

# THE MINISTERIAL FORUM



EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

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## HONORING ONE ANOTHER

### The Former-Pastor / Present-Pastor Relationship

*by the Rev. John Herman  
Executive Director,  
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I never know what may come across my desk as Director of the EFCA Pastoral Care Ministries. Recently an EFCA District Superintendent asked other EFCA leaders for guidelines to resolve conflict arising from the involvement of a former pastor in the life of a local church. The wide range of responses concerning how this issue should be addressed caught my attention. Pastors often don't know what is expected of them as a "former pastor," nor do many foresee the consequences if that role is performed poorly. Equally important, church members who want to experience a positive relationship between a former-pastor and the present-pastor often wonder how best to make it happen.

In the 1990s, the EFCA superintendents Council developed a policy with the rather cumbersome title, "Guidelines for Credentialed Individuals Attending an EFCA Not as the Pastor." When asked to comment on its relevance in the 2010s, the members of the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing suggested it needed to be updated, and that became a project of the Ministerial Association Board. After an extensive process involving a review by the EFCA Board of Ministe-

rial Standing, District Superintendents and the Ministerial Association Board (with opportunity for feedback in various venues), a new document emerged entitled "Honoring One Another" (see the text below). We trust that the six principles outlined there will help to make present-pastor/former-pastor conflicts less of an issue in our midst.

#### Pastoral Transitions—Each Honoring the Other

Various circumstances result in a pastor attending or being involved in a local church in which he is not the pastor. This results routinely when a pastor retires or simply leaves vocational ministry. It also commonly occurs when a pastor is asked to perform a wedding or funeral by a member from a church he has previously served.

The qualities that enable a former pastor to contribute positively to the ministries of the church (particularly his influ-

ence and experience) can also create stress and conflict for the new pastor. This seems to be especially true during the "fragile first year." Extra thoughtfulness needs to be exercised

by both the former pastor and the present pastor during this transition time. The former pastor may not be able to adequately let go of a desire to continue to pastorally serve a particular group of people. The present pastor may have strong and legitimate desires to establish new pastoral relationships and may feel uncomfortable holding on to too many things from the church's past.

#### Performing Pastoral Duties

A pastor serves the church as a whole. But on a day-to-day basis a pastor also ministers to individual people. The bond created by this personal involvement in what the EFCA Pastor's Service Manual calls "Family Services" (such as weddings and funerals) is unique and long lasting. Pastoral transitions are painful for

parishioners in churches of every size, cultural setting, geographical location and length of existence. Requests to return for a

"family service" are common in pastoral ministry.

A comprehensive set of guidelines cannot make the decision for every pastor in every situation. The appro-

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appropriate response to such requests will likely need to be determined on a case-by-case basis. I would, however, encourage discussions in local pastor clusters to consider ideas of how to best honor each other's ministry when asked to participate in these "family services." Seek input from the perspective of both former pastors (who are honored to be asked) and present pastors (who miss the opportunity to minister to the family).

Your personal conclusion as to when and how to respond to requests to do "family services" will serve you well. It can also be used to inform parishioners who request such a service and are often unaware of the factors that a pastor has to take into account when responding to their request.

*The Ministerial Forum  
of the  
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Ministerial Association*

A review of opinions, viewpoints and thoughts addressing biblical issues facing EFCA Ministerial members. Editor, Bill Kynes. Published under the direction of the EFCA Ministerial Association Board members 2011-2012 Chairman: Rev. Tom Macy, Faith Church, Indianapolis, IN (Chairman); Rev. Dave Wardle, The Orchard, Arlington Height, IL; Rev. Adrian Rayo, Iglesia Nueva Vida, Sun Prairie, WI; Rev. Mark Frazee, Home-wood EFC, Moline, IL; Rev. Dan Sommer, The Chapel EFC, Saint Joseph, MI; Rev. John Herman, EFCA National Office, Minneapolis, MN (Executive Director)

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The views expressed in *The Ministerial Forum* are the author's(s') alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Evangelical Free Church Ministerial Association or its board of directors.

