heath, 44.

- How do you convey the Christian witness to the unchurched?
- When facing a problem, what questions do you naturally ask?
- What ministries do you enjoy doing most in your current parish?
- Do you think that your vocation in ministry has changed in the past several years?
 - If so, why?

The committee may want to know how the candidate solves problems or interacts with people:

- Ask for an example of a problem or personnel dilemma that the candidate had to resolve, how did he resolve or affect that solution?
- Would she handle the situation the same way again or differently? Why?
- If you or the candidate has identified areas of weakness in a ministry skill area, ask how will the candidate address them [and how will you assist him?]
- Based on her past experience, how will the candidate handle some of the challenges your church currently faces—not from a theoretical perspective, but based on how she has done similar things in the past?

Interview questions should never direct the candidate's answer by describing something you like or do not like and then asking the candidate, what he will do. For example:

“We have an active prison ministry, will you participate in it?” Instead consider: “What prison ministries have you participated in?” Do not ask multi-part questions; instead ask single statement questions that allow the candidate to focus on one concept. Add additional questions later if necessary.

During the interviews, the candidate's body language and mannerisms can convey as much as the words used. Although it helps when all members of the committee are

attentive to this aspect of the interview, it helps when at least one person is specifically tasked to observe the candidates' body language and mannerisms. Considerations for this portion of the interview include:

- Does the candidate make good eye contact?
- Does he include and draw-in other members into the discussion?
- Does she appear attentive, interested, and engaged?

During each of the interview phases, someone should be assigned to moderate the interview process. As one consultant notes, "It is important to draw out the concerns and responses both of the entire committee and of the candidate. At the end of the session the candidate should be given an opportunity to ask questions of the committee and to address an additional matters."⁴² In the final analysis, committee members should reflect upon the candidate's abilities and performance and ask themselves:

- Can I see myself in a pastoral role with this candidate?
- How does the candidate express his spirituality?
- How does the candidate balance her ministry, family, personal pursuits?
- Can I hear God speaking to me through this person?
- Would I feel inspired by this person's preaching to invite a friend to church, knowing that they would benefit from hearing them?
- Would I feel confident in seeking out this clergyperson or refer a friend for personal counseling?
- Can I see this candidate as the Rector of this parish for the next 10 years?
- Would I like this person to officiate at my children's marriage or conduct my funeral?

⁴² McConnell, 48.

- Can I serve on a vestry with this person as the rector?
- And the classic assessment: Would I enjoy going out to lunch and spending time with this person?

Lastly, the committee should never use the interview opportunity to *challenge* candidates on topics unrelated to the position of rector, such as their employment prior to ministry, their family's social background, their political stance, etc. Remember the fundamental criteria, always ask the *same* questions of every candidate, and never ask a question you would be unwilling to answer. Interviews offer holy moments of sharing, heart to heart. They deserve the friendliest, warmest, and most open environment possible to share and to learn as much as the time allows. Interviews should never be combative or challenging. A true anecdote of what a committee interview should not do:

During a rector search in 2003, the search committee team leader's first question to a candidate, who was a retired military officer, was "How could he justify 'the war' and killing babies with being a minister?" Ironically, the priest was vehemently opposed to this war, and all war for that matter—on the pragmatic grounds that wars are wasteful of lives and resources and the politicians who vote for them are rarely the ones who die in them. In this case, the committee member wrongly projected his own bias onto a candidate. He asked a question not asked of any other candidate, did not apply to the role of rector, and was combative and disrespectful.

A better way of approaching this candidate might have been: "In what ways was your first career choice a natural lead-in to ministry or a contrast to it?"

Remember our dating analogy. This is a date; never argue or become combative. If you disagree, drop it. People disagree about many things. Ultimately, you need to ask if this issue prevents that candidate from performing his job as rector.

Despite the desire for equity and to ask the same questions of each candidate, when the committee reaches later interview phases, occasionally “a second, smaller part [of the interview] should cover any specific items related to the particular candidate, as suggested from prior contacts and conversations or consideration of applications and resumes.”⁴³ However, as a caution, should a candidate respond to one of these unique questions in a way that might eliminate her from consideration, *stop* and go back to ask the other candidates the same question if it might apply. To eliminate a candidate at this late phase solely based upon the answer to one or two unique questions without validating other candidate responses could cause you to select another candidate who might also have answered that question *in the same way!*

Ultimately, “The search committee should make it an absolute rule that equal and fair consideration be given to all of the candidates interviewed. If you cannot give candidates *equal* consideration, do not invite them for a visit or interview.”⁴⁴ You waste their time and yours.

Lastly, much material is published about church size and the leadership requirements unique to different size churches. The church sizes are frequently titled: Family, Pastoral, Program, and Corporate. The search committee should be aware that each size church requires a different style of leadership and level of clergy participation. As a result, the committee should pay attention to the size church the candidates are

⁴³ McConnell, 45.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 50.

currently serving and/or have experience in. Successful leadership skills in one size church do not always translate to another size church. It is appropriate to question a candidate on this if the committee has a candidate shifting from one size church to another. Often a candidate seeks to shift to a different size church because he does not fit where he is. An excellent overview is contained in, Roy M. Oswald, James M. Heath, and Ann W. Heath, *Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions*. 2003.

Choosing

No candidate is perfect. Each will have strengths, after all that's what got them to this point, and each will have some detractors. The question for the search committee is to determine which one comes the closest to meeting the *originally* stated needs of the parish profile. The point is that every clergy is different, with different skills, experience, spirituality, and personality. As a search committee, you look for the ones who *fit your profile best*, not the ones who look better compared to the others.

The committee should not overlook professional experience and successes prior to a candidate's call to ministry. A goal-oriented, successful person in one field whether sales, military service, teaching, social services, etc., inevitably proves likewise in ministry. If you consider less than desirable behavior exists, one may always ask what the candidate has done recently to rectify the situation and look

Consider what is known about each candidate—experience, skills, liturgical breadth, spirituality, personal interest, and hobbies. What impressions were formed in the various interactive opportunities: Telephone, Correspondence, Site Visit, and Parish Visit? Was the candidate organized, well groomed, friendly, knowledgeable, pastoral, enthusiastic, calm, prepared, confident, etc. All of these and many more create a sense for who each candidate really is and how they might interact with you and the parish. Using a format common to the committee, committee members should individually consider each candidate. They should pray about their personal analyses and their reasons. Then the group should come together to share their impressions and discern God’s will for their efforts. “Discernment is ‘consensus with prayer.’ It is not necessarily unanimity...Discernment succeeds only when members of a group have an intense desire both to *do* God’s will as well as to *know* it.”⁴⁵

You have met some phenomenal candidates and shared in their lives in a significant way. Now you have narrowed your search to 3 to 5. “They may be totally different in appearance, style, and/or experience, all have the promise of matching your situation in such a way that a new and vigorous church can emerge.”⁴⁶ They are different, they are outstanding, and your church will likely thrive with any of them, but you must determine the order in which you will invite them.

Much divergence of opinion and recommendations abound in the area of how many candidates to present to the vestry, each with well-rationed logic from various viewpoints including: cost to the parish, time involved, not putting too much pressure on

⁴⁵ Ketcham & Hahn, 32.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 23.

the vestry, not putting enough pressure on the vestry, allowing the vestry to be a part of the “discernment,” not having the vestry “re-do” the search committee’s tasks, and so forth. Some search process experts recommend giving the vestry only one name, while others recommend providing two, three, or more names from which the vestry may choose.

Analysis shows that not only do most search committees provide two or more names to the vestry, but also that nearly one-fourth of all rectors who are finally installed were *not* the recommended first choice. Despite not being the first choice, search committees unanimously state that they are “very satisfied.” Voyle and Voyle consulting believes that “Three candidates provide the vestry an opportunity to be conscious of differences in ministry style. Two candidates creates a problem of making direct comparisons of candidates, based on personal biases with little regard for the specific needs of the parish. One candidate increases the pressure on the vestry to simply affirm the search committee’s process without engaging in the discernment process.”⁴⁷

Providing only one name to the vestry implies that the search committee has superseded the vestry’s role. Worse, “If the vestry discerns a problem with the single candidate they may feel pressured to accept the candidate regardless of their discernment because they may be unwilling to start the whole process over again.”⁴⁸

The search committee’s goal is to provide its vestry with a well-reasoned and prayer-filled selection of *qualified* candidates from which to choose. Thus you should provide the Vestry with your top three candidates, *in order* of preference, and why. If, as

⁴⁷ Voyle & Voyle, 40.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

occasionally happens, the first candidate(s) withdraw or reject your offer, then the Vestry can in good conscience go to the next fully qualified candidate.

When the candidates are separated by an infinitesimal amount, let the vestry know that each of the candidates would make a great rector. Explain that your committee work was thorough and that you have spent much time in prayer concerning the candidates and your work. The vestry is invited to review the candidates, their skills and abilities, and to discuss nuances from the candidates' parish visits, and may always reorder as it sees fit.

Often the vestry may indeed see something that the search committee overlooked or ignored. In such cases, the vestry must address that issue to determine if it affects the order of the candidates. However, barring any glaring error by the search committee, the vestry should be very cautious about over-riding search committee members who have spent substantially more time with the candidates.

Concerning “minority” candidates—women, persons of a different race or ethnic background from the majority of the congregation, search committee members should openly address the natural tendency toward bias and prejudice, which are byproducts of our culture and our experience. Ironically, our biases and prejudices reflect who *we* are; they tell us nothing about the skills, experience, and ability of those candidates against whom we may be biased. Failure to acknowledge and be on guard against bias and prejudice undermines the work of the search committee. It restricts the freedom to fully engage the process and may negate the work of the Holy Spirit. Consider also that by virtue of their ‘minority’ cultural experiences, minority candidates are often able to employ unique perceptions and skills—the very skills *your* church may need.

