

**MAKING THE GOOD MOVE:  
TRANSITIONS IN  
MINISTRY APPOINTMENT**

**Doug Anderson**

**NORTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
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## **PREPARING TO END WELL**

**Importance of saying “good-bye” and letting go**

**What will be your last sermon?**

**Examples: “Good Grief” / “The Focus of Our Faith”**

**“Thank You For Being Partners in Ministry”**

**Philippians 1:3-11 is a great text for “good-bye”**

**Don’t unload your “baggage” in a final sermon or sermons**

**Good-bye letter with several reasons why you are leaving (some hear one reason, some hear other reasons)**

**Leave the parsonage in excellent and clean condition (walk-through with Trustees & PPRC)**

**Leave necessary notes for new pastor**

**Make sure the church is planning a “hello” for the new pastor**

## **PASTORAL POWER AND TRUST**

**"Power" is the ability/resources/ energy to accomplish purpose**

**Power is given by God and given by the people we serve**

**The "change" analogy:**

- 1. initial stack of change**
- 2. additional change from being right  
being relational**
- 3. cashing in your change as needed and before  
you leave**

**"Trust" is therefore developed by being relational and being right**

**Smaller church – primarily relational**

**Larger church – primarily being right (right issues)**

**Leading change for the sake of the Mission requires trust!**

## **FOCUSING ON THE MISSION**

**Being a Great Church means living consistently and well our Common Mission  
(the Great Commandment and the Great Commission!)**

**Lead by this Mission as lay and clergy together.**

**Be a “Champion of the Mission”.**

**Focus on the right issues.**

**Ask good questions.**

**Starting well means more than just getting along as lay and clergy –  
it means living out our Mission from God well together.**

**So it is more than feeling good – it is living as a Great Church!**

## PASTORAL TIME-USE AND PRIORITIES

How would you prioritize your time to help your church?

\_\_\_ Visitation - calling in the homes of members or at their places of work in a systematic program to meet each member on his/her own turf.

\_\_\_ Teaching - planning and/or teaching classes for church school teachers, teaching short term classes, teaching the confirmation classes, training laity in evangelism, leadership, etc.

\_\_\_ Counseling - counseling with individuals on personal and spiritual problems, with couples planning to be married, with those who are hospitalized, etc.

\_\_\_ Administration - serving as the "executive" to the congregation, working with the committees, helping to plan the financial program of the church, working with committees on the planning and implementing of programs.

\_\_\_ Evangelism - calling on the unchurched people in the community, bearing witness to the Good News, calling on prospective new members.

\_\_\_ Enabler - responding to lay leadership as a "coordinator", helping other identify their own special call to service, and enabling them to respond.

\_\_\_ Community Leader - serving as a volunteer leader in the community to help make this a better world for all of God's children.

\_\_\_ The Leader - serving as the leader of leaders in the congregation, the person who articulates the vision and focuses the work of the whole congregation on that vision.

\_\_\_ Personal and Spiritual Growth - developing & following a discipline of Bible and other devotional study, participating in programs of continuing education, and helping to plan and lead opportunities of growth for others.

\_\_\_ Denominational and Ecumenical Responsibilities - carrying a fair share of denominational responsibilities, participating in ecumenical groups and other cooperative bodies.

\_\_\_ Leading Worship and Preaching - planning and conducting worship services, including sermon preparation and working with others who lead and participate in worship.

\_\_\_ Office Management - handling the correspondence, channeling communication, keeping records, getting out bulletins, newsletters, etc.

*(Adapted from Lyle Schaller, The Pastor and the People, page 46)*

## **CHOOSING WELL THE PACE OF CHANGE**

**You need to develop trust in order to lead well in your new appointment.  
Trust is developed by positive relationships and doing what is needed.  
Which to emphasize first is the key to getting off to a good start.**

**Either extreme can be dangerous to your leadership:**

- miss the train because they move ahead without you; or
- get so far ahead they mistake you for the enemy and shoot at you!

**The choice is the pace of change and implementation along this continuum:  
Slow and Easy (relational, people, caring, responsive)**

**Fast and Hard (right decisions and issues, leading, initiating)**

**Key clues to discern a good balance and which direction to emphasize:**

- SLOW**
1. previous pastorate for you was hurtful
  2. major congregational conflict
  3. major community change
  4. strong accelerated program and activity
  5. small church (under 100 in average worship)

- FAST**
1. previous pastorate for you was supportive
  2. people are pretty together and unified
  3. community and stable
  4. church is passive and folks are eager to get going
  5. large church (over 250 in average worship)

**Ways to gather clues to discern the pace of ministry:**

1. Statistics
2. Interview with PPRC – tone, future orientation, pastoral expectations, level of conflict
3. Conversation with previous pastor
4. Church size

**If you are in doubt and not a small church, lean toward fast and hard – this is probably needed 75% of the time**

**If you are not comfortable with the pace that the church needs ... adapt!  
Pastors serve churches, not churches serve pastors.**

## **GETTING ACQUAINTED WELL**

**Begin to communicate your plan to get acquainted with the congregation.**

**Tell them how you are meeting with leaders individually.**

**Explain how you plan to meet persons in the congregation  
(and how your spouse will be involved):**

**Small church is through home visits.**

**Schedule these in advance.**

**Do a listening visit.**

**Finish within a year.**

**Large church is through cottage meetings.**

**15-16 persons in each cottage meeting with a scribe**

**1 minute for each person for a thumbnail description of self**

**20-25 minutes for each question (answers recorded by scribe)**

**What does this church do well?**

**What is the biggest challenge/opportunity facing this church  
in the next 12-24 months?**

**If you had a magic wand that could perform a midsize miracle  
for this church, what would it be?**

**How has this church specifically helped you grow spiritually?**

**Finish within 3-4 months and follow up with a leaders retreat.**

**Midsized is a combination**

**Report on your progress as you go to increase credibility and patience.**

## **REGULAR MEETINGS OF PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Meet monthly for the first year.**

**Give good feedback.**

**What is going well with the pastor's ministry?**

**If the pastor could change or improve one thing to strengthen his/her ministry for the sake of the Mission, what would it be?**

**What does the congregation need to be doing for the sake of the Mission?**

**Clarify expectations and time use.**

**Communicate widely and regularly.**

**Be visibly, verbally, consistently, unyieldingly supportive of the expectations.**

**Have a clear process for concerns and issues (Matthew 18).**

## **STAYING SPIRITUALLY FIT**

**Plan for your spiritual fitness:**

- day off**
- family time**
- personal time**

**Introverted / Extroverted -- your spiritual growth will be different**

**Allow people to minister to you**

**“Being” -- not just “Doing”**

**Use discernment for your decisions (especially about the “pace” of ministry as you start)**

**Laugh a lot, care a lot, and pray a lot**