

Report of the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee to the 95th International General Assembly

Ministry Evaluation

FINAL DOCUMENT

The 91st Assembly of 2000 passed a resolution that this committee on the Biblical Doctrine and Polity (BDP) implement an evaluation/review for our ministry. The 2004 General Assembly added further clarification and simplification to the process. It has come to our attention that we continue to experience difficulty in implementation. We would like to express appreciation to those who continue to be engaged in the process and who assist with their input concerning this subject.

Purpose

From the outset of this endeavor to introduce a satisfactory means of evaluation and the subsequent implementation of this process, this committee has observed and others have injected into our work the need to readdress this subject. Evaluations were never intended to simply be used for the purpose of changing pastors or overseers; rather, it is time for us to have the grace and understanding to better train or qualify our leaders. We encourage our local churches and leadership across every level to take the initiative to provide evaluations that will foster better ministerial development and replace the removal mentality as simply the only resolution.

Evaluations are an integral part of everyday life and should be a means of self-improvement and accountability, providing opportunity for both commendation and admonition. Having them periodically and consistently builds confidence, gives assurance, and keeps the participants and those they serve well informed (*Assembly Minutes, 2000, Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine & Polity, page 104*). Furthermore, its purpose is to help identify weaknesses so that they can be addressed, while enhancing strengths in ministry. Today, pastors are serving on a longer-term basis, and given the fact that there is a worldwide leadership crisis, we need well-equipped ministers. An evaluation is a valuable tool in trying to reach this purpose. It must be remembered that the ultimate goal of this process is to strengthen ministry. Any change or move in ministry would not necessarily be related to the evaluations but could be performed at the discretion of the respective overseer or the General Presbyter at whatever time would be deemed necessary or appropriate. We know that the following stated guidelines may not always be applicable in every nation where available personnel or logistics may require some modifications to this procedure.

Overseer Evaluation Process

Given the fact that national/state/regional overseers are evaluated every four years (e.g. 2008), the next evaluation is scheduled in 2012. Thereafter, evaluations will be performed every four years. This supersedes previous rulings. An Evaluation Task Force of not more than six licensed ministers in good standing shall be selected, one-third by the overseer and two-thirds by the ministry in the region, to see that the process is properly carried out. Those selected will serve for four years. For the purpose of impartiality, the overseer should not attend the meeting for selection of two-thirds of the Evaluation Task Force or the selection of the moderator for that meeting. The Evaluation Task Force shall select a chairperson and a secretary from among themselves. Their responsibilities would include consultation with the ministry of the region and with the General Presbyter, assimilating the information and providing a written report. The chairperson and secretary (or another selected Evaluation Task Force member) shall give a signed copy of the written report to the overseer being evaluated. If this overseer should so desire, he could request a meeting of the entire Evaluation Task Force. The overseer should be given commendation where he has excelled, encouraged to take objective actions for improvement in areas of weakness, and to further develop in areas he has demonstrated strength.

The evaluation report will be submitted to the General Presbyter who will deal with it as he deems appropriate.

Pastoral Evaluation Process

Given the fact that a pastoral evaluation was scheduled (e.g. 2007), the next pastoral evaluation is scheduled in 2011. Thereafter, evaluations will be performed every four years. This supersedes previous rulings. There shall be a Evaluation Task Force composed of not more than six leaders—elders in good standing from each local church: one-third selected by the pastor and two-thirds by the congregation, to see that the process is properly performed. The Evaluation Task Force shall select a chairperson and a secretary from among themselves. The pastor is not to participate in the selection of two-thirds of the Evaluation Task Force or of the chairperson and secretary. Their responsibilities would include consultation with the local church congregation and the overseer to acquire the necessary information. The chairperson and secretary (or another selected Evaluation Task Force member) shall give a written, signed copy of the report to the pastor being evaluated and to the overseer. If the pastor should so desire, he/she could request a meeting with the entire Pastoral Evaluation Task Force. The pastor should be given commendation where he/she has excelled, encouraged to take objective actions for improvement in areas of weakness, and to further develop in areas where he/she has demonstrated strength. The overseer in consultation with his respective Administrative Counseling Board (composed of at least three pastors from that region/state) would deal with the report as appropriate.

