

The Billy Graham School COMPASS

Navigating Ministry & Missions

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Building a Great Staff

I served as a senior pastor for fourteen years prior to joining the faculty of Southern Seminary. I also spent a few years as a church staff member during transitional times in my ministry. Those years as a staff member were by no means difficult years (I served with kind, supportive pastors), but I learned much about being a staff member. Now, twelve years working with churches as a professor and consultant have taught me even more about staffing. Here are a few of those lessons. . . .

First, *do your homework when hiring a staff member.* Check references well. Review statistics about the churches where applicants formerly served. Do background and credit checks. Talk to other pastors and staff members who may know the applicant. Do not assume that the résumé always tells the whole story.

Second, *think person before position.*

Here, Jim Collins is right in his book, *Good to Great*. Get the right people on the bus, and then figure out where they should sit on the bus. The right person can always shift as needed, but the wrong person can be continually problematic regardless of position.

Third, *affirm staff members as often as possible.* Many staff serve faithfully, diligently, and quietly – without ever expecting a specific word of affirmation. It is precisely those leaders that you should want to honor and bless. Let them know privately and publicly how grateful you are that they are a part of the team.

Fourth, *pray together as a team.* Too much praying in a church is only reactive praying; that is, we pray only in response to needs. A church staff should be praying for each other and for the church *before* needs develop.

Finally, *avoid as much as possible the “silo syndrome.”* Every piece of the church puzzle should fit well with the other pieces, so

that the entire picture of the church is clear and healthy. For most churches, however, each piece operates independently, with no connection to the other pieces. The result is frustration for staff and for church members. Pastors, work hard to build a team so that no one is left in a silo.

I pray that you will find this edition of the *Compass* helpful to you as you enlist and lead a church staff. Please let us know if the Billy Graham School might help you in any way.

Chuck Lawless
Dean, The Billy Graham School of
Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth



“Pastors, work hard to build a team so that no one is left in a silo.”

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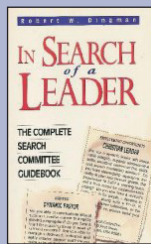
FOR THE TRUTH. FOR THE CHURCH. FOR THE WORLD. FOR THE GLORY OF GOD



Recommended Resources

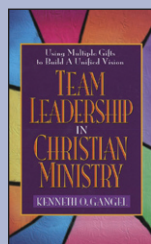
Topic of the Month:

Mentoring and Discipleship



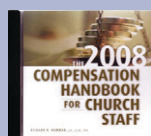
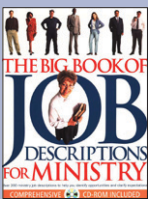
Robert W. Dingman
In Search of a Leader: The Complete Search Committee Guidebook

Michael Anthony and James Estep Jr., eds
Management Essentials for Christian Ministries



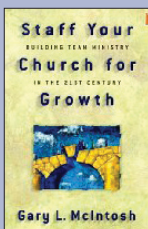
Kenneth O. Gange
Team Leadership in Christian Ministry

Larry Gilbert
The Big Book of Job Descriptions



Richard Hammar
The 2008 Compensation Handbook for Church Staff

Gary L. McIntosh
Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century



Books can be found at:
Lifeway.com or Amazon.com

In Search of a Leader

Robert Dingman's text, *In Search of a Leader*, offers some very practical suggestions for churches and/or universities which are engaged in the search for a new pastor/president. While the text is written in order to appeal to a wide range of institutions, many of the principles can be used for churches looking for guidance in the process of selecting the next leader of their congregation. Dingman covers topics from sustaining the pastorless congregation during the search process to forming the search committee and finally knowing how to wrap up the search and welcome the new organizational leader.

Perhaps one of the most useful ideas presented in *In Search of a Leader* is in chapter four where Dingman coaches congregations to achieve clarity regarding congregational identity and vision in order to achieve alignment between pastoral leadership and organizational goals. Dingman draws on the leadership wisdom of Peter Drucker and pastoral scholars like Ted Ward and Lyle Schaller to provide a solid base of expertise to his writing. While most Baptist congregations would

balk at Dingman's reference that some denominations have considered female pastors or husband/wife pastor teams, Dingman follows that section with a clear, concise description of the scriptural qualifications of pastors from 1 Timothy and Titus (Dingman 1994, 74-77).

Robert Dingman has over thirty years experience in executive recruitment and founded The Dingman Company specializing in executive searches. (www.dingman.com). In general, his *In Search of a Leader* will provide valuable coaching for search committees seeking to efficiently and effectively manage the pastor search process.

By Jesse Adkinson, Ed.D, Assistant Professor for Christian Education, SBTS

Dingman, Robert W. 1994. *In Search of a Leader: The Complete Search Committee Guidebook*. Westlake Village, CA: Lakeside Books.

From a "Happy" Staff Member: A Letter to Pastors

By Dan Odle, Associate Pastor,
Music & Worship, Highview Baptist
Church, Louisville, KY.

Dear Pastor,

We love being on your staff. It is a great joy for us to serve you, but you may have noticed there are times when the great relationship we have can be strained. You may have even wondered during those times exactly what we expect from you. Here are just a few things we really need from you to make us "happy" staff members.

