

APPROPRIATE GOALS FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD

- 1. To Maintain the Viability of the Church.** The ongoing vital program that is expected of the congregation consists of pastoral duties plus the Christian activities of the laity. Continuing the needed programs already underway and efforts to help make them more meaningful are the responsibility of an interim leader.
- 2. To Resolve Feelings of Grief.** Pastoral visitation involves personal, direct contact with individuals. Intentional expression of interest in their feelings, more often than not, will provide healing catharsis.
- 3. To Reinforce the Ministry of the Laity.** Encouragement of participation and leadership by laypersons is vital. The Interim period is particularly part time to develop lay leadership. An elder (member of the laity) is to accompany a pastor when home communion is administered. Many responsibilities in the church may be carried out by laypersons rather than by a pastor.
- 4. To Clarify the Mission of the Church.** Congregations need to be reminded that Christians are here to serve, not only to be served. The interim leader may be the voice of the larger Christian community at a time when the church is turned inward to its own needs. A minister teaches by example, by preaching and by formal teaching.
- 5. To Deal with Special Needs of the Church.** Every church is different. As a result of diagnosis, the interim leader will learn of specific problems in the congregation. Through knowledge of techniques in conflict management and tactful suggestions by the “outsider” (the disinterested person, the interim minister) beneficial changes may be effected.
- 6. To Emphasize Fellowship and Reconciliation.** Opportunities for encouraging Christian fellowship are many. For example, arranging for a coffee hour before or after worship services is helpful. The incorporation of “congregational concerns” during a worship service can become a time of real sharing.
- 7. To Strengthen Denominational Ties.** The interim leader personally maintains a good relationship with the denomination and encourages the local church to participate in denomination-wide activities and programs.
- 8. To Increase the Potential for a Successful Ministry by the Next Installed Pastor.** The interim leader is future oriented. The interim leader is concerned with the coming of a new pastor and is helping to prepare the congregation for the arrival. In addition, he/she communicates with the new pastor any information that might be helpful.