

YOUTH MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE: SUMMARY REPORT

Church

April 28, ____

I. Principles of the Search

The numbered items below came into the candidate's description either from the committee that developed the job description, from the elders as a group before the search committee was appointed, from the search committee itself, or from informal comments made by other people and passed along to the search committee.

These factors go beyond the assumed traits expected for youth ministers: good character, good social skills, able to establish rapport with young people, biblically sound, intelligent in ways that pertain to ministry work and doctrinal understanding, balanced in being an activist and a learner, articulate; willing to listen to peers, parents, teens, and other church workers; spiritually mature, a finisher, a planner who does not try to "work out of his hip pocket," flexible, self-motivated, a team player, someone who can balance fun with seriousness and knows when and how much of each is appropriate, someone that does not have large ego needs, someone who can trust without being gullible, a natural leader who can let other people do things, a person with a sense of propriety in talk and dress as well as personal associations particularly with those of the opposite sex, someone who can keep confidentialities. Many of these traits are degree matters, which means they strengthen over time. Some of them are difficult to assess before the fact; for now, they can be addressed by comments from references, inferred from basic behavior, and assumed in mutual trust until experience can give verification.

1. preference for someone with experience if possible given the budget restraints on salary and benefits package, the fact that this is a new ministry position, and that the present youth program is only moderately extensive. We felt some leeway had to exist on the experience factor also because youth ministers are younger in ministry. Typically youth ministers do not do youth ministry for more than eight or ten years. Consequently, track records comparable to other forms of ministry are not as easy to establish.

2. preference for a married man. All things being equal, being in a good marriage should create greater stability and a generally more settled personality. It also provides another arena for evaluation of relational skills.

3. need for someone who has finished his primary ministerial preparation. Since the position is full time, we wanted someone who would not be tempted to make this ministry a sidelight to education. Continuing education, seminary and workshop attendance relevant to ministry would be acceptable if kept at a level that did not distract from responsibilities; such work could in fact enhance effectiveness if it relates to our ministry needs.

4. preference for someone with musical talent and athletic ability, or at least has a healthy interest in them. He would do well to be conversant with the interests that teenagers typically have.

II. Procedures of the Search

1. We used “net-working” to create a list of prospects instead of advertising the job broadly. Even then we did not rely on third parties and references as sole sources of preliminary information on candidates. We preferred first to approach men we already knew personally. Committee members themselves knew a good number of candidates and grouped them in two groups, contacting the preferred prospects first. Since _____ is in a somewhat unique situation with a Christian college nearby and people from the school were even involved in the search itself, we also solicited names from people like _____, vice president for student affairs at _____ and professor of youth ministry; and _____, the academic dean and an elder at _____.

2. With one exception the initial phone interviews were done by Virgil Warren because he knew all the candidates we wanted to approach. It was thought that being contacted by someone that the young men knew would increase the likelihood of a favorable hearing. He also did the phone work with references for the same reasons.

3. When it became evident that the committee was interested in talking seriously with candidate #7 below, a son-in-law of _____, the minister excused himself from committee discussions, telephone interviews, and the like.

III. Interviewing Process

1. Candidate #1, _____, was interviewed over the phone by _____ on the evening of March 21. He graduated two years ago from _____, was a better than average student, is single but plans to be married by the end of this year, has held a growing part-time ministry with junior high kids for nine months in a church of some eight hundred, wants to be able to preach if possible. He has a strong prospect of replacing the present full-time minister of youth, who will begin working with singles and young marrieds. If this possibility does not work out for some reason, he might be interested in talking with us; the decision on that option will take place in May.

2. Candidate #2, _____, was interviewed over the phone by _____ on March 22. He graduated from _____ in 2020, was a good student, held an effective part-time youth minister in an area church during his last years of college, is married to a fine young lady, is energetic and well-liked in his present circumstance. Since things are going so well where he is, he wants to stay for several years; consequently, he is not available to us or to some other congregations that have expressed interest in his coming to minister with them.

