

TO: 4; Family First Baptist Church
FROM: Pastor Emeritus Charles H. Smith
SUBJECT: From Heart To Heart and From Breast To Breast

How can I say thanks to my church family and many friends who
used their about with Jesus to intercede on my behalf to God,
when I was very ill for the multiple cards, telephone calls,
and visits by family made out of the wellsprings of love and
respect? I am indebted that a forty and one-half years of
fellowship, trust and love were given to me. Your prayers are
responsible for my escape with a refined sense of
spiritual values and direction.

EPISTLE

No one should fear or be vexed for sharing with you at this time.
What has been said is said and done is done. Only the future
life of First Baptist lies before us. My sharing with you at
this point in history has nothing to do with my desire on my
part to reclaim the MEETING THE CHALLENGE future or to
neutralize any man-made power base. After careful, prayerful
consideration with my Creator, I am persuaded to communicate
with you. God speaks through me to you.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA

First Baptist Church of Huntington, West Virginia, is a church of
understanding and love. It is a church that has been blessed with
God's people church is surely and richly blessed. First
Baptist is a great church whose history is etched with the
names of noble, Christ-centered people. I was blessed to
share in the hard work of the church with my father. He was a power-
ful preacher and a great leader. I never felt that I was in
competition with the past. I was blessed to have the wise
counsel of Jerry Smith and Luther Jackson, both seasoned Chris-
tians of the church with a long history of unselfish leadership
for the church. These men were succeeded by able leadership
and we are in the construction of a new church and an
expanded program in the church.

FROM

Dr. Charles H. Smith, D.D.

PASTOR EMERITUS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

OCTOBER 1987

It is hoped that this period of reflection be used to review
the affairs of the church, past and records due to the church,
and to plan for the future and to establish programmatic thrusts for
the future.

TO: My Family First Baptist Church
FROM: Pastor Emeritus Charles H. Smith
SUBJECT: From Heart To Heart and From Breast To Breast

How can I say thanks to my church family and many friends who used their clout with Jesus to intercede on my behalf to God when I was very ill; for the multiple cards, telephone calls, and visits my family made out of the wellsprings of love and respect? You demonstrated that twenty and one-half years of fellowship, trust and love was not in vain. Your prayers are responsible for my excellent recovery with a refined sense of spiritual values and claim on eternity.

No one should fear my motives for sharing with you at this time. What has been said is said and done is done. Only the future life of First Baptist lie before us. My sharing with you at this point in history has nothing to do with any desire on my part to reclaim the past, stake a claim on the future or to neutralize any manmade power base. After careful, prayful consultation with my Creator, I am persuaded to communicate with you. God speaketh through me to you.

First Baptist is not well. It appears to have lost its standing in the community, its beacon light to the young as a haven of understanding and love and most of all, the rich fellowship where God's people shared in openly and uninhibitedly. First Baptist is a great church whose history is etched with dignified, noble, mission-oriented people. I was blessed to build on the hard work of the late Dr. Richie. He was a powerful preacher and a good leader. I never felt that I was in competition with the past. I was blessed to have the wise counsel of Jerry Cosby and Luther Jackson, both seasoned chairmen of the boards with a long history of unselfish devotion for the church. These men were succeeded by able leadership who assisted me in the construction of a new church and in other outreach programs the church has proclaimed in its ministry.

Now is the time for us to look at ourselves. God has suffered us to lose some footing. If we are not faithful to His cause, He will give us enough room to stray. First Baptist is the oldest Baptist institution in Huntington. It has always been regarded as the leading church in the black community and respected as tops in the other communities. It must search and obtain the country's best well-prepared and experienced minister.

Let me suggest that this period of reflection be used to revisit the MISSION OF THE CHURCH, HEAL AND RECONCILE ONE TO THE OTHER, REVITALIZE OUR SPIRITS, AND VISUALIZE PROGRAMMATIC THRUSTS FOR THE CHURCH.

I. GOD WILL NOT GIVE YOU THE VISION UNTIL RECONCILING TAKES PLACE

After two leadership disappointments with loyalties separating members and straining life-long relationships, HEALING MUST TAKE PLACE first before any meaningful dialogue, planning, and execution can take place. HEALING requires a willingness on everybodys' part to cease holding court playing the role of prosecutor, and leave judgment of events to the God of history.

HEALING can only take place when our thoughts are focussed on the mind of Jesus for this given situation; when the emotions of hurt, anger, bitterness and spiritual pain are submerged in the forgiving power of the blood at the foot of the cross; and when each of us pray that God will use us as instruments of His Peace. HEALING can only take place when the past becomes only a frame of reference and our energies are used to carve a place for Christ in the lives of our people. Therefore, BE YE RECONCILED ONE TO ANOTHER.

