

SENIOR PASTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Briefly describe your conversion experience and personal journey with God as a follower of Jesus Christ.

I grew up in a Christian home, however I did not have a personal saving faith in Jesus until I was 19 years old. Several events over the course of a particularly dark week caused me to see my need for Jesus, and it was alone in a parking lot one night that I called out to the Lord. I attended an Alliance Church that Sunday and the Pastor prayed with me after the service as well. Everything that I had heard about all my life in my home, church and Christian school came to life. Soon thereafter, I sensed a general call into ministry.

I decided to attend Toccoa Falls College as a part of this ministry calling clarification journey. While I was there I fell in love with the Bible and sat under much teaching about- and experienced the filling of- the Spirit for empowerment for victory in the Christian life and for ministry. Including my years at Toccoa, it took about 6 years for my call to fully solidify into a call to full-time pastoral ministry in the local church. I have never looked back.

For the past decade my journey following Jesus can be described as “a long, joyful obedience in the same direction” (Peterson). Daily faithfulness consisting of morning devotions, prayer, scripture memorization, and confession have been the consistent and key tools that God has been using to shape me into the image of his Son. I love to talk with the Lord throughout the day, sing hymns and songs as I walk (and mow the lawn), and invite him in the challenges and fun parts of my day. It is a vibrant and alive love relationship.

2. Briefly describe your experience with the theology, emphases and values of the Christian & Missionary Alliance.

I can honestly say that I love being a part of the C&MA! I came to saving faith, and sensed my call to ministry, in an Alliance Church and through an Alliance school.

I love the simplicity of our statement of faith as it majors on the core doctrines without becoming mired down in minutia. My foundational theological training happened at Toccoa. I resonate with the key doctrines and expressions of Alliance faith and the four-fold Gospel. While I have attended both a Baptist and Methodist Seminary for my graduate work, I remain faithful to Alliance doctrines and values.

I appreciate that the C&MA started, and has at its core, the mission of God to reach the unreached peoples of the world and that this continues to be our primary emphasis. I believe that we all play a part in our Acts 1:8 mission of reaching our Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria's. I also love the

work of CAMA in its focus to minister in creative ways to the whole person. It has been our desire at CrossPoint to give towards the Great Commission Fund and support local partnerships that fulfill our mission and hold these same C&MA values.

I appreciate the straightforward and succinct way that our President John Stumbo has framed our current call with the key values of Love, Proclaim, Reach, and Launch as these are applicable locally and globally. I believe it is the role of the local church to implement these values as contextually appropriate. At CrossPoint, we have sought to love our community and our church family, proclaim the truth to our neighbors and friends, reach the lost through global partnerships and strategic events for our city, and launch every believer into their God-given purpose.

I served on the Licensing, Consecration and Ordination committee/panel for several years and now serve on the district executive committee. These roles have increased my appreciation and commitment to the values and priorities of the C&MA. There is no other denomination that I would want to be a part of. I believe in who we are and what we do as an Alliance family.

3. What theological and doctrinal tenets do you emphasize in preaching and teaching for sustained Christian growth within the church?

In my 20 years of preaching the Word week in and week out, I have clearly seen the power of the pulpit in nourishing, leading and directing the entire congregation. This is humbling, and as Scripture states, the teacher will be held to a higher standard of accountability (James 3:1). While my sermons range in style and topic from entire book studies to apologetics to subjects the congregation needs instruction on at that time (stewardship, peacemaking, evangelism, etc.), the following are tenets that I emphasize no matter the type of series we are in.