Clarity. The first thing we look for from you is clear direction. We all want to follow someone who knows where he's going, and when you chart a clear course for the future, it gives us confidence and focus. When that message is communicated clearly and consistently (thought you would like the alliteration), we work more intentionally

and with greater purpose.

Input. We serve on your team, but we also want you to value our input for key decisions. When you include us in the discussion – instead of simply handing down decisions – it helps us buy in much more quickly. We will honor the final decision as the will of the team, but knowing you have sought out – and listened to – our input is invaluable to us.

Protection. While we value the freedom you give us to run our ministries, we also need to know that we're operating under your authority and your protection. We're willing to stand with you in difficult and even unpopular decisions, but it's imperative that you stand with us as well. It emboldens our service when we know you support, both publicly and privately, the work we do. In a very real sense, the protection you give us by your blessing on

our ministry is the very source of the freedom we desire.

A pastor. Finally, we need you to be our pastor, too. We want you to hold us accountable, to disciple us, and to minister to us – to pray with us and for us in good times and in difficult situations. Often, our families can get caught in the crossfire of our busy schedules and the needs of so many other church members. You can be a great source of encouragement for them as you lead them and pastor them as well.

In the end, this is much more than just a professional relationship; we are co-laborers in Christ. We love being part of this ministry team, but we know that every great team needs a great leader. We understand that you are the pastor. We not only respect that, we need it.

Sincerely,
Your Staff

CHURCH HEALTH 101



When to hire staff?

Most church growth experts say that a healthy staff ratio is the equivalent of one full-time staff member for every 150 attenders.

Smaller churches typically spend 50-60 percent of their budget on staffing; larger churches spend closer to 40-50 percent.

A church should be looking for staff *all the time*; that is, church leaders should always be watching for persons who might make good staff members when an opening is available.

Part-time staff can work effectively when the church has several ministry needs/areas to address.

– For more information, see “10 Things to Consider Before Your Church Hires Another Staff Member” at http://mondaymorninginsight.com/index.php/site/comments/10_things_to_consider_before_your_church_hires_another_staff_member/.

Motivating A Staff

Church staff serve more faithfully and more effectively when they feel appreciated. Here are several ways that some church leaders show appreciation to their staff:

- Giving a Christmas bonus in addition to a small Christmas gift
- Remembering staff birthdays and anniversaries; giving them both days off
- Remembering birthdays of the staff member's spouse
- Scheduling an annual staff retreat at a nice lodge, and then giving staff time to relax
- Seeking input from their staff when making significant decisions
- Taking staff members to lunch unexpectedly
- Giving a surprise day off
- Arranging child care to facilitate a “date night” for the staff and their spouses
- Providing funding and time for professional development
- Taking the initiative to pray with staff members

RESEARCH SHOWS

A 2007 study of 2100 churches revealed this information about churches and their staff:

- On average, 48 percent of the church's budget is devoted to salaries.
- About 38 percent of the churches provide additional salary to the pastor and staff to help with social security payments.
- On average, part-time music/choir/worship directors earn about \$20.00 per hour.
- The average of salary and benefits for full-time youth pastors was \$50,824.
- 104 of the churches surveyed had a full-time executive or administrative pastor. Slightly over 60 percent serve in churches with an annual income of over \$1 million, and about 40 percent serve in churches with a worship attendance of over 1,000.

Source: Richard Hammar, *The 2008 Compensation Handbook for Church Staff* (Carol Stream, IL: Your Church, 2008).

Staff Q & A – Feedback from an administrative assistant

1. What is the role of an administrative assistant?

The primary role is to support the minister with loyalty. In supporting the senior pastor, I feel it is my role to keep him informed about our members' lives as well as our large staff and their families, take any responsibilities I can for him so he can focus on preparing his message, protect his time in the office to do the most important things first, and be proactive.

2. What secrets have you learned about how to be a better administrative assistant?

First, develop a plan of communication so that I do not have to interrupt the minister every time something comes up that needs his attention, unless of course it is an emergency—but not many things are on the emergency level. Second, have a sense of humor.

3. What suggestions would you have for pastors in regard to being a “boss” to an administrative assistant?

Respect the assistant, and “go to bat” for us when necessary. Everyone makes mistakes, and it is important to an administrative assistant to know that the support from the pastor is there as well.

By Mary Stephenson, Grace Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee

BGS HELPS

Biblical Church Growth: The Blog and Writings of Dr. Chuck Lawless

Blog, Articles, Books, MP3s, Recommended Resources, Book Reviews, Links

<http://www.biblicalchurchgrowth.com>

The Dehoney Center for Urban Ministry Training

We have recently started a center for training ministers to reach the cities. If you are interested in the center or our Certificate of Urban Ministry, please contact us at

UrbanTraining@sbts.edu

Need a good evangelistic tract?

<http://www.sbts.edu/pdf/GRACE.pdf>

Need help with staffing issues?

National Association of Church Business Administration • <http://www.nacba.net/>

Church Staffing.com • www.churchstaffing.com

Church Law and Tax Report • www.churchlawtoday.com

Monday Morning Insight • www.mondaymorninginsight.com

The Southern Baptist Convention Job Bank • <http://www.sbc.net/jobs/default.asp>

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