Thus, if the search committee recommends a “minority” candidate(s) to the vestry, the vestry must carefully listen and consider the search committee’s rationale. You can be certain that the search committee has already considered the potential impact, both positive and negative, on the congregation. They have spent considerable time in prayer on this candidate and his ranking. They have already aired every concern that the vestry can think of, and then some, and yet they made this choice. The search committee has developed a bond of trust that rarely exists within a vestry and they have spoken more openly and honestly about this topic than others in the congregation ever will. At the same time, the vestry must fully support the candidate that the vestry finally chooses.

When in doubt, the vestry members should ask themselves: Is this person qualified? Do I trust the search committee when they say that this is the ‘best’ candidate? And then take a leap of faith. If later challenged by members of the congregation, simply say, “The candidate is fully qualified and the best candidate for our church at this time, and I am trusting God to take us in directions we never imagined, so join me on this journey.”

Occasionally no one candidate seems right. When this happens the committee must display the utmost courage and say so. No search committee wants to go to their vestry and tell them that they do not believe that their next rector is among the candidates chosen, nor should the vestry or congregation pressure the search committee to “pick one” simply because the parish has “already spent so much time and money.”

If the right candidate is not there, he is not there, and the committee must be dissolved and a new committee formed. In the rare occasions when this happens, the vestry and search committee need to evaluate what if any disconnects occurred—was the

parish profile unrealistic or invalid? Perhaps the profile drew the correct candidates for the *profile*, but the profile misrepresented the parish. What could have been done differently in the various screening levels—too many candidates weaned out, not enough variety in the candidates? “Committee members need to be working all the time to understand that their responsibility is *real* but *not ultimate*, and what is being laid on them is not so much being *successful* as being *faithful* in their task.”⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Celia Hahn of Ketcham, 26.

CHAPTER 6

RECTOR CANDIDATE CONSIDERATIONS

The Planning Phase and General Considerations

Perhaps you have spent several years as an Associate Clergy. Now you are ready to consider a position as a rector and you have all the time you need and considerable leeway granted by the rector to pursue your goal openly. Perhaps you have served as a rector for many years, believe you have discerned the call to move onward, but you are uncertain, regardless, you do not want your congregation to know. As a rector, maybe you have done what you needed to do to heal a broken congregation and see it safely onto a healthy path or perhaps you have reached a period of congregational distress and dissension that exceeds your leadership skills. Perhaps as Associated Clergy you have been serving as the Priest-in-Charge and/ or Interim because the rector left, but you know your time is rapidly coming to an end. Perhaps, a new rector has been called and desires to see you move on as “quickly as possible” so that he may hire an associate of his choosing. Whatever your reasons for seeking a vocational call as a parish rector, this section is intended to help you in the search process. You are also strongly encouraged to consider the preceding section concerning search committees. If you understand how search committees operate, then the better prepared you will be and the better able you

will be to provide what they need. The opening analysis section, with the various anecdotes from rectors who have successfully accepted a call, and the associated surveys found in the appendix may also provide insight on what to expect.

In the course of analysis for this project, I was struck by the remarkable fact that although some works exist to aid the parish search committee in its search process for a rector, none exists to aid the searching priest. Admittedly, the task of creating, training, and nurturing search committees toward the goal of calling a rector is challenging and time-consuming. However, it is no less so for the clergy person setting out to find and receive a call as the rector of a parish church. Some clergy are blessed to find a call within a year; others may wait upwards of two years. The data indicates that married, white males experience the shortest time in transition (7-12 months). Older, unmarried women and rector candidates of nonwhite and/ or different ethnic backgrounds experience the longest time in transition (19-24 months). The majority of congregants in mainline denominations have a stereotypical image of a priest as a young (white) married man.⁵⁰ In most cases, people are unaware of their own biases and prejudices and how they can impact the search process. The good news is that when a church does call a minority clergy candidate, effectively any female or person of color, they universally report that they are “very satisfied” with their selection. Moreover, the candidates report that they are “very satisfied” in their rectorship. It just takes longer to make the right connection. In effect, the process is like dating with a goal toward marriage. Dating is another discernment process. The process takes as long as it takes. It’s simply easier to make a match when the candidate is “just like us.”

⁵⁰ Jackson W. Carroll, *God’s Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 57ff.

For the minority candidates who seem to find themselves perpetually in “second-place,” yes, it will seem unfair; yes, it will be frustrating; yes, it may even become spiritually depleting. However, have faith and trust in God, because the right church is out there and they inevitably need your unique experience, skills, and insight. In many ways, for you and for the search committee, calling a rector is like “getting married.” They and you want it to be a marriage that will last.

So, what can *you* do to enhance your search process? As with any profession, you must *know who you are*, know your talents and abilities, and know your strengths and your weaknesses. You must be honest with yourself. No one will sell you better than you will. In many ways, rector candidates have an advantage over job seekers in other professions. The intense discernment process required by most dioceses in the process toward ordination, combined with ongoing spiritual formation and reflection offers opportunities rarely found in other professions. Still, the adage of honestly considering what you have to offer—what you bring to the table as it were—remains germane. More importantly, during your years of ministry, you have inevitably *changed*. How long has it been since you sincerely considered what you do well and what you do less well or need to improve upon?

To rephrase and to paraphrase standard job employment consultants: Most rector candidates that fail to find a church, fail not because they lack information about the *transitional opportunities*, but because they lack information about *themselves*.⁵¹

Despite all of the intense discernment that you went through for postulancy, candidacy, and ordination, and the years you may have spent in ministry, you have grown

⁵¹ Richard Nelson Bolles, *What Color is Your Parachute?* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2008), 241.

and changed in the process. Whether you are looking for your first opportunity as a rector or your fifth, it is worth your time and energy to sit down and take a self-assessment test. Bookstores contain numerous resources in this area.⁵²

Who you were five years ago is not who you are now. Re-evaluate how you have overcome challenging events in your past (divorce, loss of a child or parent, awareness of your sexuality, racial conflict, etc.). How have these events shaped you? How have or can you use those experiences proactively? The search committee wants to know *who you are as a person*. They will ask these questions because they want to see you. They also want to see if your past is any indication of your future. This is not something to dread. Rather, these types of questions become powerful opportunities to journey intimately with others.

The importance of conducting a thorough self-assessment helps you to see more clearly who you are and, in the process, helps you to become more confident in presenting that self to others. Additionally, you should be able to critically address programs or situations that you addressed successfully and those that went poorly, and why. Many search committees will ask you for examples of situations that succeeded and failed, and what you learned from those events. The committee members want to see how you handle success and adversity. They want to see if you appear to have a healthy awareness of your limitations and whether you can learn from mistakes. Conducting a thorough self-assessment not only builds your confidence, but it also prepares you to address honestly and succinctly these types of questions.

⁵² For example, Richard N. Bolles, Russell C. Ayers, Arthur F. Miller, and Loren B. Mead. *Your Next Pastorate: Starting the Search*, (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1990).

Another area that the self-assessment should help you to identify is your leadership style and methodology. Search committees want to understand how you lead. No one leadership style is necessarily better or worse than any other, unless it is the wrong style for a particular congregation and what it needs. For example, if the laity are already actively engaged in leading various ministries and if you prefer a leadership style of “coach,” “mentor,” or even “laissez-faire,” well and good. However, if the congregation is hurting or discouraged from ministries that have failed or through other wounds and turmoil, those leadership styles may not only be ineffective, but might possibly exacerbate the problem. A more dynamic “hands-on,” even “authoritative” leadership style may be required to positively redirect and reengage the congregation in a process that may take years. The latter style of leadership will do well in the latter case, but most likely fail in the former case. Know your leadership style and find the church that needs your leadership.

Another area that a self-assessment can clarify for you, the rector candidate, is: what size church to you really fit? All rector candidates should be aware of the differences in responsibilities, leadership, and pastoral care required by church congregations in the different major categories of Family, Pastoral, Program, and Corporate size churches. Although no stereotype holds true in the specific, ongoing, personal closeness with congregants generally diminishes with the increasing size of the parish. Working directly with a vestry where every member *is* a committee to one where they represent the interests of several committees requires a different type of leader. Leading a corporate size church with a multi-clergy staff, various administrators, and possibly deacons and seminarians, is administratively challenging even for priests with

extensive administrative backgrounds and a genuine love for strategic planning and administration.

If, however, administrative skills are not your strong suit and you positively groan at the thought of sitting at a desk, then the corporate size (and possibly even the program size) church is probably *not* where your interests and talents lie. On the other hand, if you love routinely visiting shut-ins, making hospital calls, and performing general congregational visitations then family and pastoral size churches are most likely your forte and your leadership and pastoral skills have shaped themselves to suit those environs.

As one consultant puts it, you must carefully “consider and in detail just what kind of church you want to serve and can most effectively serve, and *only* take a call if it *matches!*....Taking any church just because you want to work in the church is just as bad as deciding to make pornography just because you want to eat.”⁵³

If you discover that you desire to work in a different size parish, along with all of the attendant different requirements in leadership style and level of clergy participation, you must be clear on “*why*”. Search committees *will* notice if you are making a major shift in church size and you can expect numerous questions from them for your reasons. Well-trained and prepared search committees know that the successful leadership skills in one size church do not always translate to another size church. On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with honestly admitting that you have skill sets and interests better suited to a different size parish or perhaps that you performed poorly in one size church because you lacked the skills and talents to meet the specific leadership demands of that

⁵³ Bolles, Ayers, Miller, & Mead, 2.

size church, and that you are better suited to a different size parish. As Polonius said to Laertes in *Hamlet*, “and this above all else, to thine own self be true!” [Act I, scene 3]

Always answer questions from who you are, “without consideration of whether or not your answers will win you the post. God calls you to whatever place *He* genuinely calls you as *you are*...The most important gift you have to offer is God’s Holy Spirit coming through *who you already are*.”⁵⁴

Shaping Your CDO Profile

You have assessed your skills, experience, talents, and interests. You have evaluated your leadership style and the size congregation that you fit best. Now is time to develop your resume. It is worth the \$15 to \$25 dollars to buy a *Resumes For Dummies* type of resource. Perhaps it has been several years since you last updated your resume. Regardless, much has changed in both the classic paper and electronic world of resumes. Take the time to bring yourself up to date and follow the professional advice.