## Making It Work in Your Setting

In this issue of The Ministerial Forum several members of our association relate their experience, describing a variety of ways to properly "honor one another." It may help to recognize that a continuum exists—the variable being the degree of involvement by the former pastor in the local church previously served or the local church a "former pastor" is presently attending. The continuum might look like this:

- Full closure, with limited ministry opportunities
- Flow of information, like that received by an informed member
- Friendship, based on shared

- experiences in ministry
- Freedom, invited to seek ministry opportunities
- Formal ministry partnership

The differing levels of involvement will be an important factor in how the relationship is worked out in your setting.

## One Last Word

In the stories to follow we did not include accounts of times when things did not go well and one pastor felt wounded by the actions of another pastor. Such stories exist, but even limited details can quickly result in a story being recognized. Our purpose is to stimulate productive thinking and improve our record of "honoring one another." ■

# HONORING ONE ANOTHER

June 2011

The following principles have been put into writing in order to foster positive relationships between pastors past and present. They have been reviewed by the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing, EFCA District Superintendents and the Board of the EFCA Ministerial Association.

### Principle #1:

Every member of the body of Christ should have the opportunity to serve the local church in a positive way and be encouraged to do so faithfully. This includes a former pastor.

### Principle #2:

The former pastor has the primary responsibility to assure all involvement is a positive experience for the church and pastoral staff. The present pastor has the opportunity to honor the ministry of former pastors in affirming ways, assuring their church involvement is a positive experience for them.

### Principle #3:

It is appropriate to put in place agreed upon limits to the involvement of a former pastor in the areas of attending, serving, leading, and performing pastoral functions.

### Principle #4:

The best way to set limits is through the wisdom of leaders of the local church who are urged by scripture to manage the affairs of the church well.

### Principle #5:

The issue of a pastor returning to a former church to perform pastoral functions is a sensitive subject requiring careful decision-making on a case-by-case basis.

### Principle #6:

Accusations of misconduct in regard to involvement in the local church by a former pastor who holds an EFCA Ministerial Credential are to be responded to following the discipline guidelines of the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing. ■

# PASTORAL SUCCESSION: Handling it Well

By Mike Andrus  
Former Pastor, First Free EFC, Wichita, KS  
and Tom Macy  
Pastor, Faith Church (EFC),  
Indianapolis, IN

**W**hat is your relationship with the pastor who preceded you in your present position? How do you relate to the man who followed you in your previous pastorate? What should the relationship be? Are you friends? Do you welcome your predecessor back for special events, to preach or to participate in an occasional wedding or funeral?

How do you avoid the sting of comparison and accompanying jealousies, the temptation to be sucked into feelings that people have about the other pastor, good or bad? How do you respond to inappropriate negative comments about your predecessor or resist the temptation to weigh in on current issues in the church after you have left?

How do you respond to your personal feelings that you will never measure up to the "star" who preceded you or your jealousy over differing patterns of growth? Relationships between predecessors and successors can be richly rewarding or painfully threatening. And it's not just between the two of you. The church is impacted as well.

In far too many cases pastors are uncomfortable with, or have no relationship at all with, their predecessors/successors. Some have never even met one another. Others hear only horror stories about the other. Have you considered that your relationship with one another may be a huge asset (or a huge liability) to the church that you have both loved and pastored? Have you considered the

congregation's need to process their grief over pastoral changes, and how that is impacted by the relationship between predecessor and successor?

## Why does it matter?

The church is a body, a living organism. Whenever there is a pastoral change, particularly involving

the senior or lead pastor, there is a time of adjustment and grief for the congregation. This grief process can be similar to that experienced by a death in one's family. If the

new spiritual leader ignores his predecessor, or makes him feel unwelcome, or worse yet, makes disparaging remarks, the healing process is disrupted and affects the long term health of the church. In fact, wounds may be fester that will impact the church negatively for years to come.

It matters to the pastors, too. We were part of that church family. We developed deep friendships that continue throughout life. Other relationships are more casual but still important. Friendships can be continued privately, of course—through letters and phone calls and Christmas greetings. But how much better when the pastor is allowed to return and preach, and is able to interact with the whole family of believers he once served! We believe the current pastor almost always benefits, too, from a healthy relationship with the former pastor.