- *The Gospel is a Past, Future and Present reality and message of good-news through Christ and His Kingdom (Christ as Savior).*
- *Christ is sufficient in all things pertaining to godliness (Christ as Sanctifier).*
- *Christ indwells the believer through the person of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Continual demonstrated trust and obedience is an expression of a life of faith in God.*
- *God is actively and continually inviting his Church to join him in his mission in world.*
- *The spiritual gifts and love given to the church are for the building up of the church as it is the hope of the world (Christ as Coming King).*
- *The worth of a person is not found in their paycheck, job, family, etc., but instead their identity comes from Christ.*
- *Praying with others in response to the Spirit's work after a message is welcome and wise, to deal with sin, pray for healing, or ask for help (Christ as Healer).*

I have always seen the importance of personal prayer, devotion and listening to the Lord on what topics to preach. I must be in tune with him in feeding his people! In more recent years, I have

come to appreciate the very valuable input that leadership teams, staff, and congregation members give regarding possible preaching series' as well.

4. Describe a particular time other than your conversion when God met you in a ministry-related or personal struggle and redeemed the situation.

Two distinct struggles come to mind in reading this question, so I will share both.

One of my emotionally lowest times in life and ministry came in 2013 at a time of perceived "ministry success." The church was growing, the new building was complete, and I had finished my doctorate. But all of this "success" without healthy boundaries and limits had led to an empty soul and a joyless life.

I have come to see through work with a spiritual director that for a time I was more in love with the "work of God" than God. I was also more in love with the idea of being "used by God" than knowing God and being known by God. I am thankful for this time in hindsight because this 18 month valley-type of experience caused me to do deep internal work regarding purity of motive in ministry which will benefit me for the rest of my life both inside and outside of vocational ministry.

Putting an emphasis on not just "what" am I doing, but examining my internal motivations, and seeking and asking God to bring about purification of heart has led to freedom and joy in ministry. Shackles I had worn for years came off. I no longer feel the constant need of having to prove myself, and instead I am able to simply joyfully receive the ministry that God is constructing in me and through me. It is a healthy Father-son relationship!

The other time of loss and conflict that comes to mind immediately with this question happened from December 2011 to August of 2012. My wife's father passed away the week we moved into our new building in December 2011 while they were on vacation here to celebrate with us. At the same time the church had doubled in size overnight and there was the opportunity for a huge spiritual harvest. I learned hard, practical lessons on the reality of spiritual warfare and that when kingdom of God breaks in, the kingdom of darkness pushes back. We saw more people come to saving faith during that time than any other time in ministry, and yet in our personal lives were fighting through grief and the growing pains of the church growth. This literally kept my wife and I on our knees in desperation for God's sustaining grace for almost 8 months. We look back and see spiritual harvest and God deepening our dependence and humility through this time. We believe we were spared from potential arrogance and pride through prayer and pain.

5. How would you describe your spiritual gifting, and the impact that gifting has had on the way you currently approach ministry as a lead pastor?

My four primary spiritual gifts are leadership, preaching, faith and hospitality.

**Leadership and Preaching: These two gifts would score as my strongest on a spiritual gifts assessment. I would have to agree. Leading and preaching are energizing and life-giving to me when fueled and guided by the Spirit!*

I have come to see that these two gifts are often working in tandem with each other. In the life of a congregation, biblical preaching will show a congregation the greatness, power and promises of God, and leadership gives vision and clarity on how together as a congregation we can show demonstrated trust in our God for the sake of his mission in the world. Psalm 23 has been a great guiding text regarding how preaching and leadership work together. The shepherd “provides” green pastures, and he “guides” in paths of righteousness. This has developed in me the conviction that churches must always be well led and well fed, as that is the heartbeat of our Shepherd-savior. Experience has taught me that the gift of leadership should be exercised in varying degrees based on needs and readiness of the church to embrace a significant change.

Just because preaching is a spiritual gift and passion does not mean, however, that I just lean on my gift or experiences. I try to stay well read, and I seek out a preaching mentor every few years to listen to my sermons and critique them.

The same goes for my leadership gifting; I cannot just trust that I am a good leader because I have the gift. I look for good mentors, read good books and attend conferences to keep me sharp. I also felt compelled last summer to write out my leadership philosophies and thoughts in one place. I have titled this booklet “Blue Collar Leadership” as it is also a training and discipleship manual for those in my church who want to fan into flame their leadership gifts as well.