Be honest, be succinct, highlight your ministry strengths, and give the reader a taste for who you are. Within the bounds of taste and propriety, don’t be afraid to give them something to remember you—something that you ‘hate’ or that you ‘love.’

Always use quality resume paper for your paper format and always follow an electronic resume with a formal paper one.

As you shape the elements of your resume, you are also shaping the same elements that you will convey on your online CDO Clergy Profile. Your best resource

⁵⁴ Bolles, Ayers, Miller, & Mead, 3.

for assistance is your own diocesan transition officer, even if you are looking to leave your diocese. Diocesan transition officers may be a lay employee, a deacon, or a priest, often the Canon to the Ordinary. Coordinating transitions may be a full time job or a part time job, generally depending on the size of the diocese. Regardless of who that person may be in your diocese, transition officers are virtual wellsprings of information on CDO profiles—both the parish profile and the clergy profile. Take the time to make an appointment and ask for guidance on how to shape *your* profile and how *to read* the online *parish* CDO profile. Transition officers are well trained in some of the subtleties that can be found in both.

Additionally, transition officers can often provide feedback on whether you have overstated or understated your skills and abilities. Most important, transition officers “network,” generally within broad regions such as Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, etc., about openings and potential candidates. If your transition officer is aware that you are searching for a position, he or she can alert potential gaining transition officers to consider possible matches for you. Your transition officer will want to know your preferred liturgical style, size church, and any specific issues you may have [a dependent elder parent, a handicapped child, a clergy spouse, midstream on your doctorate, you are in a partnered relationship, etc.].

If you are a gay or lesbian priest and/ or in a partnered relationship, your transition officer may be best able to guide you toward dioceses whose bishops will welcome your ministry and approve a congregation’s call. This is a difficult and challenging situation for all parties, however, the search process is already a stressful and time consuming process and the efficiency of your own efforts and spiritual health dictate

that you maximize your efforts where your experience, skills, and pastoral presence can be best employed. In most cases, diocesan transition officers are a better source than the “word-of-mouth” network, particularly if there have been a recent canonical changes in diocesan policies.

Statistically, search committees that work closely with their transition officers have the highest rate of satisfaction in calling a new rector; so, when in doubt, go to the source; go to your own transition officer. Most diocesan transition officers are very busy, especially if “transitions” are a collateral duty. However, they are trained and knowledgeable about the oft-perceived arcane world of the CDO and getting your Clergy Profile “right” is important. Two primary things will initially represent “you” to a search committee: a computer printout of your Clergy CDO Profile and your resume (with cover letter). These two elements should match and complement each other. If they do not, you may appear confused or conflicted about who you are and what you are looking for in a church.

Once you have a polished working resume and an accurate Clergy CDO profile, it’s time to start actively searching for a spiritual marriage between you and a parish of people looking for their next rector.

The Searching Phase and Considerations

Among the basic elements on your Clergy CDO Profile are the type of position for which you are looking (rector) and *where*. Some rector candidates desire specific locations in the country and some are open to positions anywhere. Those clergy in

interested in a specific region like the “Southeast and Mid-Atlantic” are able to reduce their search parameters to some thirty dioceses, whereas those interested in “anywhere USA” have a more labor intensive process of over 100 diocese.

The rector candidate has the following generic resources available for determining what positions are open: The CDO Positions Open Bulletins [POBs], diocesan webpages, diocesan transition officers, advertisements in *The Living Church*, *Episcopal Life*, or word of mouth from colleagues and friends. Occasionally one or more bishops may also know you through prior relationships, perhaps as a diocesan colleague or as a parish priest. In this case, candidates frequently call to inform the bishop(s) that they are available and ask if he or she might consider them for any position that might be suitable. Always send a follow-up letter with a current resume thanking the bishop for his or her time and consideration. A copy of the same package should also be sent to the bishop’s transition officer.

Larger dioceses routinely have a variety of parishes in the transition process at any one time, while smaller diocese may go years with no transition. Larger dioceses generally have a full time transition officer and the diocesan webpage is accurately maintained with the active status of searching churches. Other dioceses may have no webpage link to transitions of any sort. Unfortunately, the searching priest will spend an extraordinary amount of time searching diocesan webpages. Likewise, the CDO POB webpage program is cumbersome and its use time consuming.

No data suggests that using a “shotgun” approach to rector employment works. On the contrary, such an approach only serves to indicate that you do not know who you are or for what you are looking as a rector. The “mail-order-bride” approach may work

on occasion, but is that the spiritual marriage you are looking for? You are far better off recognizing who you are, the skills you offer, identifying the type and size church that you can best serve and then narrowing your focus on those openings that appear to match your spiritual, administrative, and pastoral gifts.

How do you know if you match? Carefully screen each potential Church CDO Profile. What are their goals? Are they your goals too? What experience and skills do they desire? Will those attributes adequately assist that congregation in achieving its stated goals? If not, why not? Can you identify why a possible disconnect exists between their goals and what they say they are looking for in a rector? Do any disconnects between goals and clergy skills indicate a conflicted parish? Do you have the experience and skills they say that they need? If you have some but not all of the skills and experience desired, make a note of your shortcomings and consider how you might overcome them.

For example, if the parish states that their primary goal is youth ministry, but they list no requirements for any youth ministry experience, what then are they saying? If you do not have adequate experience in youth ministry, but you do in young adult ministry, perhaps you may still choose to apply, specifically noting your shortcoming in the first area, but your strength in the other area. Should you proceed with this parish into later phases this provides an excellent source for you to question them.

Rector candidates should *always* have at least one or two questions for the search committee at *every* interview phase. Remember this is a process between equals; you have as much need to clarify issues about who they are and what they are seeking as they have for you. In fact, *many search committees consider the failure of a candidate to ask*

even one insightful, germane question at an interview as an outright disqualifier. In the above example, the candidate might ask:

On your Parish CDO Profile you stated that your primary goal is developing youth ministry. Could you explain what that means to you? Phrasing this in a positive light allows them the freedom to state what they thought they meant. Based upon the committee's response you may then follow up by explicitly stating your weakness in this specific area and asking if this will be a problem, and if so, what will they be able to do to assist you in this critical area? Not only is this germane to the specific position, but it is also an important issue that both you and the search committee must resolve. Members of the search committee may have "fallen in love" with you as a person and are now overlooking the parish's greatest need. It is unethical to accept the position knowing that you lack the required skills, *unless* the search committee and vestry concur that you are the best candidate *despite* your lack of qualifications *and* they have what appears to be a reasonable way to resolve that lack. A spiritual marriage founded on false premises or unresolved fundamental needs has little chance of survival and may seriously wound both parties.

Search Committee Contact

You are a priest. You are being considered as a parish's liturgical and spiritual leader whose tasks may also incorporate broad-ranging pastoral and educational requirements. *Every contact with a parish search committee should be viewed as an interview*, whether formal or informal, whether specified or not. Therefore, your attire, grooming, and demeanor should be professional at all times. Numerous written and

electronic resources like *Dress For Success*, *Effective Job Hunting Tips*, *How to Manage a Successful Job Search*, exist to guide you if you have not done this often.

Although calling a rector is *not* the same as hiring a business manager or university president, many on a search team will routinely forget this. Moreover, some committee members may also have extensive experience in human resources or with the corporate hiring process. Although the processes may appear similar, they are not; however, you will be evaluated by those metrics nonetheless. Therefore, in simplest terms: gentlemen, wear clean, pressed black suits, black shoes, and a clerical shirt and collar. Women, wear black shoes, black suits with skirt or slacks (preferably the former for at least the first contact), and a clerical shirt and collar. Limit after-shave or colognes. If attending an interview meal in someone's home, wear clericals. If you are entertaining the search committee in your home or in a local area restaurant during their visit to you, remember that you are *still being interviewed*. You may choose to wear reasonable casual, 'civilian' attire, particularly if you need circumspection within your community. You and your spouse should never wear casual jeans or t-shirts. Limit any alcohol to one or two drinks *maximum*. Remember that you are also being evaluated on well you will represent your future parish within its local community.

Respond as promptly as possible when receiving written materials from a search committee. Although search committees will try to avoid Major Feasts, they are also on a timetable. Answer the questions asked. If you do not understand or require clarification on a topic, you may call the committee contact person for clarification. If you are unable to get definitive clarification, then state that you are uncertain about the question, and will answer based upon the following assumption—then state how you

interpreted the question. Check that all written materials are neatly typed, double or single-and-a-half spaced, and include a cover letter with your name, address, and contact number. If you can, include the same information along with page numbers in the “header” of each page. Search committees routinely separate and make multiple copies of candidate inputs for each committee member. Always check your grammar and spelling in any written correspondence.

If you are working toward a degree program, DMin, STM, or PhD that requires a specified time each year for on-campus course work, ensure that you inform the search committee. Continuing education and vacation time is normally part of a rector’s package. In most cases, an ongoing continuing education program of 3 to 4 weeks every year in June and/or July is not a problem as clergy routinely combine vacation time and continuing education time to meet these academic requirements. However, you must disclose this issue and ensure that the church will have no difficulty with this. You need to know if this will be a concern before you continue in their process. You should also remember to mention this again to the vestry during your parish visit. Ideally, the search committee has already done so earlier, however, this provides one last opportunity to clarify the subject. If necessary, you may also desire to have the specifics of your agreement on this topic noted later in your contract.