Church Ministry Evaluation

In remaining consistent with the pastoral evaluation, a process should be developed to evaluate the ministry, vision, and direction of the local church. This process shall be performed every four years. Outside ministry opinions could be invited to assist in a non-biased evaluation. This process would be under the direction of the Evaluation Task Force. It is to be understood that all evaluations are to be conducted in a timely and orderly fashion. We recommend that each local church develop a similar process to assess the leadership of their local churches, including their ministry directors.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Evaluation Task Forces

It is incumbent upon the members of the Evaluation Task Forces not to express their own feelings, but to report the actual findings resulting from the evaluation process. The following guidelines would help in giving direction to the Evaluation Task Forces, as well as providing a measurement of a person's qualifications and integrity to serve in this vital capacity:

- Attendance—Willingness to attend all Evaluation Task Force meeting
- Confidentiality—Lack of this would disqualify anyone from serving on this group
- Diligence—Willingness to actively participate in doing whatever work is needed
- Prayer—Commit themselves to quality group prayer sessions
- Love—Know to exhibit love for the person being evaluated
- Compassion—Show true concern and desire to help the person improve
- Objectivity—Possess ability to see all things without partiality
- Vision—Demonstrate knowledge and support for the individual's goals

The Evaluation Process—Educational/Training Needs

There has been much concern and confusion in the attempt to implement the evaluation process that was introduced to the Assembly in 2000. This process seems to have inflicted much fear in the person being evaluated and sometimes justly so, as it has been used as a tool of unjust criticism. Perhaps part of the fear is that the assessment has been made with nothing set in place to deal with the observations, both in terms of improving those being evaluated and in educating the evaluators with objectivity. As a church body, it is incumbent upon us to deal with this dilemma appropriately and to implement procedures that will afford us the best instrument, evaluators, and ministry possible.

It is important that the ministers and members involved in the evaluation process be well informed as to their function. This is not a time to simply find fault, but to objectively assess ministry for its enhancement. Those who participate in this work must familiarize themselves with the contents of this document prior to the beginning of the process. At the beginning of the meeting to select the Evaluation Task Force members, there shall be a reading of the duties and qualifications of those who would serve on the Evaluation Task Force as it appears in this document. Education includes sufficient prayer by the church.

When an evaluation has been completed, the strengths and weaknesses of the minister would have been noted. Steps should then be taken to address the areas of weakness and further compliment strengths. The church should take active steps to provide opportunity and finances to enhance his/her potential to overcome weaknesses. Subsequent evaluations would include an assessment as to whether the improvements deemed necessary are significant. (The above steps should also apply to the evaluation of overseers.)

At times, a change of leadership may be necessary because of gifting, leadership styles, congregational needs, etc. However, simply reassigning leadership to another church/region does not necessarily address the need for improvement. If appropriate training/development does not take place, the problems only resurface. Our goal should be to develop and have the best ministers possible.

Short tenures in pastoral/overseer ministry undoubtedly hinder the work. As Dr. Rick Warren notably observes in his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, "A long—term pastorate does not guarantee a church

will grow, but changing pastors every few years guarantees a church won't grow" (Warren 1995:66). Until a few years ago, we averaged pastoral change every two years. As we move towards long-term pastorates/overseer leadership, we want to begin a process to objectively address the causes that have so often resulted in change of leadership and stymied church growth.

There is also a great need for churches to examine their own leadership and power structures to confront internal reasons for lack of church growth and constant pastoral failures in their particular locale. Frequently, overseers and pastors have lamented the fact that some churches have developed a mentality that functions under their own mindset without regard to the vision and direction a minister feels inspired by God. In such cases, it may not be the pastoral leadership that requires change or adjustment, but the core thinking and power structure of that local church. We encourage during the evaluations that every Evaluation Task Force also examine the attitudes and underlying hindrances within their own congregation that impedes the effectiveness of any minister to properly shepherd their flock.

