

# The Changeover Zone



*“Pastoral leadership is not a trophy to lift;  
it is a baton to pass.”*  
*Bruce Miller*

**Jim Ozier**  
**Jim Griffith**

**THE CHANGEOVER ZONE**  
*“Becoming Better at Pastoral Transitions”*

**Session 1**

→  
**Discussion**

*“I laid a  
foundation, and  
another person  
is building upon  
it...  
”1 Cor 3:10*

**Session One:**  
**Success In The Change-Over Zone**

**1. Understanding the Changeover zone**

A lane of approximately 20 meters where a fast-paced series of events occurs seamlessly that results in a successful passing of the baton.

In the church it is a length of time where carefully thought-out, prepared-for, practiced roles come together with remarkable results in passing the baton.

This workshop explores every role involved with a pastoral transition in the Change-Over Zone of ministry:

- What supervisors can do to ensure a smooth handoff
- What the exiting founder can do to prepare to pass the baton
- What the new pastor can do to seamlessly receive the baton
- What the church must do so their new pastor gets off to a running start
- Other?

**2. How long is the Change Over Zone? It \_\_\_\_\_**

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>a.</b> Typical transition   | <b>d.</b> New Church           |
| <b>b.</b> Long term transition | <b>e.</b> “Planned Succession” |
| <b>c.</b> Burning Platform     | <b>f.</b> Other?               |

Whether it a planned succession or planning for a succession.... It is a period of time in which the various participants – the pastors, the church, and supervisors-- execute a set of actions that have been thought out in advance (with the skills and strengths of the runners in mind), planned and prepared for, and carried out with the precision of a successful team.

**3.** “The 100 days \_\_\_\_\_ appointment begins”

**4.** “The first 100 days \_\_\_\_\_ appointment begins”

**5.** “Role- \_\_\_\_\_ Transference”

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**Session 2**

**Session Two...**

**The First 2<sup>nd</sup> Pastor For A Church**

The first 2<sup>nd</sup> pastor follows a Founder; someone who planted the church. To better understand the dynamics of the church and the planter, attend a New Church Leadership Institute or Boot Camp.

Whether the founder is a Rock Star or just a good ole pastor... relate to the planter by:

- Asking & Listening
- \_\_\_\_\_What He/She has done
- Affirming publicly
- Never \_\_\_\_\_.....
- ....and you will always be compared ☺

So you will need to

- Be positive; be yourself; be appreciative
- Learn the church and mission field culture
- Celebrate, celebrate, celebrate
- Cast vision
- Understand you \_\_\_\_\_a past AND you must \_\_\_\_\_a future

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**Session 2**

**A. Differences & Distinctions Between Founder & 2<sup>nd</sup> Pastor**

- Who Leaves? The younger the church the more likely that the people who are there are there because they \_\_\_\_\_ it!
- Consumer-Producer Gap: The younger the church the shorter the time it takes to get a first time guest actively \_\_\_\_\_ in ministry; As the church ages, it tends to take longer
- Authority: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Pastor doesn't have the inherent authority of the planter (Tom Arthur blog) \_\_\_\_\_
- In plant, people see pastor as \_\_\_\_\_ representative'; 2<sup>nd</sup> pastor often perceived as representative of the \_\_\_\_\_

**B. The Church going through its first transition**

- ... is about 7 years old when change in pastoral leadership
- There exists significant \_\_\_\_\_, but it hasn't particularly effected attendance (people have left church or called meetings to deal with it)
- will report that \_\_\_\_\_ were either not in place or poorly run
- Attendance will continue to grow, but at a slower pace (could be function of church's age as much as transition in leadership)
- Doesn't generally mean wholesale change in \_\_\_\_\_...
- May be suffering from “Founder's Syndrome” or “Hezekiah Syndrome” or \_\_\_\_\_.

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**Session 3**

**Session Three:**  
**Why The Changeover Zone is so Critical?**

The Church in its 1<sup>st</sup> transition is at risk.