Always begin and end every search committee session with prayer, whether it is in person or via the phone. If you do not have robust prayer life, how can you expect to lead them in one?

The Basics of Interviews and Questions

A word about your “references.” References will be “interviewed” too so you should choose individuals who actually know you and can speak about your ministry, spirituality, and leadership. You should never list someone as a “reference” without asking if they are willing to serve in that capacity. You should freely discuss your goals and aspirations with your references and bring them up to date on any successes and failures you have encountered as well as what you have learned in the process. Examples of the types of questions frequently asked of references follow⁵⁵:

- How long have you known Pastor/ Rev. ____?
- What ministry relationships have you had with Pastor/ Rev. _____?
- Can you state Pastor/ Rev. _____’s vision?
- How does Pastor/ Rev. ____ lead his/her congregation?
- How does Pastor/ Rev. ____ develop personal growth in his/her ministry?
- How does Pastor/ Rev. ____ challenge the congregation?
- Please describe what area of Pastor/ Rev. _____’s ministry is his/her greatest strength and ability.
- Are there any areas of Pastor/ Rev. _____’s ministry that could benefit from development and attention?
- How do you feel about Pastor/ Rev. _____’s credibility?
- Do you have any other candid and confidential comments you would like to share?

⁵⁵ Vonhof, 61.

It is also not uncommon for search committees to ask a particular reference if they will provide the name of someone else who might be able to discuss you with them. This is referred to as a “reference’s reference.” Remember that the purpose of any interview is twofold—the learn as much about the other person as possible and to share as much about yourself as possible within the time allotted. Regardless the specific interview phase you are in—telephone, site visit, or the final visit to the parish itself; always remember to answer the question! Do not theorize, hypothesize, or make suppositions. If the questions ask you to describe a skill or experience—tell them what you have *done*.

Analysis indicates that many priests dislike the telephone interview phase. Reasons cited involve: “not being able to ‘see’ the other people,” “not being able to read the body language of the committee,” “the environment felt sterile,” and so forth. Most committees will send a set of proposed questions. Prior to the telephone interview, read through those questions and consider how you will answer as succinctly as possible. You may ask how long they expect the interview to last. Most interviews are only intended to “screen in” candidates and last from 30 to 45 minutes, occasionally an hour. The committee may not address all of the proposed questions and will likely have one “unprepared” question to see how well you “think on your feet.” As will be addressed below, you should have at least one or two simple questions of your own to ask of the search committee should they offer you the opportunity.

Focus on your *actions* in the *early* phases of telephone and site visit interviews. Do not tell them what you “think” or “feel”—the search committee is not generally looking for that yet. The committee has many candidates and they are usually just trying to screen “in” those candidates with the requisite skills and experience. The later

interviews, beginning with the site visit to your church and continuing through the parish visit and the meeting with the rest of the search committee and vestry, will employ deeper questions.

A productive interview follows the classic *50% interview guidelines*—you talk half the time, they talk half the time. When answering questions, *follow the 20-2 rule: Use at least 20 seconds to respond, but never more than 2 minutes.* If you must, practice this with a stopwatch until you get the rhythm. Anything less than twenty seconds and you appear flippant, possibly even disrespectful of the question asked. More than two minutes and you begin to lecture.

Ideally a search committee will not ask you a multipart question. Adhering to the 20-2 Rule becomes difficult with complex or multipart questions. However, there are ways to deftly step around the problem and still answer the question. Turn the complex question into a simple question that allows you to give an *example* of your *ministry skills* vice propound a theological dissertation. For example, consider what you might do if a committee asks you, “What do you think about Bishop Gene Robinson?” It’s almost impossible to answer this complex issue question within the 20-2 Rule. However, you can take a moment to rephrase it positively and say, “I’m glad you asked that question. It’s a really complex question that requires more time than we probably have, but I can tell you how I handled a situation just last month when two gay parishioners approached me and.....” In this case you take control of the question and answer it by providing some of your theology within your answer. More importantly however, you allow the committee to envision you in a pastoral role taking charge of what might be a challenging situation.

Something less dramatic, but equally complex, is the classic Commission on Ministry type question: “Tell us about your spiritual journey.” Again, there is no easy way to approach this compelling and complex question, unless you simplify it and use it to highlight who you are and how you minister in Christ. You might rephrase this by saying, “I would love to have the necessary time to share that story with each of you, but I can offer you a brief insight into my journey with Christ Jesus, particularly as it relates to my ministry with [children, the terminally ill, our parish prison ministry, etc.]” In the course of your answer, you can interweave how that ministry has shaped your spiritual journey. Controlling the complex question presents a challenge because they are usually topics you would like to address at length. The problem is that you can quickly consume the allotted time for the entire interview, leaving no time for further questions from the committee or time for you to ask questions of the committee.

There are certain reasonably standard questions that you should anticipate and be able to answer *within the 20-2 Rule*:

- What do you like best about being a priest?
- What ministries do you enjoy doing most in your current parish?
- Do you think that your vocation in ministry has changed in the past several years? And if so, why? [As in: Have you stagnated or do you seek to learn from your experience?]
- Provide an example of a problem or personnel dilemma that you have had to resolve. Would you handle the situation the same way again or differently, and why? [The committee wants to see how you solve problems and/ or interact with others; and can you learn from your environment.]

- Have you identified any areas of weakness in your ministry skills? [As in: no one is perfect, so can you identify *one* area for improvement and how you will overcome it?]
- Based on your past experience, how will you handle a challenge that our church currently faces? [Use specific examples from your past, do not answer from a theoretical perspective]
- What types of spiritual disciplines do you follow? [You may mention several, but give examples of only one, especially note if you have used your own spiritual discipline to help others.]
- How do you balance ministry, family, and personal pursuits? [Humor and examples can help.]
- What do you do for fun? [As in: would we enjoy spending time with you?]
- In what ways was your first career choice a natural lead-in to ministry or a contrast to it?

Many search committees will operate under the established assumption that the past is a predictor of the future. Do not be surprised or offended if the committee asks questions about past performance, either in ministry or possibly your profession prior to ministry. Your job is to show how you have successfully overcome past challenges and intend to use them proactively as a springboard for future ministry and pastoral situations. This is particularly true if you are asked to explain either conflict or involuntary termination.

Always respond honestly, simply, and calmly; make good eye contact with *every* person present, doing so draws everyone into the conversation. This is especially important if only one member of the committee has been “tasked” with asking the

questions. The pitfall is to address the questioner only and to fail to include the rest of the committee. If you do not understand a question, say so, and ask for clarification. It is also appropriate to take a moment to think through your answer and how best to convey the information.

The most dangerous interview situation occurs when one member of the committee monopolizes off-topic questioning or becomes hostile. Success often depends upon how well you manage to get the committee back on track. Consider,

“You raise some interesting points/questions and I’d love to address them later if we have the time. Perhaps we could discuss what primary concerns the ‘committee’ feels need to be addressed in the congregation (or community) at this time.”

At this point, you are trying to defuse any tensions or redirect control from the dominant member. You can accomplish this by gaining strong eye contact with any *other* member who appears to be a potential leader and by using the reference “committee” instead of “you.” Using the latter form of address, allows that dominant member to remain engaged in the conversation, the very thing you are trying to avoid. In the unlikely or unfortunate event that you are not successful, you may have to resort to your spiritual leadership and say:

“Perhaps, we could take a moment to pause and reflect on Christ and what he is calling us to do here and in the world around us.”

After a moment, offer a simple prayer of thanksgiving for the parish and its mission in the community and the world as well as the collective ministry of the search committee. At the very least you will demonstrate your leadership and ability to gracefully exit a

difficult situation. You should also seriously consider if this is in fact a place where you can work and serve. Unfortunately, the natural tendency in adverse situations like this is to become defensive, to take total dominion over the interview, or to lecture. None of these techniques will work.

Remember the *purpose* of each interview is for the search committee to get to know you *and* for you to get to know *them*. If you spend too much time talking, you have no time to learn about them. Therefore, you should prepare questions of your own for the search committee ahead of time; just as, you can be certain, they have done with their questions.

The first place to begin is with each parish's stated goals. In most cases goals exist to redress ongoing problems or to strengthen areas that have grown weak. Ask for clarification of the parish's goals and why they believe that they have not yet resolved them. Ask what ministry *they* are passionate about and why. For example, if the parish profile and the search committee indicate a need and/ or desire to change, ask how they came to that conclusion. More importantly, does this desire to change reflect the mind of the congregation or the intentions of a few? Many people say they want change, but few are actually willing to change. Even the threat of change can cause fear, paranoia, and resistance. Does the committee perceive this will happen or are they simply looking for the new rector to invoke the Holy Spirit and hope for the best?

Some questions may be the same for each church you consider, however other questions should be tailored to the specific church. Your goal is to learn more about the church and the congregation. A committee still conveys information when it fails or is unable to answer your questions. If you do not learn more, either you had poor questions

or you monopolized the time, leaving little time to listen and observe. To develop your questions, consider brainstorming with friends and colleagues and, if possible, some members of your present church. Examples of questions that might be formatted for different churches follow:

- Why are you interested in me as your rector?
- What role do you expect my family to have in your church?
- What concerns need to be addressed in the congregation? The community?
- What significant events and people have shaped your church and how?
- What is your vision for your church?
- What do you think is your church's greatest strength?
- What do you think is your church's greatest weakness?
- What are some of the pastoral challenges facing St. Swithin's at this time?
- What are your financial strengths and concerns?
- Since you have all been fully enmeshed in evaluating (and loving) this parish, what things have you discovered in the search process that have surprised you and what things concern you?