II. THE VISION FOR THE CHURCH WILL DEPEND ON WHERE IT STANDS

Our perspective or vision for the church will depend on where members stand. If they stand in the valley of depression, self-pity, blame-casting, personality-cultism or power-seeking, God's VISION FOR THEM cannot be seen. I emlore each of you to ask yourselves, where do I stand?

Reread I Corinthians 3:4-9:

For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another,
I am of Appollos; are ye not carnal?

Who then is Paul, and who is Appollos, but
ministers by whom ye believed, even as the
Lord gave to every man,

I have planted, Appollos watered; but God gave
the increase.

So then neither is her that planteth any thing,
neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the
the increase.

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:
and every man shall receive his own reward according
to his labor.

He will reveal His MISSION to those who are spiritually inclined. Listen to His Words, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me."

It may be a revival is needed. It may be the fire is burning too low on the altar of our souls. It may be we need a rebaptism of the Holy Ghost. It may be we need to revisit the real meaning of SANCTIFICATION and ascertain if we have truly been SET ASIDE FROM THE WORLD, RECEIVED THE IMPLANTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BEEN GROWING IN GRACE SINCE THE DAY OF OUR CONVERSION.

I beseech you to chant with me that old declaration of the church:

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name. ON CHRIST THE SOLID ROCK I STAND, ALL OTHER GROUND IS SINKING SAND.

CONCLUSION

1. I recommend that two Sunday themes embrace Healing, and that two Sunday themes embrace a revival or rededication climate.
2. That cottage prayer meetings be requested in homes in addition to the one at church emphasizing the themes.

III. THE PULPIT SEARCH COMMITTEE

This committee must know and embrace the vision of the church. It must be spiritual, i.e., caught up in the Spirit, flirting with a daily encounter with the Lord. Its power to recommend to the church will depend exclusively upon its ability to concentrate on its sole mission and not be distracted by voices outside of the chorus being director by the conductor of eternity. The committee must outline all of the areas of responsibilities currently under the church's control as well as those envisioned by the church in its long-range plans. Skills must be sought to match the real world. The committee must look beyond degrees and a good sermon presentation to other badly needed skills such as interpersonal skills, management, and group dynamic leadership skills. Professional guidance can be found for the committee as far as process, financial package, interviewing techniques, background checks and workable policy statements to be used in arriving at decisions.

I beg the committee to raise their level of expectancy. Many top notch ministers are looking for smaller congregations. The following recommendations suggested for determining needs will be extremely helpful to the committee in determining the scope of responsibility of the new pastor.

IV. YOUR CHURCH MANAGEMENT TEAM

In Baptist Tradition, The Board of Deacons is the spiritually empowered Board to assure the well-being of the Body of Christ. Without a pastor, the Chairman of the Board becomes the spokesman for the church on matters of Faith and Order, Order meaning church Polity. Certain responsibilities are often delegated to Interim Ministers until a pastor is called. Program thrust, worship design, internal concerns of the fellowship, and inter-church relationships are the primary responsibility of the Board of Deacons.

The other team in the church is The Board of Trustees. State laws require churches to name certain persons as Trustees when real property ownership is involved. This board is not a biblical board and its members need not be ORDAINED to function. These persons are selected because of their responsible character, business acumen, and other designated talents so perceived to be needed by the church from time to time in its on-going life. This board becomes guardian over the physical assets of the church. Therefore, it must look at receipts and expenditures and recommend policies that will guide the church along a protective fiscal and legal route. However, this board does not preempt the Board of Deacons from its ultimate responsibility of insisting and executing a meaningful STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM in the church.

These two teams work in harmony as a BOARD OF MANAGERS providing spiritual, fiscal and managerial leadership to the church. When and if the Trustees preempt the Deacons, the results will be evident in the spiritual life of the church. When the Deacons ignore fiscal responsibility or invade the Trustees' turf, mistrust in fiscal integrity often results. These teams must work together.

V. THE CHURCHS' TRUE MISSION

The mission of the church actually begins in the heart of God, whose love impels him to offer redemption and eternal life to man. This mission was expressed in the life and deeds of Jesus, whose every act during his earthly ministry dealt with the RECONCILIATION OF MAN TO GOD.

