



SENIOR MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF JULY 23, 2019 MEETING

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

1. The Search Committee's meeting began at 7:00 pm with prayer for the church and for the committee — David.

2. Discussion with Associate Minister Kris Perkins — Committee

- a. David began by asking Kris to discuss the type of Senior Minister that Park Street Church should be seeking at this time and what freedom that leader should have in organizing the staff.
- b. Kris began his discussion by noting that there is a lot to address in the life of the church if we want to see change. He began by noting three big issues:
 - i. Leadership structure: The new Senior Minister will need to work with the ministers and lay leadership to identify and address the church's vision and the leadership required to support that vision. He will need to initiate a planning process — 1, 3, 5, and 10-year plans with clear goals — that involves ministers, elders, and other lay leaders. These plans should include income and expense budgets. Any leadership structure that results should include provisions for staff care and development.
 - ii. Kris believes that our church should be missional within our city. While we have a well-developed world missions program, he believes that we need to develop an equally well focused program for our city. He described this in the concept of a "cathedral paradigm."
 - iii. A crisis in evangelicalism. Kris noted how this has played out in the Board of Elders and in the prior senior minister search committee. He believes that the dynamic we are experiencing now is similar to the pre-Ockenga tension between liberalism and fundamentalism. Ockenga, along with others, "re-engineered" orthodox Christianity in the mid-20th century, leaving out much of the rigidity of that day, while retaining the fundamentals of the Christian faith, revitalizing evangelicalism, and addressing cultural issues. Kris believes that the same type of rethinking is needed today, and that Park Street Church is well positioned to lead that effort.
- c. The new Senior Minister must be evangelical and reformed (in that order). He should have a proven track record. If Park Street was currently living out its corporate life to its fullest potential as a "Cathedral Church" for the city of Boston possessing regional and national impact, the ideal would be to hire the "very best" preacher and a writer who already has national recognition within the evangelical movement. But given that a significant amount of change and growth is necessary, the incoming Senior Minister must be a solid preacher, but emphasis should be placed on finding a new minister who is a unifying change agent. How we get to be the church we need to be is the primary concern at this critical time.
- d. Important character traits of an incoming leader include:

- i. He will need to understand the context of Park Street and know the people, understand and feel the reality of the church, its history and the way “things are done here.” And, in that context be a constructive change agent.
 - ii. He will need to be an influencer, confronting any “elephants-in-the-room” and those who are disagreeable beyond reason.
 - iii. He also has to be authentic. To Kris this means that when they are in a one-on-one meeting with you and when they are preaching, you see the same person. He needs to be vulnerable, willing to share, consistently of good character.
 - iv. He must be humble, not threatened by other good leaders around them.
 - v. He needs to be resilient.
 - vi. He must be able to get people to think positively and not be weighed down by crises.
- e. Important leadership traits include:
- i. He needs to be someone with vision, but also can catalyze vision into reality.
 - ii. He needs to be good at macro (not micro) administration. Able to organize people to think through issues and empower the right people to do the implementation.
 - iii. Preaching. People are looking for something “new” from the pulpit, new insights from Scripture. When you hear a sermon, you need to receive a “nugget” that is helpful. Good exegetical, Biblical exposition is necessary. Good story-telling so that you can picture/feel the truth. Good applications, so you can see how it will make a difference in your life. And, all that in 30 minutes which is difficult; so not all of these characteristics need to be in every sermon.
 - iv. Team leadership development. The Senior Minister needs to value the team, give them assignments where they thrive, feel safe, and continue to develop their skills. Park Street should be a place where we train staff not only for our church but to go out into the world.
- f. Kris believes we need a pastor who is a bridge to the next generation, and not a next generation pastor. He is not sure that a younger person could be a unifying change agent. The pastor we’re seeking needs to empower the next generation and set the church to succeed in the next generation. This led him to suggest that we look for someone in the age range 45-55. This led to a question: What about someone like Tim Keller who is older? Kris responded: “Who would have chosen Abraham, an old guy, or Paul, a murderer, or Jeremiah, who was just a child? It’s not an age question, it’s wisdom that’s needed.”
- g. When interviewing candidates, the committee needs to ask about the candidate’s personal relationship with Christ and to make sure that it is central to the candidate’s life. He suggested that we might ask: What are three things that draw you to Jesus? And, then ask more details about what they do, what they have learned, etc.
- h. Jason prayed to close our discussion with Kris.

3. Discussion with Ministerial Staff Member Michael Balboni — Committee

- a. David prayed for Michael and then asked what type of senior minister are we looking for and whether that individual should be free to change the way ministry, and staff, is organized.
- b. Michael responded saying that the most important criteria is that the individual the church calls must be convicted that he is called to ministry at Park Street Church. This

has to be clear to him. It is non-negotiable and the most important factor in making a call.