I take very seriously as a Senior Pastor being an excellent preacher every time I am in the pulpit. I also take very seriously my responsibility as the “lead” pastor to lead the church whether from the pulpit, the board room, or by the way I live my life.

** Faith: I have come to see I have a spiritual hunger to trust God, and also trusting God (with certain things) comes easy for me. Living with “God gaps” and creating space in our personal and ministry lives for God to demonstrate his faithfulness and provision has been a consistent way of experiencing him deeply within the life of our congregation and our personal lives! Our building program and growth over the years has been a constant demonstration of CrossPoint saying yes to God over and over in faith that he would provide. Aside from my own salvation, marrying my wife, and having our children, leading this church in these faith steps and watching God move has been the greatest joy of my life.*

** Hospitality: Welcoming people is a gift that has shown itself strong only in the past 10 years. Taking initiative to create an environment within our church (and home) that welcomes visitors and helps relational and emotional walls come down for the sake of people eventually experiencing the love of God through community is very important to me! I lead the guest services team at CrossPoint personally because I believe so strongly in a hospitable and welcoming environment for members, visitors and the unsaved. My wife and I also have our friends and unsaved neighbors into our home regularly for the sake of building relationships.*

6. Who have been key influencers in your life and why?

There are many people who have impacted my life profoundly. Because I could write pages about each and every one of the people listed below, I will try to simply name them and put next to their name a phrase or two explaining their primary place of influence in my life.

- *Heather Smith (Wife)- ministry partner, loyal co-laborer, critical thinker*
- *Paula Smith (Mom)- prayer warrior, passionate teacher, generous person*
- *Don Bubna (C&MA Pastor) – constant encourager, ministry modeler, relational mentor*
- *Tim Owen (C&MA Pastor and District Superintendent) – church growth leader and ministry encourager*
- *Randy Nutter (Father-in-law, Business Professor)- friend, encourager, business mentor*
- *Steve Elliott (C&MA Pastor)- Beeson Program recommender*
- *Morris Dirks (C&MA Pastor and Spiritual Director)– Soul formation guide*
- *Sam Rima (C&MA Pastor and Professor at Bethel Seminary)- Educator and author*
- *Jerry Bridges, Paul Tripp and Martin Lloyd Jones (Authors)- through writings have provided food for thought and spiritual nourishment*
- *The staff, members and our small group at CrossPoint Alliance Church- modeled faith, demonstrated obedience and provided comradery in the call to follow Christ*

7. Have your thoughts, priorities, or ideas about ministry changed in the last 5-10 years and, if so, how and why?

I hope to be a life-long learner through books, mentors, and godly experts in different fields. While the core of my ministry beliefs has not changed, there are a few things that readily come to mind as areas where I have changed in thought, priority or practice over the last decade.

The priority of a prayer-fueled ministry: Early in my ministry, like many pastors, I did the much needed work of bringing clarity to the vision and goals while aligning teams and ministry systems around our shared values and desired purposes. Unfortunately, for a season, I did this work and pursued the fulfillment of this work without a deep commitment to prayer in my personal life and without dynamic prayer in the life of the congregation. I have learned that prayer is so key in the life of a church both for the sake of ministry being fulfilled and for relationships to withstand the difficulties that come when a congregation pursues God's vision together. This is not to minimize the work of vision, goal setting and ministry alignment; it is just the reality of taking Jesus at his word, that without abiding in him we can produce no real long-lasting fruit.

The practice of developing others to do the ministry versus just doing the ministry: As our church in Lewiston grew from 400 to over 1000 in two years, I saw a clear need for the pastors to move from doing the ministry to equipping and training those of the church body to do the work of the

ministry. This is often a very hard adjustment for the church and the pastors to make, but it is God's Ephesians 4 design that ensures that the ministry load is shared, people are walking in their giftedness, and that pastors avoid burn out or get off-center from their primary Acts 6 calling.