When Jesus established his church, he charged it with the same sense of mission. Unlike most organizations in the world, the church does not exist to advance its own interest or to build up its own resources. Its MISSION --its "reason for being" -- is to glorify God by making Him known to persons through faith in Jesus Christ. Those who will provide leadership in this area should possess these qualifications:

- MISSIONARY VISION
- CONCERN FOR PEOPLE
- ABILITY TO GATHER FACTS AND ANALYZE DATA ABOUT COMMUNITY NEEDS
- ABILITY TO WORK WITH PEOPLE
- LEADERSHIP SKILLS
- WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE ONGOING TRAINING

BEFORE God gives the vision to the church, He requires us to take some preliminary steps, such as:

1. Study the needs of your local community. There are scores of persons with special needs who offer special mission opportunities. Design a simple questionnaire. This need not be filled out by the interviewee, but used as a guide to consistently ask the right questions. Programs cannot be meaningfully designed until they are targeted to meet specific needs. The needs could be loneliness, rejection, failure syndrome, counseling, financial, single-parent complexities, tutoring, peer counseling, creative outlets, how-to . . . , guilt, broken relationships, health, no insurance, or just somebody to talk to, marriage counseling, positive mentors, knowledge of the bible, etc.

2. Develop plans for meeting those needs. The following guidelines may be helpful:

- Suggest that the church attempt to meet the most urgent and significant needs in the order of their importance.
- Suggest approaches that are challenging but not beyond the church's capabilities.
- Call for action that goes beyond treating symptoms and attack the causes of problems.
- Propose methods suitable to the needs and to the resources available.
- Use effectively and appropriately all the needed resources that are available.

3. Work through existing Church Councils, Missions, Women and Mens' groups. All groups should have a piece of the action.

4. Plan LEADERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOPS. Many active members are new and have never been trained. Many members lack the bible basis for their activities in the church. So often, church participation is taken as another club activity of the community. Plan a church institute or retreat with key leadership. Bring resourceful persons in the conduct of the workshops. Affiliation with the American Baptist Convention along with The National Baptist Convention as thousands of churches have done would make the church eligible for unlimited resources, such as : Retirement Funds for church staff, low-interest loans, low-cost church insurance, mission, educational, evangelical resources persons, etc.

VI. THE VISION COMES AFTER THE CHURCH PERCEIVES THE NEED

Visions are revealed. People without a vision perish. They self-destruct. Your vision for the church will depend a great deal upon your understanding of the real world in Huntington today, not yesterday. Your vision will depend a great deal upon your zeal to "Serve this Present Age", not the one that existed under the leadership of former pastors. Do not allow your present limitations to harness your willingness to envision for the future. Venture with me some wild concepts for God's examination.

- Construct an Educational Whole Life Center
- Construct the second floor Educational Unit To The Church
- Develop the following ministeries:

PROFESSIONAL SPECIALTIES

Ministry with Children
Ministry with Youth
Ministry with Adults
Visitor-Homes
Counselor
Evangelism Leader
Inter-Church Cooperative Leader

Social Ministry Leader
Stewardship Leader
Worship Leader
Community Leader
Leadership Development
Supervisor-Lay Leaders

SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

Ministries to Alcoholics	Arts/Drama Ministry
Ministry to Drug Addicts	Apartment House Minister
Campus Ministry	Communications Ministry
Evangelistic Ministry	Building Construction
Day Care Center	Bus Ministry
Senior Citizens Center	Chaplain-Hospital
Member Visitation	Correctional Ministry
Mental Health Ministry	(Intern-Minister) Supv.
Family Life-Parenting	Crisis Troubleshooter
Weekday Programs	Recreational Outlet Minister
Bible Study	Christian Ed. General
Teacher Training	Business & Indus. Devel.
Planned Parenthood	Welfare & Social Services
Music, Performing Arts	Festivals & Gatherings
Conference Planning	Sports Activities
CHURCH SCHOOL	WORSHIP-PRAYER LIFE

VII. BE ABLE TO DISTINGUISH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING BEFORE YOU GO TOO FAR

MISSION: The mission has already been established by Christ -- Salvation of souls by spreading the gospel -- the Good News -- there is no substitute for our personal testimony. This is a broad all embracing commission.

VISION: God's revelation to his called group as to His will and purpose in that church community. This vision is always rooted in hope. Ezekiel's vision was to give God's people hope of returning to Jerusalem to live and worship again.

PROGRAM THRUST:

To carry out the mission and fulfill the vision, long-range and short-range plans must be made in order for the church to stay focussed and not wander in the wilderness like the children of Israel did for years.

The church must prioritize what programs it must launch during a given period. Programs are normally measurable and can stand the test of evaluation. Again, these programs should be based upon need assessment.

TOOLS: Teas, fashion shows, pancake feasts, workshops, closed circuit television, slides, fieldtrips, church dinners, rallies . . . these tools are instruments of activity.

However, the church, through a rally, can raise large amounts of money, but if in the process of achievement, fellowship is not strengthened, individual commitment of the saving power is not realized, the mission of the church is not enhanced, and God's will is not done.

