

you. This is a new day in Baptist life in terms of such matters as advertising and negotiating. Don't hesitate to be candid about your gifts and your needs. Are their "deal-breakers" from your point of view: salary, school systems, your spouse's employment?

**7 PRIDE.** Ministers, by virtue of the up-front nature of their work, sometimes have huge egos. A healthy self-confidence is necessary. Self-absorption and hypocrisy is another matter entirely. Putting your best foot forward is to be expected. But, don't pretend to be better than or different than you are. You will be a better pastor if you have awareness of and grace toward your own short-comings as well as the sins, failures and mistakes of the laity with whom you will work. Pretense plays itself out in many ways in this process, from claiming degrees you haven't completed to hiding important truths about yourself. In our information-rich, background-checking world, you can be sure that your sins will find you out. Churches that can be wonderfully gracious during the process of ministerial courtship can become understandably graceless when they discover they have been deceived.

**8 PANIC AND IMPATIENCE.** Desperation does not put you in a good negotiating position. Practice what you preach: Patience. Internal Peace. Contentment. Serenity. Rick McClatchey, Coordinator for CBF of Texas says, "I think that most ministers do not allow themselves enough time to go through the process." A successful search will take a minimum of six months and can take over two years. Don't resign where you are serving. Do the work there to which you were called, and do it honorably and well. It is easier to get a job if you have a job. Seminarians should not wait until their last semester to start looking.

**9 NOT DOING YOUR HOMEWORK.** Check your own references. Ask their permission before you use them. Keep them current. A myth is that "important" people make the best references. That is not necessarily true. Most committees would rather hear from someone who can actually talk about your previous ministry, your strengths and weaknesses. Also,

an interview works in two directions. You need to ask people who would know about the church you are considering, including the minister who just left. No congregation is all bad or all good, and you set yourself and the church up for problems if you only believe the best or the worst. Only an unhealthy congregation is afraid of communication. Ask the committee probing questions. What are their expectations? Remember that the grass that looks so green to you looked brown to the pastor who just left. How will the church and you know if you have done a good job? Be prepared for the committee to ask predictable questions. Negotiate everything before the job is finalized. When you are unpacking the moving boxes is no time to ask if the church pays the utilities on the parsonage or how much vacation time you will receive. Let the search committee know if you are withdrawing from the process.

**10 FAILING TO LEAD.** Churches that once had 20 resumes to choose from now have dozens, sometimes hundreds! This is an interesting time in Baptist life and in many ways this is a "buyer's market" for churches. Your leadership actually begins in the search process. Avoiding the "mistaques" above is a good start. Shrewd leaders answer the questions they want to have asked. You will have some clues about your ability to work with this congregation by the way they respond to you during your conversations. Churches need good pastors.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13: 34

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"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

# 10 MISTAQUES

Clergy Job Hunters  
Make 100000  
often



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## 1 IF YOUR CHURCH WORK IS NOT A CALLING, BOTH YOU AND THE CHURCH EMPLOYING YOU WILL BE MISERABLE.

Are you responding to a longing God has placed in your heart, or looking for a job? Working in a church involves both, but never ever let the latter get the upper hand. Does the church which you are considering need a preacher, an administrator, a pastor, a musician, a teacher? What are they asking for? Which are you? Nobody is everything. To what has God called you? When the going gets tough, and it will, if you are uncertain of your vocation, you will bail out. Pray. Seek the counsel of trusted friends. Read scripture. Discern the will of God. Someone wisely said, "A need does not constitute a call." A committee which is interested in you, and which appeals to your vanity which is not necessarily the voice of God. Most ministers have both a call to something and a call away from something. Be spiritually alert.

## 2 LACK OF WORK ETHIC.

There is no substitute for a combination of the Holy Spirit and hustle. Leave either out of the equation, and you diminish the likelihood of a successful search or a thriving ministry. If you feel it is time for a change, get out your resume. God can work in spite of us, but, ordinarily, God works through us. Don't let the people helping you work harder than you do. Make phone calls. Use on-line services that connect Baptist churches and clergy. Two are:

[www.thefellowship.info/leaderconnect](http://www.thefellowship.info/leaderconnect)

[www.ministryconnect.net](http://www.ministryconnect.net)

Baptists Today has become an important part of the Reference and Referral component of moderate Baptist life. Subscribe and visit its website to see churches that are advertising for pastoral staff.

[www.baptiststoday.org](http://www.baptiststoday.org).

Visit face-to-face with people who can help you in this process. Network. Make new friends. Cultivate old

acquaintances. If a denominational or CBF employee is trying to help several people who seem to be equally gifted, and one sets up an appointment to introduce himself or herself, and the others merely say, "Call me when you are in my area," which do you think will more likely come to mind when a church asks for help? Once you have established a relationship with someone who is attempting to help you, maintain contact. Most "Reference and Referral" offices do not keep resumes in perpetuity.

When a committee connects with you and makes a request (e.g., tapes and videos), provide it for them in a timely fashion. How you approach this endeavor can be a clue to how you do the work of ministry. At the same time, do not neglect your current calling. When you are called to a new position, let the people who have been trying to help you know your good news.

## 3 SABOTAGING YOUR OWN SUCCESS.

Life is complicated, and we don't always know why we do the things we do, but this is a good time in a minister's life to get help from a coach, mentor, therapist, friend, counselor or spouse who will be honest. Some ministers show up for appointments late and in blue jeans. Turn off your cell phone during the interview. Some management consultants say you have seven seconds to make a good first impression. This is not rocket science! If you fail to exhibit basic social skills, maybe you are not Christ's or the church's best representative.

## 4 SUB-STANDARD RESUMES.

Some resumes are so poorly written and presented that they beg to be thrown in the trash. You are writing your resume for laity, not for your seminary professors. Most laity don't care about your career objective to work with "a community of commonality." Resumes should be no more than two pages and should be visually appealing. Keep the language simple. Your resume will be photocopied, so use fonts that are easily read. Present yourself positively. What special gifts or talents do you have that would benefit a congregation? If you have some obvious problem in your resume, a cover letter is essential. If you are

currently unemployed or have been in your current ministry location less than two years, some word of explanation is necessary. You are trying to get the attention of a committee who actually wants someone to get their attention! If you have an inferior resume, it indicates one or all of the following:

- that you do not know the difference between mediocrity and excellence, or
- that you have no friends or family who can or will give you sound advice, or
- that you will not listen to good advice.

None of those are good options.

## 5 LACK OF SELF-AWARENESS.

Your life should reflect your ministry aspirations. There is often a tension between a minister's actual track record and his/her potential. If you have a history of difficulty at several churches, the best thing you can do to improve your qualifications for your next church might be to hunker down and work through difficulties where you are serving now. If you want to pastor a large church, grow the church where you are currently serving. Sometimes, men and women want to serve in a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship church when they have never attended CBF meetings. Who are you? What are your skill sets? Every church is not the same. It is gratifying to be courted by a church, but beware of succumbing to flattery!

## 6 DISHONESTY.

Integrity sometimes goes out the window when people are looking for jobs. Clarissa Strickland, Reference and Referral Coordinator for national CBF, says, "Don't try to be what you think a committee is looking for. Search committees have a strange way of expecting the same person they interviewed to be the one to show up for the job." If you don't know who you are, how can you lead a congregation? You need to have self-understanding of your own history, your gifts, your weaknesses, your ethics and your theology. If you have to begin this process by avoiding reasonable transparency, then this may not be the church for