The priority and practice of a clearly communicated discipleship path for people to follow: When the church was smaller, I assumed people knew what next step they should take in following Jesus. Things just seemed less complex. Since then I have realized that a key pastoral leadership need is clearly communicating to the congregation, big or small, and especially to new believers, their next step in the discipleship journey. For example, we started to simply communicate that in addition to Sunday morning where the Word is preached and we worship corporately, that every person should be part of a growing group where they experience relationships and biblical growth and a serving group where they use their gifts in community. When the path is clearly laid out, people take it!

The thought of the importance of less assumptive language and varied mediums of communication: As preachers and churches, we have to be more conscious of the language we are using as we present the Gospel and teach the truths of Christianity. With all of the cultural changes, post-modern thinking and the distinctions between generations becoming more evident, the use of appropriate language and effective methods and modes of communication will be significant. This does not mean watering down truth or accommodating false doctrine, but it will mean going the extra step in thinking through language and method ramifications.

8. On average, what percentage of your time do you spend on the following:

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| • Teaching/Preparation | • Leading | • Prayer |
| • Shepherding/Discipling | • Planning | • Managing |
| • Other (please describe) | • Counseling | |

Looking at an average week and how I spend my time, the following percentages would be approximate:

*Teaching/Preparing = 40% (I spend a large chunk of my time preparing my sermon.)

*Leading = 20% (I love working on the vision implementation, meeting with my Executive Pastor and Boards, dreaming of the future, and creating clear pathways for ministries.)

*Prayer = 10% (This has the most impact. I start my day in a time of prayer both at home and the office, we have staff prayer daily at 9am, and I stop regularly throughout my day for prayer. I also lead our monthly prayer meeting for the church and put together the prayer aids for that.)

*Planning and Managing = 20% (My Executive Pastor is responsible for much of the staff oversight, day to day operational decisions and budgetary leadership. He also runs the staff meetings. However, he and I meet for a few hours at the beginning of every week to assure we are

on the same page and so that I have a good sense of what is happening overall in the church. I manage the guest services team, work on basic calendar and implementation with front office team, and of course do correspondence, return calls and emails, and day to day office work.)

**Shepherding/Discipling = 8% (I do take a few appointments per week to meet with different congregation members and address questions and life issues with them in the context of biblical knowledge and growth. I sit on the advisory board for our church plant and the local Bible school. I also lead a small group, and seek to provide a sense of shepherding to our elder board.)*

**Counseling = 2% (This is not my strong suit. I will occasionally take a counseling appointment, but only in rare circumstances.)*

9. On average, what percentage of your time would you like to spend on the activities listed in the preceding question in a new Senior Pastor position?

Having been in a Lead Pastor role in a multi-staff, larger church with an Executive Pastor at my side, I have really hit a sweet spot in how I structure my week and the entire church is better served because of it (this is not an exaggeration). I would like to continue the type of weekly rhythm noted in the preceding question. However, one thing I would like to adjust is the percentage of time spent shepherding and discipling. I would love to have some additional dedicated time each week to invest in and disciple younger leaders.

10. How would you describe your ideal work environment and culture?

I have come to see that my ideal work culture is a combination of multiple things all working together:

- I enjoy a fun team environment, yet with enough alone, serious time to do deep creative mental work.*
- I love a connection point at some time in the day for the staff to see each other and smile together (i.e. like at lunch or 9:00am prayer time).*
- I believe in high productivity and high quality in conjunction with healthy relationships marked by integrity, humility and trust.*
- I value a combination of knowing how much our work matters and yet not taking ourselves too seriously. We don't want a stuffy atmosphere, but we want to do all things with excellence, authenticity and unity.*
- I think teams thrive when there is clarity on what each person is to do, when they do it, why it matters, who they are accountable to, and where they can go to get help.*

Healthy cultures do not accidentally happen. They take intentional shaping through building relationships and solid structures and systems in which to operate.