Every situation is different:

But regardless of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church or the \_\_\_\_\_ for its first pastoral change, this transition has no precedence in the congregation and can cause fear, confusion, anger, and grief. This is a fragile time...the future is at risk

Every situation is different:

When people leave as a result of the transition, they are likely to leave the \_\_\_\_\_ as well as the church.

**1. Financial \_\_\_\_\_ is at risk**

¼ to ½ million spent on new church over 48 months by the Conference; Sometimes another \$ 50k-100k from mother church; that much more from the launch team members and early participants...often takes million dollars to start a new church and get it to charter.

**2. \_\_\_\_\_ development is at risk**

People’s trust in connection/denomination is at risk;  
People’s trust in ‘the church’ is at risk; morale is at risk

**3. The \_\_\_\_\_ is at risk**

The church has no precedence for its first transition; its leaders frequently do not comprehend or buy in to tribal polity; growth is at risk ... will it maintain, decline, or grow? The discipleship of members is at risk; the relationships and bonds between members is at risk...people will react differently to the first pastoral change, often fracturing friendships.

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**Session 3**

**4. \_\_\_\_\_ are at risk**

DS's often report that their reputation is on the line during this time of transition; 2<sup>nd</sup> pastors sometimes fear that the remainder of their career is on the line. “thrown under the bus” is a phrase we often hear.

**5. Even more, \_\_\_\_\_ are at risk**

People have invested their time, energy, resources in the new church; people have come to know Christ through their church. People have formed their spiritual identity through their church; they have connected their belief in God via their experience in the church.

**→  
Questions**

This first pastoral change can also result in a stronger, healthier church. HOW the transition happens makes all the difference.

Tom Arthur was a newly appointed 2nd Pastor to Sycamore Creek UMC in Lansing. He wrote in his blog that as he went into his appointment he was burdened by the following questions:

- Will church fall apart under my leadership?
- How do I build upon success of founder?
- How can I fill shoes of beloved founding pastor?
- How can I lead in the context that has only the experience of one leader?

Session 4

**Session Four...**  
**Considering Becoming A 2nd Pastor or Following**  
**a Long Tenured Pastorate?**

What current 2nd Pastors tell potential 2nd Pastors...

**A. The Essential 7 characteristics needed:**

1. Positive \_\_\_\_\_
2. Good \_\_\_\_\_
3. Culturally \_\_\_\_\_
4. Personal & \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ skin,
7. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. The 8 Great Skills Needed:\***

1. The ability to learn existing church \_\_\_\_\_  
and respond appropriately to it
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ communicator
3. The ability to develop & apply \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ intentionality
5. \_\_\_\_\_ & motivating
6. The ability to learn & respond to needs of  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The ability to clarify & \_\_\_\_\_ personal Call  
to Ministry
8. Being a \_\_\_\_\_ agent with patience

*\*Don't be fooled! A candidate's actual track record can be more important than his or her skills!*

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**Session 5**

*“History tells sad stories of good churches that are calcified as monuments to former pastors”  
Colin Hansen*

**Session Five:**  
**The Role of Supervisors**

“The DS or other supervisor is the on-the-field coach and has responsibility over the entire changeover zone dynamic.”  
check list of 5 key functions

1. P \_\_\_\_\_
2. P \_\_\_\_\_
3. P \_\_\_\_\_
4. P \_\_\_\_\_
5. P \_\_\_\_\_

**Increasing the odds of a good transition**

2. Decision
3. Notifications
4. Announcements
5. Introductions
6. Onboarding

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**Session 6**

*“Real champions do not become champions when they win the event, but in the hours, weeks, months and years they spend preparing for it.”*  
T. Alan Armstrong

*“All it takes is all you got”*  
Marc Davis

**Session Six:**  
**The Role of the Church:**  
**Saying ‘goodbye’ saying ‘hello’**

**Rally the troops!**

- The ‘age-response’ ratio
  
- Rally around \_\_\_\_\_, and through \_\_\_\_\_ and to highlight \_\_\_\_\_: (“This is who we are; why we exist; what we do; how we do it!”)

