



SENIOR MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF JULY 16, 2019 MEETING

Present: David Rix (chair), Jason Abraham, Jim Bruce, Linda Herman (via video), Richard Ibekwe, Leslie Liu, and Margaret Sloat.

- 1. The meeting began at 7:00 pm with prayer offered by David in the office of the Interim Senior Minister.**
- 2. Discussion with the Interim Senior Minister, Phil Thorne, as to his view of the characteristics Park Street Church should be seeking in its next Senior Minister.**

Over the course of the discussion, Phil listed five characteristics — exceptional preaching, visionary leadership, being a cultural ambassador, godliness and a pastor's heart — he believes essential that the church's next pastor have.

- a. Preaching is the primary role of the pastor that will be visible to the congregation. He will need to have exceptional strength in this area, preaching to **both** the head and the heart. There needs to be excellence, depth and engagement. Phil also noted that the new Senior Minister will need to reveal who he is while preaching with substance to a demanding congregation. Further, he noted, that his preaching must engage the culture. And, noting the educational level of the congregation, he suggested that if the church calls someone without a Ph.D., he needs to be really smart.
- b. Park Street Church is at a crossroads with multiple conflicting views of reality. One of the major challenges is between preserving our orthodox evangelical theology and better engaging the culture in which the church and its congregants exist. This suggests that the next Senior Minister needs to be someone who can envision the future while putting his arms around the church that is, and around those who are newer to the church and passionate about engaging the culture. Today's church is not the same as it was a decade ago and it will not be the same at the end of the coming decade as it is today. If the candidate is an "either/or" candidate in regard to preserving orthodox evangelical preaching from the pulpit and cultural engagement, it will not work out. The new Senior Minister must create a vision for the church's future with the involvement of the church leaders and then engage the congregation in realizing that vision.
- c. The next Senior Minister must see himself as an ambassador to the culture in which we live. A goal should be that at the end of the coming decade the church is known as much for its engagement in the culture of our city as it is known for its global missions endeavors.
- d. Godliness. Phil believes that godliness is the most important characteristic for a senior minister, above preaching. He also noted that a danger for a gifted leader who is a strong preacher is that he may think that he can lead without being humbled. The search committee should look for evidence of the fruit of suffering and at the center a crying out to God. He suggests that the church doesn't just want to hear great preaching but also see a deep love for God. The Senior Minister also will need to have a pastor's heart. While it will be hard to find someone to teach at the level that this church expects, be a visionary leader, and a cultural ambassador, he must also have a pastor's heart spending a lot of time with people, "walking the hospital."

- e. Other topics we discussed included:
 - i. The new pastor's age. Younger, rather than older. (Dr. Ockenga was 29 when he became pastor at Park Street.) Phil suggested that we think in terms of finding a pastor for the "next generation."
 - ii. Organizational structure. Give the new Senior Minister flexibility in defining it over time after he arrives. He needs to begin by working with the staff and elders who are here.
 - iii. Phil suggested that in the hiring process we get to know the candidate and his family as real people, not just in the formal sense of being the candidate. How do they interact with each other, what are their interests, etc. Also, we should understand how he will interact with the staff and the congregation. These are behaviors that he will bring with him.
- d. Jason closed our meeting with Phil by praying for him, our church, and the work of the Committee.

3. Discussion with the Minister of Missions, Julian Linnell in his office.

- a. The Committee's discussion began with David praying for Julian's work as Minister of Missions and for him.
- b. Julian began his conversation with the committee by focusing on the need for the new Senior Minister to understand the international nature of Park Street Church. He noted the large number of internationals that worship at the church each Sunday and the size and nature of our missionary endeavors — perhaps as many as 40% of the congregants have an international connection, and our long-term missionaries are considered members of the church staff, funded principally by the church's Mission's budget, which represents some 40% of the church's giving. Julian reminded us that this is really a unique arrangement whereby missions is such an integral part of the church.
- c. Julian outlined the Park Street Church global mission priorities which provide an essential foundation for the search committee and for the new hire. These priorities motivate our mission as a church and can be briefly summarized as:
 - i. Unreached People Groups: 86% of all Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim peoples do not have a relationship with a Christian. Park Street has prioritized mission to unreached ethnic groups with fewer than 2% evangelicals.
 - ii. Christian Movements across the Muslim World: Since 2000 more Muslims have come to Christ than the previous 1200 years. Park Street has prioritized a deepening of our mission within Muslim-majority nations.
 - iii. Bible Translation: Of 6,909 languages in the world, 2,184 are still without Scripture. Building on Park Street's long history of Bible translation, we seek to promote greater involvement in the remaining task.
 - iv. International Students in USA: Approximately 50,000 international students study in Boston, many from unreached nations. We seek to disciple, equip and send students back to their home countries to disciple others.
 - v. Growth of Majority World Church: Asia, Africa, South America are the Majority World. We seek to align Park Street with the emerging epicenter of Christianity in the Majority World.
 - vi. City Engagement: Boston is experiencing unprecedented growth. Though a small city by global standards, it hits above its weight. We seek to engage in the city through our One Mile Vision and find natural global links between Boston and other world cities.
- d. He then shared a list of six priorities he has regarding the senior pastor:

