



Pastor Candidate Questionnaire

Please provide your response to the following nine questions and return to the Pastor Search Committee with the other required application materials. Please provide complete answers and use as much space as you need.

1) How did you learn of the Pastor position at Christ Fellowship Church?

I am in good contact with the Presbytery, and I heard about Ed's death the next day.

2) The Pastor Search Committee is operating under the instructions that it is to nominate a *Pastor that they feel is led by God to be Christ Fellowship Church's next Pastor.* How do you feel that you are being led by God to be Christ Fellowship Church's next pastor? Why do you feel that God is specifically calling you to lead Christ Fellowship Church?

We don't know that for sure, yet. Like the church, we are in an exploration process. However, CFC strongly appeals to us because it comprises several values in our lives: a small church that's eager to grow; EPC, Colorado and Ft. Collins where our roots are very deep; stated priority of children and youth; the energy, intellectual passions and young people of a university town; finally, vision for training vocational ministers. These have all been criteria of ours for returning to pastoral ministry in Colorado even before Ed passed away.

3) Given the application materials provided (Congregational Survey Results, Church Information Form, Job Description, etc.), what do you feel is the Lord's vision for Christ Fellowship Church? What do you think He is calling on you to accomplish at Christ Fellowship Church? Do you share His vision? Please be as specific as possible, providing specific examples, short-term and long-term goals and objectives, etc.

The church seems to want a vibrant worship service, effective ministries to children and youth and a season of local outreach. Because the pastor's position is vacant, the church is looking for a pastor to lead them in these areas.

I am strongly interested in CFC because these priorities fit both my priorities and my experience. I have fifteen years experience at Sunday morning worship planning and

leadership at Bear Creek EPC, Dillon Community Church (DCC) and the International Church of Luzern (ICL). I love to preach, and I have had good response to my preaching in all those settings.

At Bear Creek, I did a stint as the Director of Children's Ministries and at DCC and the ICL I made sure that Children's Ministries were one of the top priorities of the ministry. I also often participated in the Children's Ministries in those settings via a Kidz Korner segment in the worship service and at VBS where for some years I put together a kids band to lead group singing. At DCC, we hosted a Montessori school, and once a week I led the kids in group songs. I continue to do this kind of song leading for kids, such as this weekend at the Kids Stuff Sunday School retreat with our local church.

My experience with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) in high school and at CU, Boulder, my years as a youth worker at Bear Creek and my time as a middle school and high school teacher here at BFA root me deeply in the importance of and development of youth ministry.

I also have a strong desire to facilitate a church culture that draws college students. At CU, Boulder I was involved in the FCA leadership to reach out to students via a weekly bible study, and at the ICL we found our worship services attractive to the young adults going to the various vocational schools in Luzern – hotel and business management, language schools, and the like. The prospect of staying involved in the lives of college students pleases me.

In terms of outreach, at both DCC and at the ICL I helped the churches reorganize their missions ministries around a stated vision. I also led training seminars in relationship evangelism using the Willow Creek *Becoming a Contagious Christian* curriculum, as well as modeling and teaching what I call "Common Ground" outreach; meaning using the leisure activities or community involvement that we have in common with non-believers to build friendships and to model and share the love of Christ. My years in overseas missions have also increased my awareness of expats in my own country, and, wherever we land in the next phase of ministry, I am interested in reaching out to internationals.

The personality style of the pastor your survey indicates matches mine. I really enjoy the personal side of pastoral ministry. I like to mix with the congregation before and after the service to meet, welcome and take an interest in people. In a smaller church, I like keeping track of people's birthdays, including the kids', and calling people to remember their day with them. I like to hear their story and what's important to them. I like hearing what people have learned and learning from them.

Finally, Bonnie and I have talked on several occasions about how years in ministry equip a person to mentor younger ministers. We talked about how important it is to be ready to encourage and train the next generation, and we expect our next pastoral position to include this. Before considering CFC, we envisioned this ministry at a church with more professional staff than CFC, however, encouraging and equipping a seminarian is similar. Therefore, we like the fact that CFC states that the next pastor has to have the desire to nurture a seminarian.

4) What are your gifts? How has the Lord shaped you and prepared you to accomplish His vision for Christ Fellowship Church? Please cite specific examples of education, training, personal experience, or professional experience that you have received that you feel have prepared you for this role.

Please see the EPC Personal Information Form for my answer regarding spiritual gifts and learned skills. I believe that my reply to question #3 answers #4. A couple more thoughts might be helpful to summarize where my training and experience have brought me. Inside the church, I am a preacher, trainer and care-giver. Outside the church, I look for a few strategic venues in which to build mutual friendships in the community and allow God to use those for evangelism.

5) Can you share elements about your daily walk with the Lord? What do you do to not only draw yourself close to Him, but also keep yourself close? What is involved? How do you know that you are led by Him and by Him alone?

I am very regular with an early morning quiet time; before the household is up. I use this time for private worship – bowing before God and pouring out praise to Him. I use a private prayer book in which I have written down a wide variety of prayers that have been meaningful to me throughout my life for the content of my prayers. I have also written down the lyrics of my favorite 25 or so hymns, and I mix in singing with my spoken prayers. (You can imagine how long it took me slowly to write everything down in this book, and once last year I misplaced it for two months! I was so bummed to have to start over, but a private prayer book like this has become a very important part of my devotional life, and I was prepared to start rewriting it. Thanks to God, I found it!)

My regular devotional times also involve regular reading. I'm always reading through Scripture, and I always have a history book in tow. I read them both in this morning time.