"You may build great cathedrals, large and small but it's only what you do for Christ (His Mission) will last."

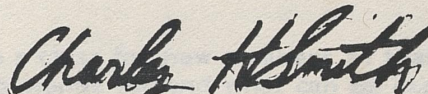
ORGANIZATION:

Organization is assigning people to carry out varying tasks in a set program to achieve its desired ends. All church organizations should be task-oriented in conjunction with the overall church objectives.

RESOURCES: The church's greatest resource is its people. Establish a talent bank. Often unlettered members are the greatest resource. Retired members offer unlimited skills, experience and wisdom. The new professionals should not be a threat -- use the benefit of their training.

BENEDICTION:

May God get the glory for the things I know you will do. God bless you. I love you all.



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QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED IN EXTENDING
THE CALL TO A PASTOR OF A BAPTIST CHURCH

It is essential that the pastor and the church get off to a good and right relationship. This can only be done if information is given that will help a pastor make up his mind about the progress, preparation and program of a given church.

1. Under what conditions did the church extend the invitation to the pastor to serve as its leader? Was the call for as long as he and the church could work together to advance the Kingdom's work?
2. What authority is granted to the pastor in selecting and developing his staff?
3. What authority does the pastor have in selecting officers of the church? Explain.
4. What consideration is given the pastor in approving the various department heads with whom he is to work?
5. Does the church evaluate the pastor's performance on an annual basis?
6. How long do officers serve in their positions and is there a rotation system?
7. Does the church have a training class for church leaders and are leaders selected from that training class?
8. Is it essential to the church that leaders be trained before taking office?
9. Does the church have a class for new members so that they will know what the church stands for and what can be expected of them and of the church?
10. Who leads the church in its training ministry?
11. Who is expected to approve the activities that are to be held in the church and on its premises?
12. What is the procedure used in paying the pastor his salary ; is it weekly? monthly? yearly? Explain.
13. Does the church give the pastor an anniversary on an annual basis?
14. What type of insurance does the church have for the pastor and those who work for the church?

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15. Is there a retirement program for the pastor and other church employees?
16. Does the church deduct Social Security from the salaries of its employees?
17. Does the church pay Social Security for the pastor and its other employees?
18. Does the church have a budget? Who makes up the budget committee?
19. Is there a car allowance and home allowance for the pastor?
20. To what national convention does the church belong? How long has the church been a member?
21. To what state convention does the church belong? How long has the church been a member?
22. To what district association does the church belong. How long has the church been a member?
23. Does the church send delegates to the various national, state and local religious conventions and congresses?
24. What is the procedure used in selecting delegates to attend church related conventions?
25. Is the pastor expected to attend all of these meetings?
26. How much vacation time is given to the pastor and members of his staff and what formula does the church use?
27. Where are the deeds to properties owned by the church?
28. Does the church have a safety deposit box and if so who has the keys to the box?
29. Does the church have its own office safe and if so, who is permitted to use it?
30. Who are the paid employees of the church and what are their responsibilities and to whom are they responsible?
31. Does the church have a constitution and bylaws? If so, are copies available?
32. Is the pastor expected to moderate all church meetings? If not, who then, is to moderate?

QUESTIONS

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33. Is there any indebtedness on the church and if so, to who and how much is the balance?
34. Is there a finance committee and is that committee bonded by an insurance company? For how much is each member bonded?
35. What insurance company handles the church's needs? How much coverage and what kind?
36. Does the church have a bus ministry? How many buses does the church own?
37. Who is responsible for the bus ministry and what is expected of person(s) responsible?
38. Does the driver have a chauffeur's license or regular license?
39. Are the finances of the church audited on a regular basis?
40. Who is the auditor for the church? Does he/she have a CPA certificate?
41. Does the pastor approve all bills to be paid by the church before they are paid?
42. Where are the records of the church? Are they kept in the church office ?
43. Name the various departments or auxiliaries of the church?
44. Does the church have a minister of music? If so, to whom is he/she responsible for his/her performance?
45. In the event the pastor leaves the church or is turned off from the church, how much time is given in the separation process - 30, 60 or 90 days?
46. What are the annual events that the church has on its calendar, such as revivals, Men's Day, Women's Day, Church Anniversary, etc.?
47. Who is responsible for selecting speakers for various occasions of the church?
48. What is the church's policy relating to weddings and funerals at the church? Are non-members permitted to use the church?
49. Does the church have a parsonage and does the church take care of utilities and expenses of the parsonage?
50. In the event the pastor dies, how much time is his widow given to live in the parsonage before being asked to vacate?