**Should Your Church Consider an Intentional Interim Pastor?**

Conventional wisdom used to suggest that a church should make use of an interim pastor in cases where there has been significant conflict or where the pastor left under duress. But equally challenging for a new pastor is the situation where he follows a long-tenured, well-loved predecessor. Quite often such a pastor fails to measure up to the man before him, and his tenure is therefore short because “he’s not Pastor Bob.”

Between those two extremes are all sorts of situations where an intentional interim pastor can be of tremendous help to a church in transition. The pastoral search process usually takes from 9 to 18 months. Pulpit supply could help meet the need if preaching were all there was to consider. Even so, a steady stream of even the best communicators leaves a church longing for consistency in the pulpit. Asking staff members to fill the void left by their former pastor takes them out of their job descriptions into roles they weren’t hired to fulfill, and leads to staff burnout.

An intentional interim pastor brings the innocent eyes of an outsider, the experience of a seasoned pastor, the skills of an interventionist, and the commitment not to stay. This makes him a great resource as the church leaders focus on thinking objectively about the ministry God has called the church to. He provides a good bridge between past and future ministry in the church, and allows the pastoral search team to slow down and do a thorough job without feeling rushed.

We highly recommend the services of Interim Pastors Ministries, an organization that has been placing intentional interim pastors since 1990. IPM trains the pastors it deploys, and coaches them while they are on the field. We recommend that church leaders discuss their needs with their denominational leaders, and contact IPM. After listening to your needs, IPM will provide the resumes of two or three qualified interims. Church leaders should study these resumes carefully, conduct limited interviews, and bring their top candidate in for a candidating weekend, culminating in a congregational vote.

We have yet to experience a situation where a church leadership team has regretted making use of an intentional interim pastor.