As one consultant recommends, "Ask [the committee] whatever it is that *you will wish you had known after you accept the call*...think of all the experiences you have had (or your clergy friends have had) that made them say, 'If I'd known *that* I'd never have accepted this call!'"⁵⁶

Once you have your questions, put them *in order*, and *write them down*. This may come as a shock, but some people actually get anxious during interviews and you do not want to forget your questions, besides you will look like you are prepared and organized.

⁵⁶ Bolles, Ayers, Miller, & Mead, 4.

Is there any particular “order” to the questions you ask? Actually, yes there is. Just as the search committee has an order to their questions, so should you. Put forth the questions that you believe can best highlight your strengths, skills, or ministry gifts. In a sense, you are seeking information about the search committee and the parish, but doing so in a way that emphasizes what gifts of ministry you offer.

The Site Visits

Search committees spend a substantial amount of time developing their Parish Profiles and Information Packets to forward to prospective candidates. Return the courtesy when they come to visit you in your church. Have a simple colored report folder for every member of the team. Include one or two of your previous monthly church newsletters, one or two service bulletins, including the one for the Sunday service they will attend. Include copies of articles about your church and its history, information about various parish ministries, and general information about your town and community.

Consider also the search committee’s spiritual needs during their travels and perhaps provide a single worship sheet in each folder for Compline, Morning, or Evening Prayer, complete with some prayers, biblical readings, and a psalm. Print out labels for each folder: “St. Swithins Search Committee, Welcome to St. XXX Church.” Taking the time for the search committee members in these little things not only indicates basic organizational, administrative, and computer skills, but also a thoughtful caring heart. If finances allow, you may also desire to have a simple fruit basket with a handwritten welcome note to the committee placed in the search team leader’s hotel room. Are these

things required? No. However, the committee will remember your thoughtful kindness and the effort you expended on their behalf and they will remember you.

Expect the search committee's visitation team to observe closely how you interact with others on Sunday, how well maintained your parish facilities are, what types of activities and ministries are on bulletin boards or hallways, how the parishioners feel about their church, whether there was a sense of joy, wonder, and love for Christ in the service.

After the visitation team leaves, write a thank you note to the team, thanking them for taking the time to visit you. Include any information that may amplify the visitation event or address any issues that may have arisen during their stay.

If the committee site visitation to your church went well, you may become one of the 3 to 6 candidates invited for a parish visit in the final interview phase. During the parish visit, you will have an opportunity to interact not only with the entire search committee, but also members of the vestry. Bring quality "thank you" notes and stamps with you, as you will use several for mailing *before you leave*.

This will be the first opportunity that the rest of the search committee has to evaluate and validate the impressions of the site visitation team. It will be the first chance for all members of the search committee to interact with and actually observe your responses to questions. This will also be your first opportunity to interact with members of the parish vestry. And this is also an opportunity to address any last concerns about your qualifications and to assess whether you and your family would actually be happy in that community.

From your perspective, the parish visit offers you the chance to interact with the *entire* search committee and an even broader representation of the parish. It provides the opportunity to ask questions that are more detailed and to observe the entire committee's response. This is also your opportunity to evaluate what the parish facilities look like—how well-maintained are the facilities, how far away is the rectory or what is the housing market like? Can you [and your spouse and children] envision living in this area, culture, or climate? What quality of life might you and your family expect in this area? Consider the location and quality of schools, opportunities for personal recreation, employment opportunities for your spouse or older children, and so forth. You should expect a driving/walking tour of the community and, if there is one, a walk through of the rectory.

This is also a last opportunity for “full disclosure” by you and the church on things the search committee should know about you and that you should know about the church. If you have an experience or skill mismatch that was identified earlier, you should take this last opportunity to affirm that this will not be an insurmountable problem. This may be the first time that the vestry is made aware of this issue.

You may be asked to lead Morning or Evening Prayer or to demonstrate your teaching skills by leading a short bible study or group discussion; note, however, that the details should have been coordinated with you before your arrival. Under no circumstances should you be asked, “to preach.” Evaluations of your liturgical and homiletic skills were among the purposes of the site visit. Moreover, this is often expressly forbidden in many dioceses.

You should ask to see the service register and a copy of the last parochial report. These documents will reflect the health of the membership and its giving trends, areas for

which you will be responsible. You should ask if there are any maintenance issues with which the vestry is concerned or if there are any capital campaigns planned within the next five years. Again, you are seeking to learn as much about them as they are about you.

If you have dinner at a parishioner's house, ensure that you have the name and the address and send a personal handwritten "thank you" note the next day. Do so for anyone who took personal time to assist you during your visit. Once you return, compose a formal typewritten letter to the search committee and vestry, thanking them for sharing their parish and their time with you.

If you are not called, remember that it is never appropriate to ask the search committee why another candidate was chosen over you. First, there is the issue of confidentiality, second, the search committee has no obligation to share that information with you, and lastly, this is a *calling* process, not a *hiring* process.

However, you may ask the search committee verbally for advice on anything they are willing to share that might help you in future searches. Let the committee know that this can include anything from how you answered questions to issues with personal attire, cleanliness, mannerisms, or conduct. Listen closely to what is said, and perhaps to what is not said, take notes so you do not forget, but do not expect them to commit anything in writing. Remember, you are asking for an immense favor, one that many people are uncomfortable doing. Be gracious and thankful, and then read, re-read any inputs given, and pray about what they have shown you. Afterwards, you may need to consider whether to broaden your search criteria—either in type of church, location, or even type

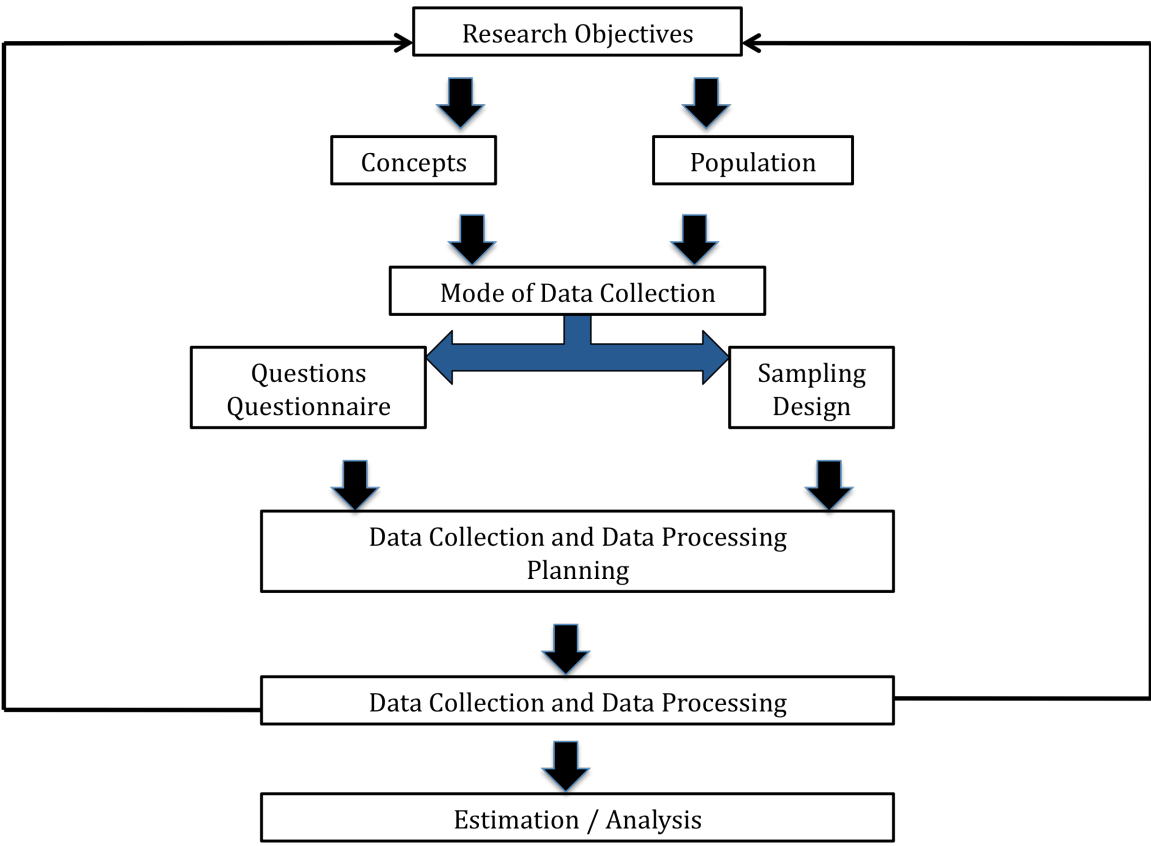
of ministry and seek advice from your transition officer and bishop. Be patient, God's timing is not always our timing.