3. Candidate #3, _____, was interviewed over the phone by _____ on about March 24. He graduated from _____ in 2022, played soccer, was in music ensembles, was on camp teams, had a part-time youth ministry while at _____, plays trombone and some keyboard, has been a full-time intern with a church of over 2200 members. Strongly anticipates being brought aboard full-time by that church, the decision to be made in May. This candidate expressed some interest because of the

preaching possibility that the plans for a contemporary service might afford, but he really wants to be part of a large, multiple-ministry staff because of future plans to join two other men in planting such a church.

The committee planned an interview time with him when he came to campus during the last phase of our search time. At midday, however, he left a note saying that he could not come to the meeting we had all planned our schedules for, so we used that time to finalize a recommendation without further attempts to talk with him. The level of interest in our situation was not particularly strong in light of the virtual certainty of his going full-time with the very sort of congregation he wanted to learn from.

4. Candidate #4, _____, a 2022 graduate of ___, was first contacted about March 27 over the phone by _____. When it was known that he would be on campus at ___ with a group of prospective students, plans were made for those who could to meet with him in person a couple days later. That meeting took place with _____, _____, and _____ of the committee because they could break free from daytime schedules. He has been interning for over nine months with a church of over fifteen hundred but has not been asked by the church to stay on even though the youth ministry position came open under some unfortunate circumstances early during his internship. His lack of experience with a large program of more than a hundred kids is the primary reason. A half-dozen strong youth programs are looking at him already, one or two of which are especially "hungry" to have him come. He is not married and has no prospects of marriage in the near future. He is athletic, pleasant personality, adequate student, and has no particular expertise in music.

5. Candidate #5, _____, was contacted by phone by _____. He walked the graduation line in 2019 at ___, played basketball for the school, was on camp team and ad team, had some experience in youth ministry before graduating. He is now on staff as a full-time junior high activities minister with a large and progressive congregation, the same one he interned with immediately after graduating. He and the church have extensive plans for expanding this outreach ministry in their large metropolitan area, so he wants to keep doing what is for him an open-ended opportunity in something he really enjoys.

6. Candidate #6, _____, was contacted by phone by _____. He will graduate from ___ in May, 2022. He has been part-time with a church for a year or so. He was an above-average student, was active in campus life, participated in music activities particularly during chapel music, has a good bit of keyboard skill (playing by ear), has a pleasant personality and good character. Within the last year he got married. He is virtually certain that the church where he has been part-time will hire him full-time; the congregation votes on him soon.

7. Candidate #7, _____, sent the search committee a letter/resumé in early March indicating his willingness to look into our position. _____ called him initially; later the four committee members had a conference call with him so everyone could get a sense of his personality and independently assess his responses to their questions. He graduated with a ___ GPA in 2023 from _____. As a

student he worked part-time with younger youth in a church in _____. He participated in intramurals and boxing during his time at the college. He has some ability in music, has been coaching defensive backs at the nearby high school while ministering at the _____ Church of Christ in _____. He has a ___ GPA for his graduate work on a Master of Divinity at _____.

Since _____ later became the search committee's recommendation to the elders and their subsequent recommendation to the congregation, other information about him and his work is available on the biographical sketch circulated to the congregation on April 24, from the church news letter, and from his own letter-of-inquiry/resumé that accompanies this report.

IV. On-Sight Interview of _____

The general schedule for _____ on-sight interviews April 21-23 appeared on a bulletin insert on Sunday, April 17. A more detailed agenda, originally distributed to major participants, accompanies this report.

While ___ was in _____, we made available to him as many printed items as we could in order to acquaint him with the situation here: church bylaws, camp schedule at _____, the _____ programming schedule, contents of our new membership packet, map of the city, university information on biology majors (for his wife's benefit), church directory, annual report, financial report, information on programs and resources at the Bible college, etc.

We had him meet the Youth Committee, the Search Committee, the elders, the teens and their parents, as many church members as could attend the open meetings. He was introduced to some church personnel and received information orally about the Little Apple Task Force, Heart for Youth, Life Choice Ministries, and the International Family Center. He toured the university briefly and drove around town especially so he could see the parks and recreational facilities useful to youth activities. He went by the middle school and the high school on the way into town Thursday. He knows about the Bible Bowl program, which was something he himself did for six years. We explained the present program and the activity level of sponsors and teachers with the junior high and high school classes.

