

LOSC Recommendations Regarding Pastoral Matters

I. Regarding matters of pastor compensation:

Recommendation 1: Create a Pastor Compensation Policy to include the following guidelines:

- a. A plan to increase CLBA/CLBC pastors' salaries to the mid-range of all denominations in the United States/Canada.
- b. Survey data should be based on a comparison of all compensation plans of churches within a reasonable radius of each church, determined by population density.
- c. Compensation guidelines should focus on disposable income after all taxes (including Self-Employment taxes) are paid rather than total salary.

Recommendation 2: Create a policy so that when a church is seeking a new or additional pastor, prospective names will be released when the compensation package for that pastor is reviewed and approved by the Office of the President as consistent with the Pastor Compensation Policy. This policy should include the following guidelines:

- a. The Office of the President shall have responsibility for implementing this policy.
- b. The implementation plan should include an education process that the assigned staff member will use to proactively meet with districts and churches to educate them on the need to:
 1. pay their pastors competitive salaries.
 2. understand the unique compensation and tax burdens pastors have as dual-status employees.
- c. Set recommended salary base line increases for each year for all pastors.
- d. Encourage churches to assess their priorities and compensate their pastors appropriately.

II. Regarding care of our pastors:

Recommendation 3: Create a continuum of care to meet the needs of pastors and their families in order to prevent and identify early problems and to provide easy access to the necessary level of care.

Recommendation 4: Create a "Pastors Assistance Program" (PAP) office for the CLB (modeled after a corporate Employee Assistance Program) to include the following guidelines:

- a. The PAP will be a function of the Office of the President and the staff member will report directly to the President.
- b. The PAP office will be staffed by a qualified Christian counselor, preferably a pastor, who can:
 - 1) make the contacts with and qualify potential Christian counselors in areas of the country where there are CLB congregations.
 - 2) receive calls from regional mentors, pastors, pastors' families and or congregations who might need a referral to a Christian counselor in their area.
 - 3) select Christian counselors who have an understanding of and appreciation of CLB theology.
 - 4) make the final referrals as determined necessary.
- c. The PAP office will also provide support for insurance issues including:
 - 1) getting counselors certified with the pastors' insurance if necessary.
 - 2) helping with filing claims as necessary.
- d. Where there is financial hardship, the Pastors Assistance Program Professional may request the use of the Benevolence Fund in order to reduce the financial anxieties associated with securing outside help.
- e. PAP may support the Office of the President as needed in conflict resolution situations between pastors and congregations that do not require a professional referral.

Recommendation 5: Create a “regional mentor” program within defined regions and CLB church clusters to include the following guidelines:

- a. Assign a “regional mentor” to follow up with pastors in well-defined regions.
- b. Regional mentors will initiate appropriate contacts with each pastor in their region in order to:
 - 1) provide a safe place to talk about ministry issues, problems and conflicts.
 - 2) identify potential conflicts early in the conflict cycle.
- c. The regional mentor will communicate with the counselors set up in his region by the PAP professional.
- d. The regional mentor could be a part-time position in each region.
 - 1) Staffed with recently retired pastors, pastors who are contemplating retirement or a professional counselor.
 - 2) Regional mentors must be able to demonstrate to the PAP that they have the skills and sensitivity to serve in this role.
 - 3) Regional mentors shall undergo appropriate training, possibly by the PAP Professional.

Recommendation 6: Create a policy for training pastors and congregational leaders in healthy conflict resolution to include the following guidelines:

- a. Add Peacemaker Ministries training or like material to the training curriculum in Seminary.
- b. Establish continuing education goals for serving pastors to complete this training within 2 years.
- c. Make this training available to congregational leaders.

Recommendation 7: Develop a calendar of events for the continuing education, development and encouragement of pastors.

- a. Develop some pastors’ in-service training experiences in such a way that brings all pastors together for a common experience.
- b. Encourage a variety of study and network opportunities.
- c. Possible topics might include:
 - 1) leadership with emphasis on defining the difference between leadership and management, focusing on what is right, not on what needs to be fixed, modeling instead of directing.
 - 2) change with an emphasis on analysis (what really needs to be changed), tact and diplomacy, minimizing conflict.
 - 3) missiology with an emphasis on the mission of the local church and intentional relational evangelism.
 - 4) the Law Gospel approach to Pastoral Care.
 - 5) preaching that is faithful to Scripture and expounds Law and Gospel.
 - 6) teaching that is based on sound Biblical exegesis.

III. Regarding communications:

Recommendation 8: Create and implement a plan to improve communications between pastors, districts and the synod.

- a. Define concrete goals for the increased use of technology.

Recommendation 9: Define reduced paper goals for communications between synodical offices and pastors to include the following guidelines:

- a. Increase use of email and synodical website for information distribution and feedback.
- b. Change information delivery to all electronic for those pastors who use technology today.
- c. Move more information requests to on-line access.

IV. Regarding the seminary and seminary training:

Recommendation 10: Create new ways to make ministry training more accessible and develop residency goals and requirements that increase such accessibility.

- a. Thoroughly study each seminary course and determine those, which for quality and content purposes, should be delivered in a group setting.
- b. Develop more courses through seminary extension to take advantage of remote course delivery opportunities.

Recommendation 11: Make available a new laptop to every student entering seminary.

- a. The laptop should be loaded with all the software necessary for use in the seminary (MS-Word, a sophisticated Bible program with Greek and Hebrew).
- b. Costs may be added to tuition over the three years.
- c. Staff should seek outside sources of financial support.

Recommendation 12: Create a web or email based strategy for submission of written projects and papers.

Recommendation 13: Create a web-based strategy for delivering final grades on projects and courses.

Recommendation 14: Develop a web-based registration process.

Recommendation 15: Create a client/server based shared calendar system that includes all public events (school calendar), due dates etc.

- a. Allow students to subscribe to the calendar and use it as their own calendar on their own computers.
- b. Provide students the ability to create and manage “private” events and To-Do’s so they can use a single calendar for all personal and academic purposes.
- c. License this calendar to them so they can use it after they leave the seminary, making it unnecessary to learn a new calendar system when they leave.

Recommendation 16: Create a policy and practice in the seminary to include the following guidelines:

- a. Each seminary student and his/her family, who will be or might be called to a serving position in the CLB, will have completed an appropriate number of counseling sessions with a professional Christian counselor prior to graduation.
- b. Counselors will be those who have a passion for the ministry.
- c. Counselors will be selected by the Pastors’ Assistance Program Professional in consultation with the Seminary President and Practical Theology Professor.
- d. Costs may be added to tuition and spread out over the three years of seminary experience.

V. Regarding Lay Leadership:

Recommendation 17: Develop and implement training in CLB theology and polity as well as leadership skills for Lay Leaders in our churches.

- a. Develop a set of theological, role and skill standards for elder candidates.
- b. Develop and implement a training program for certification of elders.