In the end, remember that God made you, God loves you, and you are pleasing in God's sight. God can and will use this time to further shape you and infuse you with yet unknown skills. Ultimately, "the church is not *our* church or anyone's church; it belongs to Jesus Christ and to him alone....The local church is not an autonomous club or lodge or fraternity of dues-paying members. So, too, the clergy are not hired hands placed at the beck and call of a dues-paying membership. Rather, the clergy are those members of the church who are trained and set apart by ordination to represent the whole of Christ's church by serving the local body."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ McConnell, 63.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY METHODOLOGY⁵⁸

Figure 1. The Survey Methodology Process

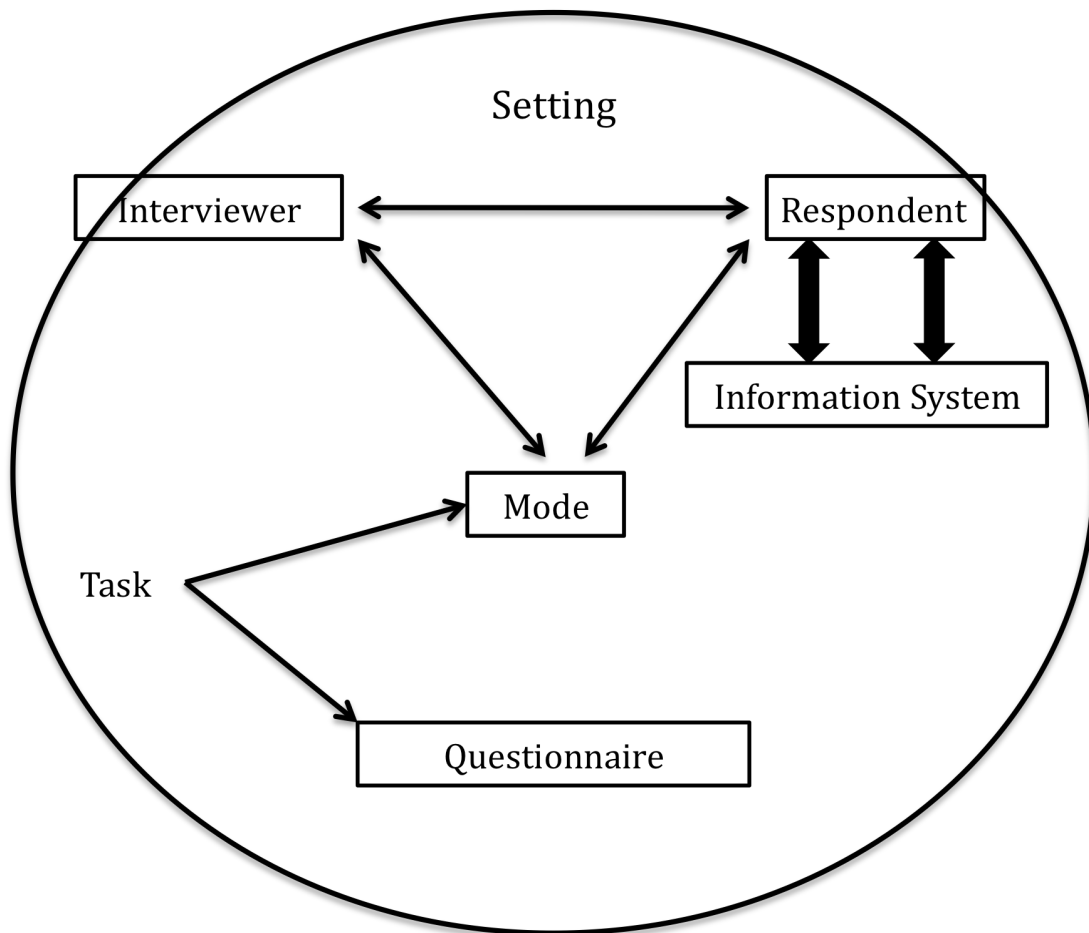


⁵⁸ Paul P. Biemer, Lars Lyberg, "Introduction to Survey Quality," *Wiley Series in Survey Methodology* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003)

APPENDIX A

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Figure 2. Potential Sources of Measurement Error



APPENDIX B
RESPONDENT SURVEYS

B. 1. Rector Surveys

Survey for Rectors All Responses Confidential
Non-attribution 1

Rector Survey

Are you: Male ___ Female ___
Are you: Married ___ Divorced ___ Widowed ___ Single ___
Are you: White ___ Hispanic ___ Native American ___ African American ___
Asian ___
What age are you: 25-35 ___ 36-40 ___ 41-49 ___ 50 & older ___

1. After you activated your CDO Profile and/or made your first inquiry, how long did you search before you accepted a call as Rector?

___ 1-6 mos. ___ 7-12 mos. ___ 13-18 mos. ___ 19-24 mos. ___ >24 mos.

2. How long were you unemployed during your search?

___ 1-6 mos. ___ 7-12 mos. ___ 13-23 mos. ___ >24 mos. ___ I was employed

3. During your search, did you reject any vestry offers of employment?

___ Yes ___ No

4. Why did you say, “No?” (check all that apply)

___ Finances
___ Felt I did not fit the church
___ Did not like the town/location
___ Felt there was too much conflict in the church
___ Did not want to be a “second” choice
___ Other

5. What “choice” were you when called by your church?

First Choice Second Choice Third Choice Fourth Choice Don't know

6. Now that you are installed, are you satisfied with your match to your church?

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Not Sure Yet Dissatisfied

7. How long have you been in your new assignment?

1-6 mos. 7-12 mos. 13-18 mos. 19-24 mos. >24 mos.

8. List the resources used in your search (check all that apply):

- Checked the CDO Online “Positions Open Bulletin”
- Updated your Profile on the CDO Program website
- Checked for availabilities on Diocesan Websites
- Spoke to my Bishop and asked for advice
- Spoke to Diocesan Transition Officers and told them I was available
- Sought advice/insight from an Interim Priest
- Notified other Priests of my availability
- Submitted Resumes
- Searched websites of churches I was interested in
- Answered advertisements in trade publications (i.e., *The Living Church*, *Episcopal Life*, etc.)
- Conducted Telephone Interviews
- Conducted Site Visits of prospective churches
- Visited interested church

9. How did you initially find the church that called you as Rector?

CDO Online Diocesan Webpage Openings Contact from Diocese (Bishop/ Transition Officer) Word of Mouth Job Opening Advertisement Other

10. During your search, how many profiles/openings did the CDO Program Office send you?

1-3 4-8 9-12 13 or more None

11. What aspects of your search did you find frustrating and/ or inefficient? (check all that apply)

- Lack of common ‘terminology’ for deployment [Transitions, Jobs, Openings, etc.]
- Difficulty finding “Openings” on some Dioceses’ webpages
- Parish CDO Profile “Responsibilities/Skills” did not match what they really wanted
- Difficulty using the online CDO “Positions Open Bulletin” page
- Some dioceses not posting “Openings” on CDO
- CDO “Positions Open Bulletin” not up-to-date

- Dioceses Webpage “Openings” status not up-to-date
- Difficulty contacting some Transition Officers
- Some Transition Officers failed to return calls or emails
- Cumbersome “preliminary” work required just to enter the search process in some dioceses

12. When using the online CDO “Positions Open Bulletin,” what parts were useful and not useful?

12a. USEFUL

12b. NOT USEFUL or did not use

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to see Diocese “Availabilities” | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to sort profiles by “Type” Community | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to sort by “Position Category” | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to sort by “Total Church Budget” | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to sort by “Average Sunday Attendance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to sort by “Minimum Compensation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Access to all Diocesan Deployment Officers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to see Parish “Responsibilities/Skills” | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. How useful was the CDO online website: “Positions Open bulletin”?

- Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Useful Did not use

14. During your search, did a Diocese (Bishop or Transition Officer) notify you of an Opening?

- One Diocese 2-3 Dioceses 4-6 Dioceses None

15. How important was a parish's webpage in affecting your impression of that parish?

Very Important Somewhat Important Slightly Important Not Important
 Did not use

16. Did you use the parish website to investigate parishes you were interested in?

Always Nearly Always For a Few of the churches Did not use

17. How important was the Parish Profile in helping you determine if you would be a good fit?

Very Important Somewhat Important Slightly Important Not Important
 Did not use

18. Did interested parishes ask you to submit answers to a set of Questions?

Always Nearly Always Only a Few Churches Did No

19. Discounting major liturgical seasons, what is a reasonable time to answer Questions?

1-3 weeks 4-6 weeks 7-8 weeks >2 months

20. Did the Search Committees send a set of "proposed questions" for Telephone Interviews?

Always Nearly Always Only a Few Did None Did no Telephone Interviews [If you did no Telephone Interviews, skip to Question #24]

21. Given the limitations of time, were Telephone Interviews effective in getting to know the Search Committee and in sharing yourself with them?

Very Effective Somewhat Effective Not Effective

22. List the things that you LIKED about the Telephone Interviews (check all that apply):

- Heard what was important to them
 Was able to clarify prior statements or comments made
 Gained a useful impression of the church through the committee
 Decided that I wanted to continue or discontinue the process with a particular church
 Other

23. List the things that you DISLIKED about the Telephone Interview (check all that apply):

- Only a few Committee Members were present (not counting 1 or 2 missing)
 We never really discussed the proposed questions
 One Committee Member dominated the discussion
 I don't like talking to people I cannot "see" (either physically or in 'the mind's eye')
 I don't think they were clear on which candidate I was
 They failed to call at the appointed time
 One member seemed hostile toward me
 Other

24. Approximately what percentage of the Search Committees kept you informed of where you stood in their processes?

- 90-100% 76-89% 51-75% 21-50% 20% or less

25. How satisfied were you with how search committees in general kept you informed?

- Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Dissatisfied

26. What forms of information did the Search Committees request? (check all that apply)

26a.

26b. **When asked, did you comply?**

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answer questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of sermons | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide an essay(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DVD/CD of sermons given | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DVD of a service | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video-teleconference | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

27. Approximately what percentage of the Search Committee members visited you? 6

80-100% 60-79% 40-59% 20-39% < 19% No one visited me

28. Approximately how many Search Committee members were present to interact with you when you visited their church?

80-100% 60-79% 40-59% 20-39% < 19%

29. At anytime in your search process, did you receive any specific “feedback” on why that Search Committee chose not to continue with you?

