

## **Acts 12:24 Churches Modified Appointment System**

1. Acts 12:24 uses a modified appointment system. While the conference retains the right to and makes the final appointment the system is modified in the following ways:

a. The process is described as less of an appointment process and more of a discernment process. The goal is to discern who God wants to be the next pastor of a church.

b. The goal of a discernment process is to get to the place where three parties are in agreement about God's next step: the Conference, the local church transition committee, and the candidate.

c. The discernment process does not require, nor should it include, a candidate preaching a trial sermon before the church. However, both the conference and the transition committee should have access to sample preaching of the candidate.

d. The discernment process seeks to maintain the primary value of the appointment system which is that a pastor gets to start in a new church without there having been a congregational vote in which a percentage of the congregation has voted against the candidate.

e. The appointment system also protects the church from a group of people working behind the scenes to gather enough votes to fire the pastor. Pastoral transitions happen through the conference and not through local church politics.

2. It is important that the superintendent leading the process and the local church transition committee be on the same page as they go through the process. The onus is on the superintendent to make as many trips as necessary to a local church to build a relationship of cooperation and trust with the transition committee.

3. The superintendent must repeatedly describe the process to the committee until they understand it and accept it. Here are the key points of the process:

A. The Conference (Regional MEG) will develop a list of candidates. From that list they will choose 3 -5 candidates to interview.

B. The MEG will choose the best candidate and take that candidate to the church. There will NOT be multiple candidates presented to the church from which they may choose.

C. The transition committee will meet with the candidate and spouse and will talk as long as needed, but this is not a job interview. The transition committee will not get to vote "yes" or "no" at the end of the meeting. At the end of the conversation the candidate will be sent out of the room and the superintendent will ask: "Are there any major red flags that say this candidate should not be the pastor of this church?" If after discussion it is determined that there are no agreed upon red

flags that would disqualify the candidate, the church will then be offered to the candidate.

- D. The candidate may say “yes” or “no” or “give me some time to pray about this” (this is the typical response.)

4. The conference recognizes that no system of pastoral transition is perfect, but we want to maintain the strengths and integrity of the appointment process, while being flexible when considering the needs of the local church.

### **Using the “Acts 12:24 Modified Appointment System” for pastoral transitions.**

There are two basic systems of pastoral transitions, either the congregation chooses (the call system) or the conference chooses (the appointment system). Neither system is perfect, both have advantages and disadvantages.

The primary advantages of the appointment are:

1. We want to a pastor to begin a new appointment without having a segment of the congregation saying to themselves, “this pastor was not my choice.”
2. The appointment system protects the pastor and the church from having a group of dissidents arise within the congregation who are working to divide the congregation and gain enough votes to get rid of the pastor.
3. The appointment system allows the conference to intervene before conflict becomes destructive in a congregation.
4. The appointment system is the ONLY source of power for the conference to influence the future of a local congregation.

Guidelines for using the appointment system

- NEVER allow a board or a congregation to vote regarding a transition.
- Never take more than one candidate at a time to a board to give the board a choice between candidates.
- We DO NOT allow a sample sermon to be preached to the congregation. We DO work to see that the board has some access to the preaching of the candidate, either from on line sources or working to provide a CD of the candidates preaching.
- REPEAT at EVERY meeting with the church board a simple paragraph explaining the process. The more you repeat this the more comfortable the board will be with the process.

Say something like:

*Acts 12:24 Churches has a modified appointment system for pastoral transitions. In the transition there are three parties, the local church, the candidate and the conference. Our goal is to get to the point where all three parties agree that this transition is God's will. In this system the MEG board will interview at least three candidates and will choose one and bring that candidate to meet with the local church board.*

*At that meeting you will be able to ask the candidate any question you choose, and the candidate will be able to ask the board any question they might have. After the conversation is done we will send the candidate out of the room and I will ask the board: "Are there any red flags that say this candidate should not be pastor of this church.*

*This is not a job interview. The board will not get to vote on whether to accept this person or not because we have an appointment system. But we will have an honest and frank discussion. If the board agrees that there are no red flags, we will offer the church to the candidate. If it is determined that there are red flags which would indicate that this is the wrong candidate for the church, the MEG will then bring a second candidate to the church.*