**Recruit Eager People!**

- Make it \_\_\_\_\_! - Doing something together
- Make it \_\_\_\_\_!- Laity empathize with pastors
- Make it \_\_\_\_\_!
  - a) Memories
  - b) Thanks
  - c) Needs

**Re-energize the congregation!**

- Not just a smooth and seamless transition, but \_\_\_\_\_ growth
- *“this is my kind of church; these are people I like”*
- Stages of grief? (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)

**Reorient---** Around a new leader

\*Remember other staff!

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**Session 7**

*Pastoral leadership is a relay race.*

*“Even if you are on the right track you get run over if you just sit there.”  
Will Rogers*

**Session Seven:**  
**The Role of the Pastors: The Handoff**

**Exiting Pastor**

The Exiting Pastor enters into the changeover zone carrying a checklist of five specific behaviors

- **E\_\_\_\_\_** – In both a personal and professional way.
- **E\_\_\_\_\_** – This is a great teaching moment.
- **E\_\_\_\_\_** - The congregation to the new pastor.
  - a) Via videos
  - b) “Selfies”
  - c) “Five Fun Facts” or “Two Truths and a Lie”
- **E\_\_\_\_\_** - there will be stress and anxiety;
- **E\_\_\_\_\_** - close the pastor/parishioner relationship;

**Arriving Pastor**

Strategically apply the STARS Profile to nearly *aspect and system* of her/his new church.

Checklist of six specific behaviors:

- **A\_\_\_\_\_** - get to know ....
- **A\_\_\_\_\_** - the positive.
- **A\_\_\_\_\_** - the church, context, community needs
- **A\_\_\_\_\_** - the anxieties, concerns, fears ...
- **A\_\_\_\_\_** - The questions you ask are critical!
- **A\_\_\_\_\_** - questions a humble, transparent way.

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*“Becoming a Successful 2<sup>nd</sup> Pastor”*

**Session 8**

**Session Eight...**  
**Getting Started: The 100 Days Before**  
**Appointment Begins**

*Check with DS about pre-appointment protocols & getting a coach and/or mentor*

- A.** “Get to know you” videos
- B.** Good Transition Resources
- The Changeover Zone, Jim Ozier & Jim Griffith
  - Making A Good Move, Michael Coyer
  - The First 90 Days, Michael Watkins
  - The Right Start, Lovett Weems
- C.** Work with church staff & DS to develop \_\_\_\_\_
- D.** Study Church’s website.... Listen & watch \_\_\_\_\_
- E.** Study Community websites.... \_\_\_\_\_  
of community
- F.** Church staff & DS ORGANIZE “listening tour”
- Coordinator
  - Communicator
  - Hosts
  - Scribes and drivers

→  
**Discussion**

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**Session 9**

→  
**How to Do it**

→  
**Discussion**

**Session Nine....**

**Getting Started:**

**The First 100 Days After Appointment Begins**

**A. Conduct listening tour**

- ✓ Every active group
- ✓ In homes with dessert
- ✓ Distribute 3x5 card

1. What is \_\_\_\_\_ that I –as the new pastor—need to know about **this** congregation
2. What is one way that **we** are going \_\_\_\_\_ in this area?
3. What is one \_\_\_\_\_ that you have for **our** church?