Yes No, but would have liked feedback No, did not want any feedback

30. If you answered “Yes” to Question #29, was that feedback helpful?

Yes No

31. Were you on a Bishop’s List of Recommended Candidates (i.e., Must Consider, Interview, and/or Visit)?

Yes No I don’t know

32. Did you accept a call to be the Rector from a Church that received your name from a Bishop’s List?

Yes No I don’t know In my diocese, the Bishop’s List is the ‘process’

33. During your search process, how many notices did you receive from CDO of a potential opening or match between your profile and a search church?

None 1 2-3 4-6 7 or more

34. List the things that might make the Search Process more efficient (check all that apply):

Updated postings on the CDO “Positions Open Bulletin”
 Regional/Area-specific Openings [vice just Diocese to Diocese]
 Commonality of terminology among diocesan websites [Transition/ Deployment/

- Employment/ Openings, etc.]
- Commonality on the location of “openings” on diocesan websites
- Clarity on specifically who to contact first [the church, the Diocese—Bishop, Canon, Transition Officer?]
- Eliminate “prerequisite” paperwork (essays, etc.) by some dioceses to enter a search
- Updated status of postings on Diocesan Websites
- Search status updates on Church Websites
- A central site to manage Background Checks
- 4 to 6 “standard” questions for use by all Search Committees (does not preclude a few additional ‘specific’ questions tailored to a particular church’s situation)
- Other than an occasional missing member or two, all Search Committee members available for Interviews [except committee ‘site visits,’ done within the financial limits of the church]
- Periodic updates from churches on my status in a church’s search process
- Feedback on what I might do better/differently in other interviews
- Streamline the CDO “Positions Open Bulletin” page
- Transition Officer or Transition Coach validate that the Parish CDO Profile Skills/ Experience actually match what the parish is looking for
- A Guidebook for the Search Process

35. Of the items listed above, which item would have assisted you the most in your process and why?

36. Overall, in your most recent Rector search how satisfied are you with the Search Process?

- Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Not Satisfied Dissatisfied

37. Please use the space below to include areas not addressed in this survey, to clarify the reasons for some answers given (please refer to question #), or add any comments you feel might improve the search process. You may continue on the back. **Your comments are appreciated and will be considered confidential and with non-attribution.**

APPENDIX B

RESPONDENT SURVEYS

1

B. 2. Search Committee Surveys

Survey for Search Committees

All Responses Confidential
Non-attribution

Search Committees

1. From the time you activated your profile with CDO, how long did it take before you called your Rector?

1-6 mos. 7-12 mos. 13-18 mos. 19-24 mos. >24 mos.

2. Now that your Rector is installed, are you satisfied with his/her match to your church?

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Not Sure Yet Dissatisfied

3. How long has your new rector been in your church?

1-6 mos. 7-12 mos. 13-18 mos. 19-24 mos. >24 mos.

4. During your search, did any candidates reject your vestry's call?

Yes No [**skip to Question #6**]

5. Why did that candidate say, "No?" (check all that apply)

- Finances
- Said did not fit the church
- Did not like the town/location
- Felt there was too much conflict in the church
- Did not want to be a "second" choice
- Other

6. How many candidates did you present to your Vestry?

1 2 3 4 or more

7. Did you provide a recommended order of candidate preference to the Vestry?

Yes No Only provided one name

8. Which candidate actually accepted your call? Use the Vestry's order if you know it, otherwise use your Search Committee's order

1st Choice 2nd Choice 3rd Choice We only provided one name

9. List the resources you used in conducting your search (check all that apply):

- Published Diocesan Guidelines
- Diocesan Transition Officer (Bishop, Canon/Priest, Lay, as applicable to your diocese)
- Used a Diocesan "Transition Consultant"
- Sought advice/insight from an Interim Priest
- Notified other Priests of your availability
- Developed a "Parish Profile"
- Posted your Profile on the CDO Program website
- Posted your Profile on the parish website
- Advertised in trade publications (i.e., *The Living Church*, *Episcopallife*, etc.)
- Conducted Telephone Interviews
- Conducted Site Visits of prospective candidates
- Brought prospective candidates to your church

10. When using the candidates' CDO profile printouts, what parts were useful and not useful?

10a. USEFUL

10b. NOT USEFUL or could not understand the data

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Basic data [name, DOB, current status & salary] | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Skills & Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Work History | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Personal Ministry Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Leadership Description | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Did not use CDO Profiles

11. How useful were the candidates CDO profiles in your process?

Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Useful Did not use

12. How helpful was your Diocesan Transition Officer in this process?

Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Useful Did not use

13. What level of involvement would you like to have had with your diocese during your Search?

Much more Periodic support Only as requested No involvement

14. How helpful were diocesan written guidelines for Search Committees? (check all that apply)

Very Helpful Too complex Too cumbersome Have no written guidelines

15. Were there any recommendations or steps in the diocesan process that you would like to ELIMINATE? (Also applies if you had no written Diocesan "Process" (check all that apply)

- Asking for DVD/CDs of sermons
- Asking for DVDs of candidates celebrating a service
- Using CDO Profiles
- Using Video Teleconferences
- Asking for Written Essays or Answers to Questions
- Telephone Interviews
- Site Visits to Interview Candidates
- Being Required to Submit Only One Name to the Vestry
- Being Required to Submit More Than Four Names to the Vestry
- Only Receiving One Applicant from the Diocese
- Considering only Candidates submitted by the Diocese
- Setting Limits on the Number of Committee Members Going on the Site Visits

16. What forms of information did you request from rector candidates? (check all that apply) 4

- | | |
|--|--|
| 16a. | 16b. |
| | When asked did the candidate respond? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answer questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide copies of sermons | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide an essay(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DVD/CD of sermons given | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DVD Celebrating a service | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video-teleconference | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

17. How many members were on your Search Committee the whole time?

- 1-5 6-8 9-12 13 or more

18. Based on your experience was your committee size:

- Too Big Too Small Just Right

19. Of the members of your Search Committee, how many were also Vestry members?

- 1 2-3 4-5 6 or more

20. How many Telephone Interviews did you conduct?

- 1-4 5-9 10-15 15-19 >20 Did no Telephone Interviews
[If you did no Telephone Interviews, skip to Question # 27]

21. What was the lowest percentage of committee members present for a Telephone Interview?

- 80-100% 60-79% 40-59% 20-39% < 19%

22. Did you send candidates “prospective questions” for your Telephone Interview?

Yes No

23. Did you ask the same questions of all of the candidates?

Always Nearly Always Only a Few times

24. Given the limitations of time, were Telephone Interviews effective in getting to know the candidates and in sharing yourself with them?

Very Effective Somewhat Effective Not Effective

25. List the things that you LIKED about the Telephone Interviews (check all that apply):

- Heard what was important to the candidates
- Was able to get a sense of the candidates’ spirituality and prayer life
- Was able to clarify prior statements or comments made
- Gained a useful impression of the candidate
- Decided that we wanted to continue or discontinue with a particular candidate
- Other

26. List the things that you DISLIKED about the Telephone Interview (check all that apply):

- Only a few Committee Members were present (not counting 1 or 2 missing)
- We never really discussed the proposed questions
- One Committee Member dominated the discussion
- I don’t like talking to people I cannot “see” (either physically or in ‘the mind’s eye’)
- I don’t think we learned anything through the process
- The candidate failed to answer at the appointed time
- The candidate seemed hostile toward us
- Other

27. How often did you keep rector candidates informed of their status in your search process?

Twice a Month Once a Month After each phase As required

28. Through what media did you keep rector candidates informed of their status in your search process? (check all that apply)

- Email
 Letters
 Postcards
 Phone Calls

29. Did your Search Committee provide any specific “feedback” to candidates on why you chose not to continue with them (other than some variation of, “they did not fit”)?

- Yes No, but it might have helped some No, don’t think we should

30. How many candidates did your search committee visit?

- 1-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 >20 Did no site visits of candidates

**[If you did no site visits,
skip to Question #32]**

31. Approximately what percentage of the Search Committee members participated in site visits?

- 80-100% 60-79% 40-59% 20-39% < 19%

32. How many candidates did you invite to visit your church and community?

- 1 2-3 4-6 7-9 10 or more

33. What was the lowest percentage of Search Committee members to interact with any one visiting candidate?

- 80-100% 60-79% 40-59% 20-39% < 19%

34. Did the Diocese provide you a Bishop’s List of Recommended Candidates (i.e., Must Consider, Interview, and/or Visit)?

Yes No

35. Did you end up calling your Rector from that Bishop’s List?

Yes No In my diocese, the Bishop’s List is the ‘process’

36. List the things that might make the Search Process more efficient (check all that apply):

- CDO keep the “Positions Open Bulletin” updated
- Clarity on who the Church can contact [the candidates, the Diocese—Bishop, Canon, Transition Officer?]
- Keep the Transition Page of the Diocesan Website up-to-date
- Keep our own Parish Website updated
- A central site to manage Background Checks
- 4 to 6 “standard” questions for use by all Search Committees (does not preclude a few additional ‘specific’ questions tailored to a particular church’s situation)
- Other than an occasional missing member or two, all Search Committee members available for Interviews [except committee ‘site visits’]
- More guidance from our Diocesan Transition Officer or Transition Consultant
- Less contact by our Diocesan Transition Officer or Transition Consultant
- A Comprehensive Guidebook to provide how to conduct the search process

37. Of the items listed above, which would assist in the search process the most and why?

38. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Search Process?

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Not Satisfied Dissatisfied

39. Please use the space below to include areas not addressed in this survey, to clarify the reasons for some answers given (please refer to question #), or add any comments you feel might improve the search process. You may continue on the back. **Your comments are appreciated and will be considered confidential and with non-attribution.**

TRANSITION OFFICER SURVEYS

B. 3. Transition Officer Survey

*Transition Officer Survey***Diocesan Transition Officers**

These questions only refer to completed parish searches for a Full-time Rector. The process used for “Interims” or the Bishop’s targeted placement of a “Priest-in-Charge” (with potential to serve as a Rector after a specified discernment period) are not addressed in this survey. All answers should reflect evaluation of completed, full process Rector Searches in your diocese.