As an aside: I really enjoy being an encourager to the staff. However, I struggle with keeping all the relational and organizational plates spinning when a pastoral staff gets over a certain size while still maintaining all of my own preaching, leadership, and organizational responsibilities. For this reason, an Executive Pastor under my leadership who not only administrates church business matters but also has the capacity to give managerial/pastoral oversight to a growing staff is a wise complement to me.

11. As Senior Pastor, how do you view the role of elders, pastoral staff, lay staff and lay workers in a church?

Role of elders: Grounded in the elder qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3, elders in a local church have a four-fold focus in the life of a local church, and they all start with letter P. They are purpose, prayer, people, and purity.

- *Purpose: Elders are to be collectively hearing from the Lord through Scripture, prayer and group conversations (amongst themselves and other designated leadership teams with godly men and women) regarding the specific vision that God has for a particular local church. They help lead the church by assuring the clarity of ministry activity towards the vision God desires.*
- *Prayer: Elders should always be modeling a life of prayer and monitoring the “temperature” of the prayer life of the congregation. Not much of lasting fruit happens in a church without prayer, and the elders must be leading the way in their own personal lives.*
- *People: Elders need to know the current condition of the flock they are called to shepherd. Eldership must not just be a boardroom experience, but elders must model the way in a willingness to get elbow deep lives of the people they are called to lead and shepherd. Furthermore, this knowledge of the condition of the flock will allow them to lead the congregation with wisdom and discernment.*
- *Purity: Elders must have a pulse on two specific areas in the life of the local church- purity of doctrine and purity of life. Elders should expect to do the difficult work of lovingly, and with gentleness, addressing areas of orthodoxy and orthopraxy that are not in line with Scripture. Though elders are the only ones who address such discipline issues formally in the life of the congregation, ideally the church body holds to the principle of “speaking the truth in love” per Galatians 6:1 when a brother or sister is in need of this.*

The Senior Pastor’s relationship with the Elder Board: I believe it is worth noting the Senior Pastor’s three-fold relationship with an Elder Board of a local church.

- *First, he leads them. This is done through prayer, and it is done by asking key and critical questions of the board about the church such as, “What is our mission and vision, and are we fulfilling them?”, “and, “As a board, how do you believe God is calling our church to show demonstrated trust in him?”*
- *Second, the Senior Pastor is one of the board members. The Sr. Pastor serves with a spirit of comradery and unity with the elder board.*
- *Lastly, the Senior Pastor serves under the elder board. The Sr. Pastor is under the Elder Board’s authority as a whole. This allows to the church to know that there is an established accountability system and allows the Sr. Pastor to have a group that functions as a protective covering.*

Role of Pastoral Staff: Pastoral staff have the responsibility of designing, implementing and administrating ministries that help a local church fulfill it's God given mission and vision. Each staff member should have a degree of expertise as well as passion for their area of ministry oversight. Staff are not working in isolation from other Staff, the Senior Pastor and Elders. Instead, having been able to give a degree of input to the Senior Pastor and Elders regarding the church's unique vision (especially to how that relates to their ministry area), and after understanding what the vision of the church is as communicated by the Sr. Pastor and Elders, the staff is responsible for the "means" that help fulfill those "ends". Pastoral staff also needs to serve, build into, equip and raise up lay staff and workers to come alongside of them in the work.

Role of lay staff and workers: Lay staff and workers in the life of a church are key! Following the Ephesians 4 pattern, pastors equip the church to do the work of ministry. Paul the Apostle communicated that the local church functions like a human body, each person having specific spiritual gift as God has determined. As each person discovers and grows in the knowledge and application of how the Lord has gifted them, each local church grow closer to reaching its full redemptive potential. The lay staff and workers should be empowered to serve in their area of giftedness. Every person has a gift and a place to serve! It is also key to understand that the ministry that God desires is not limited to being done inside the walls of a local church, though that is very important. A person's spiritual giftedness can function in his or her workplace and in the community as part of what God will use to reach others outside of his kingdom.

12. What do you see to be the major challenges and opportunities for churches in the United States today, and how do you anticipate addressing these needs as a leader in the next decade?