- i. Pay attention to their testimony, their relationships, failures, evidence of fruit, holiness, and daily walk with Jesus. Understand their relationships with their wife and children. Do they have a joint sense of calling?
- ii. Ecclesial Missiology. Missions at Park Street Church is likely to be significantly different from what any candidate will have experienced. The primary difference is that here the church as a whole, minister and congregation, is responsible for selecting, training, and sending our missionaries.
- iii. The Senior Minister should regularly reference missions (preferably monthly) in his preaching and make it a priority to visit missionaries on the field once a year.
- iv. Be a biblically controlled preacher, stressing he prefers an expository preacher who exalts the Gospel. He should be a preacher who can connect with both those who have been Christians many years as well as with baby Christians who may not have ever read the Bible.
- v. Have a collaborative leadership style with other ministers and elders, particularly with the Senior Leadership Team.
- vi. Be a credible ambassador across the city. How does he see the relationship between the culture and the church and how does he interact with it?
- e. The church is in the process of hiring a Minister for City Engagement who may arrive before the new Senior Minister. Julian does not see a conflict here and hopes that whomever is called as Senior Minister will support the vision that the church has. He quoted Whitfield here: "Jesus is on the move. You have to keep up with Him."
- f. Julian was also asked about what role he sees for the Senior Minister in equipping international students as disciple makers. He said he would like to see the Senior Minister be a champion of this cause. It's one of the reasons to preach the gospel.
- g. The conversation with Julian concluded with prayer by Jim after which the committee continued in the Missions Conference Room.

4. Continued discussion re Prayer for the Committee, Communication and Meeting Minutes — Leslie, David and Jim.

- a. Communication logistics:
 - i. Posting minutes on the web: Once the committee approves its minutes, typically at its next meeting, David will provide them to Elizabeth for posting.
 - ii. Minutes for the Committee's meetings of June 27, 2019 and July 2, 2019 were approved.
 - iii. David will be the communications link between the Committee and Elizabeth.
- b. Prayer for the committee:
 - i. Leslie provided a summary of her meeting with John Liu, Cindy Cutlip and Lori Chang. Lori has started a prayer group with the first SMSC's spouses to pray for the spouses and families of the current SMSC. Other ideas to increase prayer support for the committee included creating an email list to distribute prayer requests, creating a small group that would gather regularly to pray for the search committee, coordinating with the Hour of Prayer, setting up a prayer calendar, and establishing neighborhood prayer houses.
 - ii. No one has stepped forward to lead this effort. What might be a process whereby we could find a leader? (Joy Ahearn has indicated that she might be willing to serve as an administrator for a prayer project if there was a leader.)
 - iii. Idea of a prayer calendar. Post a large calendar with an invitation to the congregation to select a day, claim it by putting their name on that day, thus committing to pray for

- the committee and its work on that day. This could also be a commitment to fast and pray on a particular day.
- iv. David suggested that this second tier of prayer may gain traction as we post our Minutes and a church prayer/fasting calendar has been developed and approved.

5. Other Matters

- The search committee will next meet on July 23 at 7:00 pm at the church. At that time, we will have individual conversations with Kris Perkins and Michael Balboni on the characteristics they desire to see in Park Street's next Senior Minister.
- The committee will also meet on July 30 at 7 pm at Jim's. The topic then is expected to be a discussion and development of an agreed upon set of criteria which we can use in evaluating candidate sermons.
- The meeting adjourned with prayer at 9:30 pm.

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