1. In the past 24 months, how many churches have concluded a successful rector search in your diocese?

1-4 5-8 9-12 13 or more None

2. Realizing that congregations differ in size and health, on average how long does it take from the time a church forms a Search Committee to calling a Rector?

1-6 mos. 7-12 mos. 13-18 mos. 19-24 mos. >24 mos.

3. In the past 5 years, how many times did candidates reject the vestry’s call?

1-2 3-4 5-6 7 or more None [**skip to Question #5**]

4. Why did the candidates say, “No?” (check all that apply)

- Accepted another call
- Finances
- Said did not fit
- Did not like the town/location
- Felt there was too much conflict in the church
- Did not want to be a “second” choice
- Other

5. How many “churches” are in your diocese?

25-35 36-50 51-90 91-130 >131

6. Who is the “primary” Transition Officer” [TO] for Search Committee contact? 2

Full-time Lay Part-time Lay Full-time clergy Part-time clergy Bishop

7. How frequently does the TO normally meet with Search Committees? (check all that apply)

Quarterly Once a month Twice As needed Rarely

8. Does your diocese offer Search Committees the services of a Search Consultant/Transition Coach (TC)?

Required, Fee-based Required, *free* Offered, Fee Offered, *free* None

9. Does the TO or TC help the Search Committee format their Parish Profile for CDO?

Yes No We do not list availabilities with CDO

10. In general how useful are the online CDO “Positions Open Bulletin” profiles?

Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Useful Do not use

11. Do you know if your contact data is correct with the online CDO “Diocesan Deployment Officer” page?

Yes No

12. Does your diocese require any “preliminary” work by potential candidates before they may enter into a search?

Yes* No [*if ‘Yes,’ is it noted on your Diocese Webpage? Yes]

13. When you have openings, what terminology does your diocese webpage use for Deployment/ Transitions?

Transitions Deployment Clergy Openings Employment Other Not sure

14. If you have or were to have an opening, where on your diocesan webpage do potential candidates find that information?

Direct connection on Main Page Secondary Link from the Main Page
 Tertiary Link We have no links for deployment I don't know

15. Who is responsible for maintaining up-to-date deployment information on your diocesan webpage?

Webmaster Transition Officer I don't know No info posted

16. Does your Diocese have published Search Committee guidelines for the Transition Process?

Yes No

17. List the resources your diocese encourages in conducting a rector search (check all that apply):

- Our diocese provides the names of the only candidates we want the Search Committee to see and discourage other inputs
- A list of Diocese-generated recommendations
- Our Bishop often provides a "Must Interview" list of candidates
- CDO generated computer profile matches
- Candidates recommended through the Regional/Area Transition Officers' Network
- We welcome unsolicited Profiles/Resumes
- We post Parish Profiles on the CDO Program website
- We post Parish Profiles on the Diocese website
- Post the Parish Profile on the Parish website
- Advertise in trade publications (i.e., *The Living Church*, *Episcopal Life*, etc.)
- Candidates answer specific questions
- Candidates provides copies of sermons
- Conduct Telephone Interviews
- Site Visits of prospective candidates
- Parish Visits by prospective candidates
- Candidates interview with Transition Officer (TO)
- Candidates interview with the Bishop

18. How do you require/desire candidates to enter into rector search?

Go directly to search committee Through TO only Require prior approval/paperwork

19. Does your diocese allow an Interim to stand as a candidate in the search process?
[Note: this does not include Interims intentionally placed as Priest-in-Charge with intent to discern a call at a later date and no search process]

Yes Occasionally Rarely but, essentially, no No

20. Does your diocese allow associate clergy in the parish to stand as a candidate in the search process?

Yes Yes, if they leave their position first Occasionally No

21. How many members routinely participate on a Search Committee?

3-5 6-7 8-10 11 or more

22. How many Vestry members routinely participate on the Search Committee?

1 2 3 4 or more None

23. Do you require/recommend Telephone Interviews?

Recommend them Require them Recommend NO Telephone Interviews
[If no Telephone Interviews, skip to Question # 28]

24. Do you recommend sending candidates “prospective questions” for Telephone Interviews?

Yes No

25. Do you believe parishes find Telephone Interviews effective in sharing themselves with the candidates and in getting to know the candidates?

Very Effective Somewhat Effective Not Effective

26. List the things that you LIKE about the Telephone Interviews (check all that apply):

Hear what was important to the candidates

- Get a sense of the candidates' spirituality and prayer life
- Provides an opportunity to clarify prior statements or comments made
- Gain a useful impression of the candidate
- Allows search committees to decide if they want to continue the process with particular candidates
- Other

27. List the things that you DISLIKE about the Telephone Interview (check all that apply):

- Takes too much time for too little informational gain
- Often too few Committee Members are present for the calls
- Proposed questions not always discussed
- Too easy for one committee member to dominate the discussion
- I don't think committees learn that much in the process
- Other

28. How often do you recommend Search Committees keep candidates informed of their status in the search process?

- Twice a Month Once a Month After each phase As required

29. Through what media should committees keep candidates informed of their status in the search process? (check all that apply)

- Email
- Letters
- Phone Calls
- Personal Visit

30. How many candidates do your search committees usually visit?

- 1-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 >20 Do no site visits of candidates
[If they do no site visits, skip to Question #32]

31. Approximately what percentage of the Search Committee members participate in site visits?

- 80-100% 60-79% 40-59% 20-39% < 19%

32. How many candidates do committees normally invite to visit their church and community?

1 2-3 4-6 7-9 10 or more

33. Does the diocese provided a “Bishop’s List of Recommended Candidates” (i.e., Must Consider, Interview, and/or Visit)?

Yes No

34. Do most churches call Rectors from that Bishop’s List?

Yes No In my diocese, the Bishop’s List is the ‘process’

35. List the things that might make the Search Process more efficient (check all that apply):

- CDO keep the “Positions Open Bulletin” updated
- Use common terminology for deployment/transition/openings/ jobs
- Search committees more attentive to keeping candidates informed
- Keeping Parish Websites updated
- Eliminate pre-requisite paperwork by candidates simply to enter a search in a diocese
- A central site to manage Background Checks
- Centralize 4 to 6 “standard” questions for use by all dioceses Search Committees
(does not preclude additional ‘specific’ questions tailored to a particular church’s situation)
- Place diocese-unique requirements and/or preferred contact procedures on CDO’s online “Diocesan Deployment Officer” page [in addition to TO addresses/phone #]

37. Overall, how satisfied are you with the current Search Process?

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Not Satisfied Dissatisfied

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles

An Episcopal priest (name withheld). "Singing the unemployment blues: Minimal help, outdated job listings and silence from potential employers test job seeker." *Episcopal Life* 18. no.1. (January 2007): 20.

Various authors: "The Chorus Expands." *Episcopal Life* 18, no.3. (March 2007):21.

Books

Biemer, P., and D. Trewin. (1997), "A Review of Measurement Error Effects on the Analysis of Survey Data," pp. 603–632 in L. Lyberg, P. Biemer, M. Collins, E. De Leeuw, C. Dippo, N. Schwarz, and D. Trewin (eds.), *Survey Measurement and Process Quality*, Wiley, New York.

Biemer, P., R. M. Groves, L. Lyberg, N. Mathiowetz, and S. Sudman (eds.) (1991), *Measurement Errors in Surveys*, Wiley, New York.

Bolles, Richard Nelson. *What Color is Your Parachute?*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2008.

Bolles, Richard N., Russell C. Ayers, Arthur F. Miller, and Loren B. Mead. *Your Next Pastorate: Starting the Search*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1990.

Carlson, David. "A Faster Pastor: Six Ways to Improve the Search Process." *Congregations* (Fall 2008): 36-37.

Carroll, Jackson W., *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Church Deployment Office. *Ministry Skill/Experience Manual*. Rev. 2006

Geitz, Elizabeth R. *Calling Clergy: A Spiritual & Practical Guide Through the Search Process*. New York: Church Publishing, Inc., 2007

Kennedy, Joyce Lain. *Job Interviews for Dummies*. 3rd edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc. 2008

Ketcham, Bunty. *So You're on the Search Committee*. In collaboration with Celia Allison Hahn. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2005.

McConnell, Theodore A. *The Search Committee Handbook: Finding A Pastor*. Minneapolis: Winston Press, Inc., 1986.

Mead, Loren B. *A Change of Pastors: ...And How It Affects Change In The Congregation*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2005.

Nicholson, Roger S. ed., *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1998.

Oswald, Roy M., James M. Heath, and Ann W. Heath. *Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions*. With a Forward by Robert T. Gribbon. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2003.

Oswald, Roy M., and Robert E. Friedrich, Jr. *Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1996.

Ullman, Richard L. *Choosing to Serve: Resources for the Calling Process*. Church Deployment Board of the Episcopal Church, 1991.

Vonhof, John. *Pastoral Search: The Alban Guide to Managing the Pastoral Search Process*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1999.

Voyle, Robert and Kim Voyle. *Assessing Skills and Discerning Calls: A Practical Manual for Search Consultants, Search Committees, and Vestries as They Assess Clergy Skills and Discern Calls to Ministry*. 2nd ed. Ventura, CA: Voyle Consulting, 1995.

Wilson, Charles R. *Search: a manual for those called to guide the parish through a process leading to the election of a rector*. Arvada, CO: Jethro Publications, 1993.

Church and Diocesan Resources

The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, Together with the Rules of Order for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church. Adopted and Revised in General Convention 1789-2009.

The Diocese of Virginia. *Search Process*. Rev., 2006.