A case could be made that this discussion is even more important today because of longer pastorates. When my (Tom) grandfather was moved every two years in the Methodist church, serving 17 churches over the life of his pastoral ministry, this issue was probably not as critical. But in our day of longer pastorates there is probably even greater

risk for the church in times of pastoral transition, making this relationship even more vital as the baton is passed.

## How does it look?

We, Mike Andrus and Tom Macy, have a unique connection as we have been each other's predecessor and successor in the same church! Mike served First Free in Wichita, Kansas, from 1975 to 1984. He was succeeded by Tom who served from 1985 to 2003. Nearly twenty years after leaving Wichita, Mike returned in 2004 as Tom's successor. Our unusual experience has been a great blessing to us personally, and we believe it has been an important factor in the long term health of First Free Wichita, which experienced another leadership transition this past summer. We hope and believe our experience is a helpful model for other successor/predecessor relationships.

We'd like to begin by describing our transitions. After nine years pastoring First Free, Mike left in 1984 to accept the call to a church plant in St. Louis, leaving both his wife's family and his church family behind. Since nearly all of Jan's relatives were in Wichita, it was normal for Mike and his family to return to Wichita once or twice a year. When Tom filled the senior pastor role in the summer of 1985, Mike sent warm greetings to Tom, expressing joy that Tom was the new pastor. Tom responded, making it clear from the start that Mike was welcome to visit whenever he was in town. Tom always welcomed him warmly to the office and acknowledged Mike and Jan from the pulpit. Mike was often invited to preach, which he did on a number of occasions over 18 years.

When there were deaths in the church family, Tom notified Mike. When a family expressed a desire to have Mike participate in the funeral, Tom passed on the request personally; likewise in regard to weddings. For major anniversaries or building dedications, Mike and Jan were always invited. This enabled them to continue warm relationships with the church family, with no feeling that it was secretive or damaging to the

church and its current leadership.

In fact, the relationship between Tom and Mike played a major role in the decision made by the church in 2004 to invite Mike to return as interim pastor, and eventually as Lead Pastor. Even the hundreds of people who had started attending since Mike had left felt they knew him because of the love and respect Tom had displayed during his twenty-year absence. Because of the difficult circumstances in Tom's last year at First Free, he was still in Wichita when Mike was asked to return as interim pastor. Mike sought Tom's blessing before accepting, realizing that it could be a sensitive issue. But because of their warm friendship over the preceding 19 years, Tom not only gave his blessing to Mike's return, but was thrilled to see the transition take place.

Mike returned the favors when he became Tom's successor, insisting that Tom be invited back to preach before he even left Wichita to become Senior Pastor of Faith Church in Indianapolis. Some leaders felt that Tom's return to the pulpit would polarize the congregation, but Mike argued that since the vast majority of the congregation had not wanted him to leave, the wise approach would be to honor him with by inviting him to preach on the last Sunday before he moved. He did, and it was a positive experience for the whole church.

Three more times in the last eight years Tom was invited back, including officiating at the wedding of Mike's son. He was invited most recently on August 7, 2011 to preach the installation service for Mike's successor, Josh, which was also the day of Mike's retirement service. Mike regularly informs Tom of the deaths of those he knew or when other key transitions occur in the lives of members. This enables Tom to write or call those families in a timely manner.

It would be a mistake to conclude that the only reason this could happen in Wichita is because of a special long-time friendship between Mike

and Tom. The truth is they were only slightly acquainted in 1985 when Tom was called to First Free. Their deep friendship actually grew out of a mutual commitment they made to treat one another with respect and love for the sake of the congregation of First Evangelical Free Church.

### What are the potential benefits?

A good transition from one pastor to the next has enormous benefits for the church and for both pastors. For the church it models the love and compassion pastors preach and expect their congregations to demonstrate toward one another. It eliminates the games some people play, trying to pit pastors against one another. It enables church members to show love and respect for their former pastor without feeling like they are being disloyal to their present pastor.