The following are some suggested courses of action that could be considered where needed for pastors. The same principle could be applied to an overseer or local church although the practical application may differ.

1. The pastor could consult with the local church Evaluation Task Force and work together with them in addressing the needs for improvement. The Evaluation Task Force members should be qualified to objectively help the pastor where improvements are necessary. They should be willing to pursue any outside resources that could assist the process. Consideration could also be given to a pastor selecting a small group of individuals whom he/she can have confidence in and whom can be trusted. It also stands to reason that those chosen should be stable mature Christians who can objectively assess and address problems and seek out the necessary resources to bring resolution.
2. If the pastor and local church cannot reach an amicable agreement on which approach will be used, then the overseer should be called in to assist in the educational/mentoring process.
3. The pastor could further be encouraged to seek out a good educational institution in their region to further assist him/her. Should such an institution not be readily available, there is an abundance of correspondence and online courses available.
4. Consideration could be given to selecting a group of pastors in an area (e.g. Europe/CIS/Middle East) who are qualified and feel the burden to train ministers and can assist local churches to become vibrant. It is evident that we have people among us called by God for this purpose, and it is also obvious that there is a great need for this type of ministry. This task would best be accomplished by those who have a burden for pastoral training and who are God-called shepherds.
5. Consideration could be given to establishing a church school/college that would operate on a continual basis to especially train those who desire to enter the ministry. This of course would be open to all ministers; however, it stands to reason that all would not have the time or resources to do this. There may be the need to establish regional schools as an extension of this church school/college to address the situation.
6. In light of this call for more emphasis on training and equipping of our ministers, there also must be an implementation of an appeal process for them. While the evaluation process may at times reveal and provide training to help alleviate weaknesses in a minister's qualifications or leadership style, there may also be

situations that expose him/her to unjust criticism or unfair accusations that jeopardize his/her leadership appointment. Therefore, a process of ministerial appeal must be implemented to provide reasonable safeguards and accountability.

Ministerial Appeal Process

Over the last decade as we moved toward developing stronger and vibrant local churches, it has also been revealed that there must be some kind of “ministerial appeal process” that would give our ministry a sense of protection from false accusations and/or abuse by those in authority over them or by a group of discontent individuals who simply want to control a minister. We need to always give proper love and respect to those called into the ministry. Therefore, we recommend that when there is not public knowledge of moral or ethical failure on the part of a minister serving in the position of pastor or overseer, that prior to his or her removal from their present office, they be given a “right of appeal” to a Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group. This is paramount if he/she believes the removal from their pastoral or administrative office was not justified. The Ministerial Appeal Process is not designed for the normal pastoral or overseer appointment decisions or tenure.

This Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group would be composed of three of their colleagues serving in the same ministerial office (pastors/overseers) and chosen by either their respective General Presbyter or the General Overseer who will review the offense(s) by the minister that is being presented by their local church, their overseer, or their General Presbyter as a basis for removal from office. If the minister is a pastor, his/her colleagues should come from pastors in the state or region. If an overseer, it shall be composed of his colleagues (overseers) within his General Presbyter’s area.

The process of the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group shall be as follows: Any minister upon hearing of their impending removal from office shall have the “right of appeal” for a period of ten days after they are notified in writing (required) by their overseer or General Presbyter. This appeal should be sent by the minister in written form (emails are acceptable), both to the General Presbyter and General Overseer’s office, by the minister. At this point, the appropriate General Presbyter (in the case of a pastor) or the General Overseer (in the case of an overseer) shall immediately appoint a Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group of three of the minister’s colleagues. This is not a standing committee, but simply a group for this specific appeal. As godly arbitrators, this counseling group shall presume no prior guilt until they have carefully weighed all the information gleaned from a joint meeting of all parties involved. This group shall then arrange within two weeks to meet with the pastor and church, pastor and overseer, or the overseer and General Presbyter, whichever is appropriate to ascertain what the nature of the offense was and listen to each party’s explanation of their actions (teleconference calls are acceptable by the counseling group). After they have met, if the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group finds no evidence to nullify the action of the overseer or General Presbyter in removing a minister from his office, they will simply send all parties involved a letter (within five days) stating that the minister’s appeal has failed and the action taken against him/her was warranted.