In terms of staying close, that's a humbling challenge for all of us, but I was deeply impacted by Brother Lawrence's *Practicing the Presence of God*. This fabulous little book written by a 17th-century, disabled, French monk really challenged me to cultivate a sense of God's presence once I'm out of the prayer closet. A phrase from Lawrence is that we should do everything with a sense of His presence, out of love for Him and in a way that pleases Him. Lawrence worked in the kitchen, and he said that he strived even to pick up the straw off the floor out of love for God. Cool.

I was also deeply challenged by A.W. Tozer's fine little book, *The Pursuit of God*. He calls on people to find the beauty and the value of extended times of solitude simply to prostrate ourselves before God to adore Him. Thus, my little prayer book and direction from people such as Lawrence and Tozer have helped me to improve at practicing worship throughout the day.

Also, as a senior in high school I started memorizing Scripture through the Navigators Topical Memory System. Since then, I have made it a practice usually to have a passage of Scripture that I'm in the process of memorizing, or of re-memorizing, and silently reciting these Scriptures to myself at stop lights, waiting in line, in moments of temptation or stress. This has been a powerful way to stay close to God. This importance of this was confirmed for me when I learned

that it was a practice of rabbis in Jesus' culture to chose a text of Scripture for the day, memorize it, recite it and think about it through the day. When I can keep that focus, it's a powerful and joyous way to stay close to God.

Of course, obedience is a big part of staying close to God. In John 14:21, Jesus said that if we love Him, then we will obey His commands. Simply the act of being mindful of His commands and eager to follow them is an act of staying close.

How do we know that God is leading us? Again, that's a very humbling question. Many times throughout history people have done wrong thinking that God led them. It's a huge statement to say, "God told me". However, if we're immersed in Scripture, if we delight ourselves in loving God by dying to self in order to serve people, if we decide not to love earthly glory and riches and to store up our treasures in heaven, if we ask God's guidance and seek out His voice in the counsel of biblically wise people, then we stand a good chance of doing what He wants us to do.

6) Tell us about the way or ways in which you expand your biblical and scriptural knowledge. What have you read in the last six months that has really inspired you and helped you to grow spiritually? What courses have you completed or what seminars have you attended in the past three years? What did you learn from them? How did this exposure expand your biblical and scriptural knowledge?

My biblical knowledge expands by regular reading of the Scripture. This is the mining of the ore that then needs refining. I refine that knowledge by reading commentaries. I particularly enjoy reading commentaries that tell me about the historical and cultural context of Scripture. Much of our understanding can be lost if we don't understand the cultural setting of a passage.

In the last few years, my responsibilities as a middle school social studies teacher have taken me away from on going biblical training. I've spent almost all of my study time learning the curriculum and planning lessons. This is a huge chore for beginning teachers.

An example of my on going biblical training before becoming a teacher, however, is that in 2002 and 2004 I went on two biblical studies tours with Ray Vander Laan's *That the World May Know* ministry in Turkey and Israel. These tours, plus my subsequent reading, provided me a rich season of learning about the Jewish/rabbinic setting of the New Testament.

7) Have you ever been involved in mediating a conflict situation? What was your role in mediating the conflict? What guiding principles did you apply in resolving the situation? What was the outcome? Do you feel that you successfully resolved the conflict? Why or why not? Is there anything that you would do differently next time?

Yes, of course; as a father, as the head of a church staff at DCC, as the leader of a youth ministry and as a fellow Christian. Once, while still in youth ministry, I was so pleased with a creative lesson on why friendships die. Then, right after the meeting, two guys went outside and got in a fight with each other over a girl in the group!

The EPC Personal Info form asked about this, too, and I'll just cut and paste in that in:

I try to deal with conflict by creating understanding through communication. People need to speak to be understood rather than to win a point. And people need to listen to understand rather than to prepare a response. This means talking about one's own feelings and reactions in a circumstance rather than hurling accusations at the other person. It also means responding to people's comments first with reflective listening before adding my perspective to the mix. I've found that this kind of communication creates empathy, unity and the desire to find a solution rather than to punish each other. Then we can get on with brain-storming solutions to the conflict.

If there are deeply hurt feelings, then it's much harder to get to solutions. First, there needs to be confession of sin and hurt, asking forgiveness and asking the Holy Spirit to use time to heal the hurts as trust is slowly rebuilt.

However, I have also learned that occasionally two parties simply will not agree on something and unity is impossible. Then each party needs to do what they think is right and entrust themselves to God's judgment.

All that being said, however, I must emphasize that I am not trained as a therapist. I am a bible preacher, teacher and trainer and a pastoral care giver. When I encounter serious mental disorders or deeply engrained relationship dysfunctions, I refer people to those who can help them.

8) What are your compensation requirements? If you are the candidate called by God and nominated to be Christ Fellowship Church's next pastor, is there any other assistance that you will need, such as relocation assistance, sale of home, etc.?

We need a full-time salary enough to support one 7th grader at home and help out with living expenses or a couple of kids in college. This includes enough salary to pay a mortgage on a reasonable house. If there is a real estate agent at CFC, then it would be nice to get some help finding the right house. We also need the normal EPC benefits of health, life insurance, vacation and study leave. If CFC could help some with relocation, that would be thoughtful and encouraging, but it will be too much to foot the entire bill.

9) If you are the candidate nominated, when would you be available? Are there any restrictions on your availability?

We are available in June, 2011. I realize that's over a year away, but I've already signed a contract for the 2010-2011 school year at the BFA, and it's Eliza's senior year here. We don't feel good about breaking a contract or about uprooting her at the last moment.

This may present a challenge to CFC, however, we decided to apply because we think there is such high potential for a match here. We trust God that, if we are to be the candidate, then CFC will feel strongly enough about it to make it work for some months before we can get there.