V. Synopses of Comments from References

_____, professor of Old Testament Studies at _____ and the candidate's advisor toward the end of his program: "very nice young man, everything very positive, lives up to the family tradition, solid student, positive attitude, genuinely interested in people; already when he came to college he carried himself in a steady way; sincere, without guile, will work hard for you, works hard at what he does."

_____, professor of Bible and ministries at _____, supervisor of internships and teacher of some classes the candidate took: "very sharp guy, good communicator, had substance to his sermons (in homiletics class), competent, would develop leaders where he is working, hard worker, perseverant." Notable to Dr.

_____ was the candidate's willingness to "stick it out" for a couple years with a relatively narrow, small church during his student days; he went through all the hoops they wanted him to go through in order to prove himself.

_____, senior minister at _____ in Boulder, Colorado, at the time of the candidate's youth internship: "very outstanding young man, mature beyond his years, dependable, comfortable with adults as well as younger people, good drive level, not inclined to draw attention to himself. If I were in need of a youth minister at the moment, I would go after him myself."

_____, graduate of _____; current senior minister of _____ in Boulder, Colorado; on staff during the candidate's internship but not his supervisor and not often in contact with him; nevertheless he saw enough at a distance to give the following comments: he "had a heart for what he was doing; he seemed to feel driven to do good work."

VI. Additional Information

Concurrent with conducting the search for the youth minister, plans were also formulating for adding _____ to our paid staff as part-time minister of evangelism and also for beginning a contemporary worship service this fall. On the latter account, the committee members kept their eyes open for someone who had preaching experience and expertise even though preaching skills could still be in preliminary stages of development if youth ministry alone were under consideration. It would be an added advantage to have someone that could take part in the preaching for that service on a rotating basis.

Of those prospects conceivably available to us, the committee felt that in the preferred list this candidate was the strongest person for this job description. The most noticeable feature of our selection, of course, is his family connection with the present full-time minister. Viewed from a distance this arrangement could raise cautions that would not be present if the men were not relatives. We did not, however, want to pass over what we perceived to be a stronger-than-expected candidate because of this feature of the situation.

For one thing, we know they have a positive relationship between themselves. From the minister's comments about _____ before the congregation ever decided to start looking for a youth minister, we have known about his appreciation for him as "just a fine young man." During the committee's conference with _____, during his interview visit with the elders, and during informal times together we could tell that _____ reciprocates that feeling. In fact, at the elders' interview, when asked why he would consider coming to this church, _____ said that his father-in-law was one of five men he had thought of that he would want to work with and learn from. That struck us as an interesting comment since he included in that list his own father, who will be president of the North American Christian Convention for _____.

Given the integrity of the minister and _____, some factors offset conceivable questions about their joint ministry as relatives. Since people naturally watch for weaknesses in such an arrangement, the minister's love for _____ should keep him from encouraging him to come here if he believed he could not do the job satisfactorily.

Besides, a failure on the candidate's part would reflect negatively on the minister and could strain their family relations, which again a thoughtful person would not risk. Their willingness to enter such an arrangement probably indicates that they are comfortable with it and their confidence in this church in relating to such an arrangement.

Having a minister and youth minister who already have a positive relationship could help avoid problems that sometimes arise between senior ministers and youth ministers because of age difference and types of ministry expectancy. Furthermore, since the minister of evangelism is also joining the paid ministry staff, any specter of undue influence is diluted by the influence of a respected third party. Finally, the formal structure connects the youth minister directly to the eldership and in practical responsibility to the youth and education eldership liaisons.

In addition to the youth, search, and eldership interviews by phone and on location, the chairman of the search committee spent some personal time with _____ to see where he stands on doctrinal matters of interest to us. These matters seem satisfactory. For information purposes, _____ sent him a copy of Understanding Christian Ordinances and gave him a copy of What the Bible Says About Salvation.

In our common calling,

Youth Minister Search Committee

_____(ch.), _____, _____, _____ (the minister abstaining as noted)