- ✓ A couple of ‘optional’ questions –

4. What are you afraid I’ll do?
5. What is a question you’d like to ask me?

**B. Staff & key leadership \_\_\_\_\_**

**C. Strategic preaching**

**D. Utilizing your coach**

**E. Current Realities** – assessing & understanding your new church

- Stage of grief?  
(denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)  
Assess not \_\_\_\_\_
- Rigorous not \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Cast vision**

- First, \_\_\_\_\_ vision
- Second, \_\_\_\_\_ vision
- Third, \_\_\_\_\_ vision
- ALWAYS a \_\_\_\_\_ vision

**Session 10**

**Session Ten:**  
**Don’t Panic! Some People Will Leave!**

Even in the most successful transition, there will be people who leave. There are several categories of people who will exit, or ‘abandon ship’

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Away’s ...  
....worked hard and been through a lot for a long time—“Just need a break”; Probably been looking for the right time to leave even if wasn’t a transition; were going to leave regardless of how transition was handled or who new pastor is.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Away’s  
.... Angered by the way the transition was handled; might have simply been looking for an excuse to leave... or immediately dislike the new pastor
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Away’s  
... Stay through transition, but can’t get over the reality that new pastor isn’t their beloved founder; within a year they step away to see how things will “shake out”
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Away’s  
... More or less ‘neutral’ about pastoral change...but new pastor doesn’t connect with them for whatever reason—so they simply slip away.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Away’s  
... May remain even a year or two after transition, but fade away when the new pastor and changing church dynamics fails to live up to their expectations or pre-conceived notions.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Aways’s  
... Hang around in background without doing any work or contributing

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**Session 10**

**Session Ten:**  
**...And Some New People Will Surface**

Depending upon the vitality of the Discipleship process at work in the church to which you are being sent, you may well experience some or all of the below in one degree or another:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Some new people will show up *because* there is pastoral change! Even where the planter is held in high esteem, there are some people in the community who have formed a different opinion; Now, with the change in pastors, they will come check it out.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Spiritually mature people in a congregation who intuitively know when the church needs a shot of adrenalin! They may be charter members or relatively new. But they will have one thing in common: They will surprise you...and everyone else!
3. \_\_\_\_\_ These are the folks who had started moving into church leadership, and now with the transition are called upon to ‘move up’ sooner than they expected. (*Be aware—sometimes ‘Move Up’s’ will threaten the existing structure and leaders.*)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ In every church there are people ‘young in their faith’. They have already been involved in the Discipleship process, and now will be growing up to take on responsibility.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ These are the dedicated ‘worker bees’ who have been hard working; during transition they find they “Can do much more than they ever imagined” .... now they ramp up!
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Be wary of the climb ups; For reasons unknown to you, some folks will want to take advantage of the pastoral change to ‘climb up’ the leadership or influence ladder.

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**Session 11**

*“Ability is what  
you are capable  
of doing.  
Motivation  
determines what  
you do.  
Attitude  
determines how  
well you do it.”  
Lou Holtz*

→  
**Discussion**

**Session Eleven**

**The 7 Steps in the Changeover Zone**

1. Saying goodbye to previous church in a \_\_\_\_\_ way
2. Getting \_\_\_\_\_ centered and preparing the family for change
3. Managing all the pre-appointment protocols and logistics in a thorough way
4. Learning mission field \_\_\_\_\_ via church & community websites and demographics
5. Saying hello via
  - a) relational presence
  - b) listening tour
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_ emersion
6. Developing first 100 days strategy, built around relational intentionality
7. Preparing first \_\_\_\_\_ preaching plan

**A Culture of Accountability in the Changeover Zone**

- **P** \_\_\_\_\_: know roles
- **E** \_\_\_\_\_: of all parties
- **A** \_\_\_\_\_: red flags
- **C** \_\_\_\_\_: Clarify; communicate
- **E** \_\_\_\_\_: *Personal* accountability

- How do you measure success?
- It's all about the Baton!