After consultation by the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group, if an action against a pastor was found to be unwarranted, then a letter should be sent (within five days) to his/her General Presbyter advising him that they have found reason to question the validity of the charges against the minister and encourage his/her reinstatement to their pastoral position. A copy of their letter should be sent to the pastor also. The final decision will rest with the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group unless the General Presbyter/General Overseer, along with his counseling group, can produce substantiating evidence otherwise.

If the action against an overseer's removal is found to be warranted, the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group shall send a letter (within five days) to the General Overseer (and the overseer who made the appeal) that the overseer's appeal has failed and the action taken against him was justified. If the charges against an overseer are found to be unwarranted, the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group shall send a letter (within five days) advising the General Overseer that they have found reason to question the validity of the charges against the overseer and encourage his reinstatement to his overseer position. A copy of their letter should be sent to the General Presbyter also. The final decision will rest with the General Overseer, who will decide whether to support their findings by reinstating the overseer or to overrule their decision only after consultation with the two vice—chairmen of the General Presbytery.

Overturning the action of any overseer or General Presbyter is a serious matter and should be done only where there is no justifiable reason why the removal of a minister from his/her office was absolutely essential. The Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group should be composed of ministers who have displayed maturity and good character. Also, all matters that are given to them concerning the case should be kept extremely confidential, and their failure to do so would constitute their immediate removal from this counseling group.

Conclusion

We trust that these recommendations will be a blessing and help as we continue in the harvest. As we stated earlier, we know that the above, stated guidelines may not always be applicable in every nation where available personnel or logistics may require some modifications to this procedure. We have included with this report a new instrument for your Evaluation Task Force to consider using in your evaluation process. Surveys are not mandated to be distributed to the members or ministry, but your Evaluation Task Force can adapt or modify the following or use another such as the instrument found in the 2006 Policy Manual.

We humbly recommend the preceding report with special appreciation to all our dedicated pastors and overseers who serve so faithfully and diligently.

V. Walter Doroshuk, Chairman

Wallace R. Pratt, Secretary

Enos C. Gardiner

Antonios Charalambou

H. E. Cardin

Elias Rodriguez

Timothy L. McCaleb

Tedroy Powell

Overseers and Pastors Leadership Accountability and Growth Process

I. Specific Areas of Focus

1. Personal Life

Example as a spiritual leader in lifestyle

Handling of personal finances (insurance, retirement portfolio, provision for family, financial counselor, continuing education, debt-free living)

Share examples of Spiritual Disciplines (study, meditation and solitude, prayer, fasting, service, simplicity, stewardship, confession, celebration.)

Give us an overview of your family life (family time, achievements, vacations, future plans).

2. Ministry to the Local Church (Pastoral Role)

Visitation (Churches)

Visitation (pastor's home, office, restaurant)

Keeps any confidence

Is sensitive to local church needs

Demonstrates a warm and caring attitude

Relationship with ministers in the state

Relationship with local churches / members

Availability and sensitivity in problem situations

3. Leadership (Administrative) (If I lead, do I follow those who lead me?)

Supports International/State Missions

Dealing with divisive ministers and/or churches

Providing leadership when ministry discipline is needed

Supports sound biblical doctrine

Uses good judgment in making decisions

Demonstrates competent problem solving skills

Shows consideration for differing opinions and ideas

Is flexible enough to change as the situation demands

Pursues tasks to completion

Establishes a constructive climate in all meetings

Ability as an administrator, planning and conducting state meetings

Promptness in answering letters, telephone calls, and e-mails

Overall image as a leader

Good working relationship with district overseers, committees and staff

Effective communication (calendars, e-mail, web)

4. Financial Oversight

Monitoring/giving sound oversight to State Budget

5. Vision and Goals for the Future. (Growth Process—fulfilling the Great Commission)

Cooperates with others to promote church goals in the state

Efforts for evangelism and church planting

II. General Areas of Focus

Are there any weaknesses, problems, situations that need to be addressed?