

Appendix 8 A meeting of the Pastorate Call Group and the Minister

In the context of discovering God's will regarding the filling of a vacant pastorate, the care taken over a meeting of the pastorate call group and the minister is vital. When a candidate visits a pastorate, there should be more than one opportunity for informal contact with a wide range of members (including children and young people) and, if possible, adherents.

1. The preparation

Ensure that all relevant papers are available. This will comprise correspondence; minister's personal profile (not for general publication); pastorate profile including draft Terms of Settlement. The pastorate call group should include a good mix of ethnicity, age and gender if possible. A comfortable venue, with freedom from distraction and a friendly atmosphere should be chosen. Well before the meeting the Interim Moderator(s) should consult with the pastorate call group and the minister to decide what form the meeting will take. It is important that this is not determined solely by the pastorate call group and that the minister has significant input into the arrangements for the meeting and is happy with them before the meeting takes place. Prior to the meeting the pastorate call group with the Interim Moderator(s) should agree topics they wish to cover in the meeting with the minister and the Interim Moderator(s) should consult the minister about topics s/he wishes to raise in the discussion. It might be helpful if the Interim Moderator arranged an exchange of this information prior to the meeting.

2. The meeting

An Interim Moderator should chair the meeting. Every interview, however formal or informal, has a recognisable sequence, which should be followed:

- a) Opening. It is important to set the scene, to spend time in prayer together, to confirm introductions. Make clear the agenda to be followed; agree on what notes will be taken, by whom and for whom.
- b) Exchange of information. The questions and discussion should cover all topics and at each stage the candidate should be able to ask as well as answer. Only by frank exchange of views can God's will for pastorate and minister be discovered.
- c) Closing. Even when the time is pre-arranged, the conclusion of such a meeting must be handled with care. No major matter should be overlooked.
- d) It is important to make clear what the next stages will be, and the probable timing.

3. The assessment

It is vital to stop, think and pray when the candidate has withdrawn, before any conversation, discussion or assessment is begun. Those present should gauge their impressions against the list of factors previously agreed, such as training, qualifications, experience, presentation, motivation etc. Additional factors will now be apparent following the meeting and will probably affect the assessment. It may be useful to score a candidate under each heading as good, acceptable or problematic but not everyone will follow this method. A consensus should be sought in order that a clear recommendation can be made. The pastorate call group should have confidence in the candidate as a prospective minister before issuing an invitation to preach with a view.