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**Challenges**

**Opportunities**

\*who to communicate with: When & How

\*Actions I (we) can take to help transition

**Goals**

**Plans**

\*Immediate & Long Term

\*Be specific; step by step

**The 10 Most Common Mistakes**

10. Failing to grasp the Kingdom dimension
9. Being inauthentic
8. Ineffective preaching & worship
7. Not exercising Biblical leadership
6. Prioritizing personal agenda above church’s mission
5. Overlooking the mission field
4. Failing to relationally connect with the people, the church and the community.
3. Criticizing the founder & predecessor
2. Diminishing the church’s story & ethos
1. Poor implementation of necessary congregational systems

## **“Following the Founder” and “Long Term Pastorates”**

### **Typical Similarities & Differences**

Not every situation is typical and yours probably isn't....at least totally. However, this section points out significant similarities and differences related to pastoral transitions, lifted up by pastors in our workshops... and why both need the same kind of intentional care. +

Please add to our list! Note that what we are assuming here are 'successful' situations and does not take into account unhealthy or ineffective pastorates. Also, it is not intended to be all-inclusive or all-encompassing. Rather it is hoped these observations stimulate thinking and conversation to improve pastoral transitions.

### **Similarities**

There are many often-observed similarities between *successful* New Church Start situations and *successful* Long-Term Pastorate situations:

- 1. Both enjoy long tenure.** The New Church Start going through its first pastoral transition is usually 7-10 years; for a Long-Term pastorate going through a pastoral change, it is about the same. (compare to average pastoral tenure nationally for all denominations and independents is 3.6 years according to Lifeway Research.)
- 2. Both the New Church Planter the Long-Tenured pastor:**
  - Are usually effective vision casters;
  - Are considered by their respective congregations to be a beloved friend
  - Have earned admiration and credibility
  - will have a base of fierce loyalty, even amidst critics
  - Has relationally intertwined roots with many, based on significant 'marker moments' of pastoral involvement in congregants lives
- 3. Upon exiting her/his congregation, the New Church Planter and the Long-Term pastor:**
  - Feels deeply invested in the church's success now and for the future
  - Will see angst and hurt among many when they leave the congregation
  - Play a critical role in "passing the baton" to their successor
  - Can be instrumental in helping the church they love deal with the stages of grief

## **Differences:**

“Good pastorates” come in all shapes and sizes. Assuming a ‘good pastorate’, what would you add to this list of perceived differences between a successful (a) New Church Start situation; a (b) Long-Term Pastorate situation and a (c) Shorter-Term Pastorate situation.

### **1. Relationship of pastor to congregation**

- New Church Planter (NCP) “births my baby”
- Long-Term Pastorate (LTP) “adopts a child” and builds relationships over time
- Shorter-Tenured Pastor (STP) “fosters children” with great love but not as deeply developed a sense of permanency or ownership

### **2. Relationships of pastor within congregation**

- NCP is often relational hub of congregation
- LTP has become relational architect, designing systems to promote relationships
- STP is relationally invested but not center or architect of relationships within congregation

### **3. Observable dynamics of pastor with congregation**

- NCP “church centers around pastor” .... Younger the church the more observable
- LTP “coalesces around pastor” ... the longer tenure the more observable
- STP “Congregation connects with pastor” ... more relational pastor the more observable

### **4. Culture Creation**

- NCP created culture from start
- LTP crystalizes culture over time and positively contextualizes it to her/his tenure
- STP connects to existing culture but has little time to change or improve it

### **5. Values Formation**

- NCP instills and protects values from start;
- LTP inspires and strengthens values; over time facilitates values clarification;
- STP identifies with and communicates existing values;

### **6. Spiritual dynamics**

- NCP is seen as spiritual parent (giant, guru, etc.)
- LTP is seen as spiritual mentor, (giant, guru, etc.)
- STP is seen as spiritual champion (cheerleader, fellow-searcher, etc.)

### **7. Tribal or corporate knowledge awareness**

- NCP Polity & procedures little known or appreciated; Younger, more observable
- LTP High knowledge & appreciation in leaders; less awareness among newer members
- STP High corporate knowledge because of multiple transitions; often high skepticism

### **8. Pastoral relationships**

- NCP Only pastor ever known by some; only pastor at this church by all; deep roots
- LTP Only pastor known by many if not most newer attenders; deep roots
- STP known and loved multiple pastors; roots not as deep