Challenges:

Lack of trust in faith organizations by North American culture: Reports communicate that the North American culture has a very limited trust in traditional faith organizations. This is due to several factors, a few of which include past national religious scandals, negative media portrayals of religion and religious people, and negative experiences in a local church during childhood or teenage years. Because of this, those who participate in the life of a local church must realize that the default relational posture towards those of religious faith by outsiders is that of cynicism and mistrust. Keeping this in mind, while the local church must never change the content of its message, it must think through the means in which it is communicating it's message and make sure that the lives of the people match the message being proclaimed.

Continued Biblical faithfulness in age of rising relativism: In the past ten years I have seen it become more difficult for a pastor and a church that holds firmly to the authority of the Scriptures. Cultural issues such as human sexuality and the exclusive claims of Jesus have become a dividing issue not just between the church and culture but within the church itself. The local church will need to cling to the authority of scripture in it's pulpits and weekly teaching, while demonstrating with their lives the heart and person of Jesus Christ. This will call individual Christians to not only articulate truth (the belief and the "why" behind it) with love, but also live out the truth they proclaim.

Perceived lack of practical value of a church to a local community: Cultural perception of a local church could be that they only take care of their own. Communities are in touch now with the needs of their own community more so than ever. If churches choose to ignore issues that negatively affect the community in which that church is located, the practical value of a local church, or the love of the people for the community, could be called into question by the on-looking community. Therefore each local church should seek to discover what one or two needs in the community they could uniquely meet. Furthermore, seeking to partner with non-profit organizations that excel in meeting the needs of their community could be a bridge building move.

Congregations maturing in age with lack of young people connected and committed to a ministry and mission of a local church: The largest age demographics represented in a local church are very often the boomer generation (born 1946-64) and the great generation (born between 1925-56). These age groups will often make up over half of a congregation. God has used these two generations in a mighty way and they need to be respected for the sacrifice they made in serving Christ, his church and his work in the world. God is still using them! At the same time, a local church must embrace the fact that many in the following generations (such as Gen-X'ers and the Millennials) are not connecting to and committed to a local church. To engage these younger generations, a local church must take extra steps in creating pathways for younger leaders. They need to be identified, developed and given ownership in the life of a local church. Also, creating a discipleship culture that does not separate the generations but keeps multiple generations together as much as possible is a wise goal.

Opportunities:

The nations coming to the U.S.: The reality that the nations have come to the U.S. through recent global happenings has created evangelistic opportunities for the North American church that have never existed before. We have an opportunity to help the North American church to see missions as not something we just give to or accomplish overseas but that missions is engaging our own neighborhoods.

A Hunger for Truth: The U.S. could see an unprecedented opportunity in our culture hungering for truth, but have it be different than the immediate past. Our culture could be hungering for relational truth to a degree that we have not seen before. What could be developed is a relational apologetic where individuals are curious for guidance regarding issues like human sexuality, marriage, parenting and life purpose because they see joy-filled and loving people who are holding to a standard that is different than the "anything goes... your truth is your truth and my truth is my truth" paradigm that the world espouses which leaves lives empty and in shambles.

A Hunger for Relationship: People are more plugged in technologically than ever, but the connections are shallow and image-driven. The church has a true and genuine "body" experience to offer! As people become more isolated, the community the church has to offer will be a refreshing and safe place. This will take a church culture that is welcoming and warm with safe group settings.

New and Creative ways of ministry: Up and coming generations will always bring new and creative ways to think and do ministry. Each generation will need to be allowed to cut their own way in expressing the classic timeless truths of the Christian's faith.

Christians will once again be distinct in culture: As the culture overall gets darker and darker, the light can shine brighter and brighter. As the world gets greedier but Christians still give, as social media stays shallow but Christians have authentic relationships, and as people feel empty and joyless while the church is on mission full of passion, we will look more and more distinct in this world. It may not be easy, and certainly certain social pressures will be hard and isolating, but we will be light in the dark world!