

Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry by Gerald Teichrob

The Core Idea - *“Healthier church, Healthier search.”*

Transition is primarily a meaningful season of congregational spiritual formation. In an intentional Transitional ministry the local church chooses to engage a clearly defined process to seek greater health prior to engaging in a Pastoral Search. This process effectively led by a specially trained, competent Transitional Pastor/Leader who helps the church take the time to engage this process well and who ensures effective pastoral leadership and guidance through the process.

Transitional Pastor ≠ Interim Pastor

The Transitional Pastor/Leader model approaches pastoral leadership transitions within the local church from a different posture than the Interim model. In general an Interim Pastor comes alongside a church for a season to provide core pastoral services for a congregation while the church is searching for a new Pastor. The Transitional Pastor/Leader fulfills a broader purpose as outlined below.

III The Intentional Transition Process

1. It is understood that Transition is a very deliberate process led by a specialist who will guide the church through a clear process toward greater health. This is spiritual work that is not a sideline to providing pastoral services, it is primary.
2. There will be a time period specifically for church health assessment to identify both strengths and growth areas. There will a strategy developed to address these growth areas. These growth areas will be addressed *prior to* the pastoral search so that the church is able to search for a new Pastor from the greatest possible posture of health.
3. There is a clear understanding from the outset that this is a 6 - 18 month process. The church as a whole must be willing to embark on this journey. It is very important for the staff and congregation to understand and affirm this aspect of Transition.
4. The Transitional pastor is NEVER a potential candidate for the vacant Lead Pastor position.
5. The Transitional Pastor will be an active and leading participant with the church Board.
6. The assessment, when completed, will be presented to the entire congregation for their understanding and input. There may be some items from the assessment that remain at the Board level due to sensitivities that need to be managed carefully.
7. While the Transitional process is being pursued, care and diligence for the day to day operations and ministry of the church is also provided. Church staff are given support, guidance and direction. Ministry health is pursued, stability is established. Transition does not put the church “on hold.”
8. The church will clearly identify the new Pastor’s role in creating, championing and stewarding mission and vision prior to engaging in the search process. Three basic options related to this are:
 - Pastor as THE visionary

- Pastor collaborates with leaders in establishing or refining mission and vision
- Pastor resonates with a church that already has a clearly established mission and vision.

9. Once search begins, the church will not only continue to work on its own health, it will ensure that any prospective pastor is coming to the church from a place of health and wellness. The District Office is a key partner in the pursuit of health.

10. The Transitional Pastor will overlap with the new pastor for an effective orientation and hand off of ministry leadership. It is important for the new pastor to understand the Transition process that the church has experienced.