For the former pastor a good transition enables him to maintain important personal relationships that were years in the making. It also allows him to experience the joy of seeing the fruit of his labor long after he is gone. As the church grows and progresses, he gets to see that seeds planted years earlier are sprouting and growing.

For the new pastor a smooth pastoral change allows him to learn from his predecessor's wisdom and experience. In most cases it takes years before the new pastor understands the church as well as his predecessor. When they enjoy a warm relationship, he is able to pick the former pastor's brain on the uniqueness of the church's culture, the potential pitfalls, and the hidden blessings. Of course, the previous pastor must avoid using this opportunity to spill his personal baggage on the new pas-

tor, but if his input remains positive it can be invaluable.

### Who is the responsible party to make sure a transition is healthy?

Obviously both the predecessor and the successor have an important part to play in any transition, but clearly the successor plays the dominant role. The pastor who has moved on has little leverage to influence the relationship. He can, and should, speak affirmatively of his successor whenever communicating with congregation members, but returning uninvited can cause tension, especially if his successor is insecure. On the other hand, if he is not invited and thus never returns, his close friends in the church may resent the lack of honor and respect given to him by his successor. It is probably true that most pastors simply don't think about the pastor who preceded them. They are so busy dealing with their new responsibilities (and sometimes putting out fires!), that he is out of sight, out of mind. But it would be wise to put him on the radar screen.

A pastor doesn't typically have the opportunity to affirm his successor in advance, as in most cases there is a lengthy interim period between pastors. Once in a while he may have the privilege of handing off the baton directly, in which case he can be very helpful to the new pastor by appealing to the congregation to esteem him highly. But even when there is an interim period between pastors, it may be appropriate for the former pastor to write a letter to the congregation affirming their decision, especially if he knows the new pastor.

Mike's successor when he retired last August, Josh Black, had already been chosen by First Free. Interestingly Josh began attending the church in 1998 under Tom's leadership and joined the staff under Mike's tenure. Both men had the privilege of mentoring Josh, so it was only appropriate

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that they conducted Josh's installation together.

### What if the former pastor left poorly?

There are times when a pastor is dismissed for cause or when he pursues a more or less scorched earth policy as he leaves. We acknowledge that at such times a successor may need to leave well enough alone in regard to the previous pastor. But in most cases a poor exit is not intentional but rather the result of a combination of factors, with plenty of fault on both sides. If the former pastor is never allowed or encouraged to return, there is very little, if any, possibility of finding resolution to the conflict. Sadly, a poor exit inevitably worsens over time unless dealt with.

Those who feel their beloved pastor was poorly treated continue to stew as time goes on, and their frustration over his exit spills over into other issues and creates further conflict.

There is risk here, of course, because if certain leaders in the congregation give the returning pastor a cold shoulder, that only makes the wounds deeper. However, when a successor makes a concerted attempt to bring healing to the issues that caused the separation, he will invariably earn favor with all parties.

When Tom returned to Wichita to preach several years after leaving, the Elder Chair spontaneously approached the pulpit at the end of the sermon and invited the other elders to join him for a prayer of blessing. That was incredibly affirming to Tom.

When Tom moved to Faith Church Indianapolis, he heard the all too typical evaluations of his predecessors, going back three generations of pastors. In his second year, he invited each of these men to return to Faith to preach, affirming their leadership and its significance in the history of the church. On a couple of

occasions, he has gone out of the way to affirm these men when he felt they were inappropriately criticized in his presence. This was not passing judgment either way, but confirming that it was not acceptable to air past grievances to the new pastor. When his immediate successor returned to Indianapolis to lead the local crisis pregnancy ministry, he and his family attended Faith for a period of time with Tom's full blessing and were in no way a hindrance or threat to Tom's leadership, but supportive and encouraging.

### Why aren't good transitions more common?

Probably the number one reason why relationships between predecessors and successors suffer is insecurity.

The new pastor may fear that his place in the congregation's eyes is threatened if the former pastor continues to have an intimate relationship with his people. But unless there has

been a nasty divorce between the former pastor and the congregation, that fear is probably unfounded. Most church members don't want to return to "the good old days," and even if they wanted it, they know that's impossible. They just want to continue to enjoy a meaningful relationship, not get the former pastor back. After all, this pastor may have led them to Christ, baptized them, dedicated or married their children, and buried their loved ones.

