

work that glorifies God when the candidate searches for the holy in the ordinary.

Surely the “Expectations” document will arouse in the candidate a troubled sense of the immensity of the decision to accept the call to ministry. Is it possible to love others as Jesus loves us? Can one stop allowing small problems to get in the way of loving other believers? Can anyone truly love enemies? Jesus Christ commands that we love them and He will give the strength to do it. Through genuine humility, the practice of spiritual disciplines and openness to spiritual direction from other spiritually mature persons, the candidate becomes a visible reminder of the presence of God. As the life of the candidate is transformed, it gives hope that lives in the parish will also be transformed by the ministry of this candidate.

One of the most crucial tasks of the Provincial Elders’ Conference is the matching of pastors and congregations in the preparation of call lists. There is joy and satisfaction in witnessing pastor-congregation relationships develop fruitfully and disappointment and pain in dealing with those that turn out otherwise.

Will Harstine

The expectations of the PECs as set forth in the main article hold no surprises. Be good, do good work, be a good team player, work for the good of the denomination. That pretty much sums it up, and who will quarrel with these solid expectations? But when spelled out, these expectations say too much in some places, too little in others, and nothing at all

The power of serious and frank exchanges between pastors and boards enables the covenant relationships to develop in a healthy manner. The PECs expectations provide a framework to help candidates become more skillful in developing healthy relationships.

I believe the “Expectations” document will strengthen the ordained ministry in our provinces by expanding the insight the candidate brings to ministry. The guidance this document offers to a candidate speaks to the agreement between believers that is so essential that Christ places it as a condition of God’s response. If the candidate realizes that he or she is seeking or avoiding the guidance provided by the “Expectations” document, that in itself will be helpful in providing more self-awareness about the call to ministry. Deeper insights come when individuals listen to other believers and examine personal beliefs in the light of standards such as the “Expectations” document. The PECs expectations will lead the ministerial candidate to Christ’s expectations: unite in service, go to the world and love one another.

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in at least one important area. First the “too much.”

At a number of places in the document one gets the clear message about the need to be ready to move anywhere in the world in order to answer a “call.” The pastor is itinerant; that’s the idea. I sense denominational frustration here reflecting, no doubt, the

current difficulties that typically surround almost every “call” situation, to say nothing of a growing and healthy sensitivity to the demands of contemporary family life that places many calls beyond the realm of realistic consideration. The PECs need to realize this as a fact of modern life and not make it sound as if only those willing to uproot their families continuously are qualified for ordained ministry. The Church is served best not when pastors are moved all over the chess board every few years but when pastors learn the art of leadership and exercise it effectively in fairly long-term pastorates.

Second, the “too little.” There simply is not enough emphasis in this document upon the spiritual life of a pastor, leading outward into theological and exegetical study, and then onward towards the spiritual leadership of a congregation. Above all else, the pastor is expected these days to provide a spiritual foundation upon which all of a congregation’s activities will be constructed. The cornerstone of this foundation is the regular corporate worship of God in Christ Jesus, by far the most frequent activity of every congregation. The document would be strengthened if it were to dwell more clearly upon the pastor as spiritual person and as spiritual leader who challenges a congregation weekly with regard to its liturgical potential. To say this another way, the document should declare that the primary expectation of the Church is that the pastor be a well-grounded, competent, inspiring and faithful leader of the people at worshi

Third, the “nothing at all.” Would you believe, after all the weeping and wailing at top levels over numerical decline, after repeated attempts over the past thirty years to discover viable methods of church growth, not one word in this document addresses evangelism or outreach, except perhaps for an oblique reference. I thought the time had come to discourage maintenance ministry and replace it with a concept of ministry that reaches beyond the walls. If so, let’s expect candidates for ordination to have “church growth eyes”. Let’s expect those who believe they are called of the Lord to demonstrate that they know that the Lord calls his people to minister to the world and to reach the lost. Let’s expect someone seeking ordination to have had evangelistic and social action experiences. Let’s ordain no one who believes the job is only to shepherd the flock.

Many good things are said in this document. But the overall tone is one of protecting the denomination and producing traditional pastoral care type leaders. The document could become stronger if it were to reflect some of the concerns I have mentioned. May I also suggest that the word “minister” never be used when “ordained minister” or “clergyperson” or “pastoral leader” is intended. All of the baptized are ministers. This document is directed towards the baptized who seek to serve as *ordained* ministers.

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