- c. Theology. The individual the church calls has to be orthodox. Look at all the major topics in their understanding of God. They need to be evangelical and be able to champion that idea. There should be clarity in what it means to be evangelical: (1) Infallibility and inerrancy of the scripture. (2) Salvation by faith and grace alone. (3) Personal commitment to Jesus Christ. These are non-negotiable. This person should be Reformed because this is the tradition of Park Street Church going back at least 100 years. For example, Gordon Hugenberger did not talk about this label much, but he was definitely Reformed. This is also non-negotiable.
- d. Personal life. 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 2. Look over each trait. Need to ask private questions, ask their spouse, and people they are close to.
 - i. The person needs to have a holy life, be humble, someone who has experienced suffering.
 - ii. Want to know who the spouse is, what role would she desire to have?
 - iii. This individual should be in their 40s. Needs to engage millennials and baby-boomers. (These groups think differently – have different approaches, definitions of terms, e.g., social issues of how to talk about a pro-life approach on abortion.)
 - iv. Someone who prays.
- e. Personality traits.
 - i. Team player – comfortable letting others lead. Need to be open about his gifts and limitations. An Ephesians 4:11 team.
 - ii. Consensus builder. Needs to work with staff, elders, and congregation on important issues. Have an integrative personality. Sympathize with those who are conservative evangelicals and those who are progressive evangelicals.
 - iii. Someone who is good at a lot of different things. Academic intellect who also has management skills, good people skills, and is culturally aware.
- f. Teaching.
 - i. Expository practice, book-by-book. Careful attention to the Biblical text but with attention to the redemptive story.
 - ii. Attention to systematic theology. Biblical theology tracing an idea from Genesis to Revelation. Systematic theology is the doctrine of man, the doctrine of God, end times, etc.
 - iii. Sermon should be 30-35 minutes, 35 minutes the absolute max.
 - iv. Illustrations, stories, some self-disclosure, passion.
 - v. Organizational structure of the sermon should be clear. Michael thinks that this approach works well at Park Street, appeals more to the mind and less to the emotions which fits this church well.
 - vi. 20-25% of the content of a sermon needs to be addressed to non-believers, appealing to individuals of a different religion, someone spiritual but not a believer, someone who is secular. Park Street has a lot of visitors who are not Christians.
 - vii. Application. How do I respond to the message?
 - viii. Does the person pray over the sermon?

- g. Vision.
 - i. The new pastor not only needs to cast a vision but also must align everyone towards that vision.
 - ii. Needs to be willing to grapple with big questions especially being in a city with many universities.
 - iii. Have a heart to serve the least of these.
 - iv. Exercise spiritual leadership on behalf of other churches. Seek to serve other churches in Boston towards a greater end. The bigger vision is revival in Boston. Park Street should be the engine towards this vision.
 - v. A person who loves Boston.
 - vi. Continue to champion cross-cultural missions.
- h. How is he called?
 - i. Internal call. How have you heard this call?
 - ii. External call. Is there unity and consensus within the church?
- i. Structural considerations.
 - i. The Senior Minister position is functionally too large for one person. One person for teaching/vision (Senior Pastor) and another for organizational leadership (e.g., Executive Pastor) to execute vision on a day to day basis. It makes the most sense to split the roles.
 - ii. There should be a public teacher doing writing, engagement, being a catalyst for vision, helping align people towards vision, because the pulpit is the main opportunity for communicating the vision. That's a full-time job.
 - iii. There should be an organizational leader, in charge of the staff, making sure that the vision is carried out day to day.
 - iv. Q: Who creates the structure and what does the organizational chart look like? Both people would work very closely. Often everyone reports to the Executive Pastor and he reports to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor would have to choose the Executive Pastor. It's a tight relationship.
 - v. Right now, the tail wags the dog. The organization is fixed, and the vision has to fit within that.
 - vi. Q: Should we establish that now, looking to fill both positions? Probably not. But if you are expecting someone to spend a lot of time preparing sermons and you want that person to produce other kinds of teaching products, that is most of their time.
 - vii. Q: How would you weigh team player and consensus builder vs. preaching? They are both necessary. Teaching and building vision are both critical and they have to be good at both.
- h. Linda prayed for Michael and his ministry.

4. Update on communication — David

- a. David reported that applications for the Senior Minister position that are now entered on the web go directly to Richard Kidd. David has asked Elizabeth to remove all links to the application process used previously. He also asked her to update the information on the website to indicate that new applicants should email Richard directly.

- b. David will access the information remaining in the information system used by the previous search committee and download any information there that would be helpful to this committee.
- c. Margaret continues to work on a paragraph on city engagement for the Church Profile.

5. Approval of July 16, 2019 Minutes — Deferred until the next meeting.

6. Other Matters

- a. Linda: Rich Kidd mentioned that in his application review he looked to see if the candidate was “tall enough to ride the train.” What are the criteria being used? If we require experience leading a large congregation, a younger person might not have that. The church profile states that 10+ years of pastoral experience with at least six in a large church. Jason: Don’t want to rule out anyone based on age. Jim: Doesn’t think Rich has a particular age in mind and is savvy enough to pick someone who is excellent even if younger. Example of Gordon Hugenberger — he pastored a small church, not a large one.
- b. Update from Board of Elders Meeting: The elders discussed the statement on evangelical principles, that the search committee reviewed earlier, at their last meeting. Phil and Kris are working to revise the statement for further review by the Elders.
- c. Please review the [existing church profile](#) and candidate qualifications to identify any needed changes.
- d. The committee needs to discuss how candidate sermons are chosen for review. How many? How do we do this work? If we ask a candidate which sermons, they might just submit their best sermons. Some churches do not have their sermons on line.
- e. We will next meet at 7:00 pm at Jim’s home in Lexington. The principle item on the agenda will be a discussion of how we organize our review of candidate sermons and the criteria and process we will all use. We will also review the minutes of July 16 and 23, 2019
- f. Jim closed the meeting with prayer at 10:00 pm.

Final Revision 7/31/19 11:37:34 AM