Insecurity in the successor is understandable if he hears that his predecessor has empathized with disaffected members complaining about changes the new pastor has brought to the church. Thus the former pastor should never comment negatively or cast doubt on changes or new directions of the church and should always be sure to give the new pastor the benefit of the doubt. Even if the new pastor makes obvious errors in leadership, his predecessor expressing

opinions will not be helpful, only harmful.

Different growth patterns and differing strengths and weaknesses can be the source of temptation to jealousy and/or resentment of one's predecessor or successor. One cannot help but think of Saul's jealousy when he heard the refrain, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7,8; 21:11; 29:5). As Tom looks back to his first years at First Free, he readily confesses to feelings of insecurity in following Mike in Wichita, knowing of his well-deserved reputation for excellent preaching. Thus, Mike's warm support protected him from languishing in unhealthy comparisons.

### What does the Bible say?

Are there Scriptures which speak to this issue of pastoral transitions and relationships? The Apostle Paul founded a number of churches throughout Asia Minor. Since he was primarily a church planter, he turned all of those churches over to elders and pastors, colleagues like Timothy and Titus. Constantly Paul affirms these men and urges the congregations to listen to them and to value them highly (1 Cor. 16:10-11). Timothy was young, so Paul makes sure the church does not treat him with contempt (1 Tim. 4:12), while Titus was apparently so timid that Paul tries to make sure the church does not disregard him (Titus 2:15).

Of course, Paul was not only a former pastor; he was also an apostle with divine authority, so we should not assume that as former pastors we have the same authority in our former church as he demonstrated. But certainly we should be able to imitate him in regard to the care and concern he demonstrated to former parishioners (see the last chapters of Romans and 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy, where Paul mentions a number of individuals in the churches he founded, with whom he maintained close and personal relationships). Paul also frequently expresses his desire to revisit those churches.

Other Biblical passages can also inform this discussion. In Galatians 4:12-20 Paul discusses the conflict he

is having with his former parishioners in Galatia and reveals valuable steps in resolving such conflict. In 1 Corinthians 1:12-17 Paul talks about the party spirit in Corinth and denounces the tendency to follow one particular leader instead of giving the focus to Christ.

### Conclusion

All pastors other than church planters have one or more predecessors who have blazed the trail for them. They may have done well or poorly, but nearly all have given blood, sweat and tears. They deserve

to be honored and respected. Nearly all pastors will also have successors, eventually. It has been well said that the greatest measure of a man's ministry may be what happens to the church after he leaves. If so, then he should work hard to help his successor be a success. ■

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## OUR DECISION OF MOVING ON AFTER RETIREMENT

*By Gary L. Hamburger  
Former Pastor, Hope EFC, Albuquerque, NM*

**W**hen we made the decision to retire from full time Senior Pastoring, my wife and I determined from the outset that we would move on. We did not want to influence the calling of the next pastor in any way. We assured the leadership and the congregation that we loved them, and hard as it was, we needed to give the search committee and the future pastor opportunity to begin a new era in the church.

This was not easy for us. We had served the church eighteen years and had a wonderful relationship with the leadership and the congregation. We wanted to leave "on top," so to speak; or as one former Superintendent liked to say, "leave the stage while they are still clapping". However, we also sought to prepare the congregation for this departure through the last messages from the book of Philippians. It was a tender and rich time together.

Moreover, we sought to prepare the elders and the congregation for an Interim Pastor, as much as possible. I stressed to the people that they had not been drawn to me, by the Holy Spirit, but to the church. I was just a servant for a time.

As my wife and I left, we decided to visit forty churches in the Albuquerque area, not hard to do in a city of almost seven hundred thousand people. (We wanted to stay in this city because of children and grandchildren, as well as for other reasons.) We had received some advice to visit a number of churches before we settled on one to see what God is doing in His vineyard. It was both inspiring and discouraging. However, it was most enlightening.

At the conclusion of visiting these churches, we decided to settle in one less than one mile from our home. We did not have the option of attending another Evangelical Free

Church. The only other one in our city was planted by our former church, so we didn't want to cause any problem there. The other one is in an adjacent smaller city, and is forty minutes from our home. We wanted to be able to invite neighbors to our church. Additionally, our son is an associate pastor at the distant church.

I have been invited to do two weddings and a few funerals at our former church. This, we believe, will decrease as the new pastor gets established. However, I have practiced strictly "hands off" the workings of our former church. The congregation has been excellent in letting me do this. I have not received one phone call asking my opinion! That's just the way I want it. I

have handed off the baton to the next runner. It would be unhealthy to try to grab it back.

The new pastor invited me to sit on his ordination council recently. To me, that showed that he trusted me with a very important event in his life. That trust was in part due to staying out of our former church's business.

Even though we miss the people we served for so many years, it helps to know that our decision to move on helped them. It didn't hurt them. It helped us to move on, too. We are getting quite involved in the church we chose to join, in different ways. This is expanding our horizons. It is like beginning anew. We highly recommend it to those who are facing this decision.

We may attend events at our former church, as appropriate, but we have no plans to ever return as members. We believe that this promotes church health-both theirs and ours. ■

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# THINKING THROUGH POST-RETIREMENT CHURCH AFFILIATION

by Jack Kroeze  
Pastor, EFC of Blairstown, NJ

As our church was dealing with several staff transitions, the question arose: "What is Pastor Jack going to do?" Because I was 63 years old and had been the Senior Pastor in Blairstown for 23 years, the question was quite appropriate. I knew it was time for me to state my intentions. Though feeling a call from God to continue in the senior pastoral role so that there could be some stability during this period, I also realized that it would be helpful for the church to prepare for my eventual retirement. At a business meeting in September 2010, I read a statement stating I would retire from the Senior Pastorate of the EFC of Blairstown in the next 2 years. Since that meeting, the time has been more clearly defined to be the later part of 2012. I thought this was a fairly simple announcement, but for my wife, Eva, and me it triggered a lot of discussion about what this piece would look like.

In addition to considering all the things that go with retirement, we were immediately confronted with questions about our relationship with the church. Blairstown is a small, sub-rural community in northwest New Jersey. We own our home and made a decision that we would like to stay there in our retirement years. During what will be 25 years of pastoral ministry we built many deep relationships that have enriched our lives. We began to think through the potential options and consequences of our decision.

We discovered many options we needed to explore. Could we step into a part-time staff position and serve under a new Senior Pastor? Would it be possible to attend the church as a "former pastor" and maintain relationships without hindering the ministry of the new pastor? Would we need to go to another

church so that the church could move on without us and not be impacted negatively in any way? We are still not sure how this will all play out, but we want to be sensitive to what is best for the church, the new pastor, and ultimately for God's glory.

During the process I discovered areas that I am seeking to keep in mind as we explore the possibilities that will be before us.

- It has caused my wife and me to think through our ability to adapt to the role of simply being a "part of the family." I believe it takes a certain type of person to be able to let go of the reigns of leadership and be supportive of a new pastor while remaining within the church. It can be done, but there are issues that need to be navigated very carefully. During this past year, I have been open and honest about this area with the leadership of the church. It has been helpful for them as well as for us.
- We have sought advice and counsel from other retired EFC pastors. What we heard from a number who left their church and the community they had lived in was that they felt adrift, at least initially, because all their relationships, built over the years, were taken away. A number of these pastors were finding it very difficult to adjust to this dynamic in the early stages of their retirement. We found the wives were especially affected by this. So we are seeking to address this need with our eyes wide open.
- Our decision and choice will also be determined by the new Senior Pastor. Will he feel threatened by our presence? Will he know of our unconditional support? Will he feel the freedom to minister well without us looking over his shoulder? Will we be able to

handle people's comments to us in a way that is healthy? Perhaps a part of this would need to be framed out in an "official" covenant that the former pastor would agree to. This puts in place the parameters that would serve to protect this relationship. Part of my heartbeat is to be an encourager of younger pastors. What better place to do that than in the church where I formerly served!

- Lastly, we are already talking about what the next season of our life will look like, especially as it regards ministry. I like how John Piper views this change. He does not talk about retirement but "re-engaging." Just recently David Jeremiah shared this thought: "God's dimensions in life are not bound to the years of time." I certainly want to be active in doing "kingdom work." Thus I am now exploring opportunities that the Lord might have for me when I come to that official date of retirement. This has been very healthy. I don't just want to stop working and then seek to connect with something. I want to be proactive in seeing what God has for me in the future.

I know we will need to take some time away from the church so that adjustments can be made to a new pastor. This would be a time of refreshment, reflection, and rest for us, as well as a time for the people to develop in their relationship with their new pastor. After that period of time, we will need to see how God has led.

Over all of this is our constant prayer for ourselves and for the church. Our prayer is framed by the fact that our God is sovereign over our lives and sovereign over His church. We are not sure where this will lead, but thinking through the many questions that are prompted by retirement from Senior Pastoral ministry, especially a long term pastorate, is critical so that you might be prepared for this transition but also that the church would be ready as well. I am looking with great anticipation to the future as I walk with the Lord during this transition period. ■

# FORMALIZING THE RELATIONSHIP

Dr. Raleigh Galgan served for 30 years as the Senior Pastor of the Valley EFC in Vacaville, CA. On July 1, 2009 he handed off the Lead Pastor position to his successor and former Associate Pastor of Student Ministry Jeremy White. As part of the transition Dr. Galgan wrote and signed the following "Covenant for Alignment and Staff Unity." The formal nature of the document is due in part to the size and complexity of the church's structure. It was also created because the transition called for Dr. Galgan to remain on staff as the "Teaching and Equipping Pastor." This covenant illustrates one way a former pastor could define (and limit) the degree of his involvement in a church previously served.

## Covenant for Alignment & Staff Unity

- I) I will not make nor entertain from others any indifferent or critical comments about ministry changes of Valley Church unless my input is sought from the Executive Pastor or the Senior Pastor or the Elder Board.**
- A) If I disagree with the leadership decisions at Valley Church I will only speak my opinion once to the Executive Pastor & the Senior Pastor and then give it to God in personal prayer.
  - B) If my opinion is sought by the Elder Board I will share it with the Elder Board.
  - C) If my opinion cannot come under submission & with respect for the leaders over me I will resign my ministry position and adhere to the Guidelines for Resignation.
- II) If I disagree with a decision or the direction of the Executive Pastor, Senior Pastor or Elder Board.**
- A) I will only speak my opinion once to the Executive Pastor & the Senior Pastor and give it to God in personal prayer.
  - B) If my opinion is sought by the Elder Board I will share my opinion
  - C) If my opinion cannot come under submission with respect for the leaders over me I will resign my ministry position and adhere to the Guidelines for Resignation.
- III) I will give my Advice and opinion on church life, ministry decisions or church direction only when I am asked by the Executive Pastor, Senior Pastor or the Elder Board.**
- A) I will not share a neutral or less than positive opinion on church life, ministry decisions or church direction with any one outside the Elder Board.
  - B) If my opinion cannot come under submission & with respect for the leaders over me I will resign my ministry position and adhere to the Guidelines for Resignation.
- IV) If I have a conviction that puts me in conflict with any ministry decision or direction.**
- A) I will share my conviction with the Executive Pastor and Senior Pastor and give it to God in personal prayer.
  - B) I will share my conviction with the Elder Board only if I am invited to do so.
  - C) If, in good conscience I cannot come under submission & with respect for the leaders over me I will resign my ministry position and adhere to the Guidelines for Resignation.
- V) Guidelines for Resignation**
- A) If I or my spouse cannot in good conscience and with a positive attitude be supportive and speak well of the leaders over us and their decisions then I will offer my immediate resignation asking for a grace period of transition with a six month salary severance
  - B) I will immediately begin worshipping and/or serving in a church outside Solano County.
  - C) I will not discuss Valley Church's leadership or ministry with others unless it is totally positive and supportive.
  - D) I will only attend Valley Church for special events with the permission of the Elder Board.

As Unto the Lord,  
Raleigh Galgan