

Suggestions for

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NOMINATING
COMMITTEE

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The Nominating Committee

THE PURPOSE OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE is to discover, interview, enlist, and propose for election by the church such persons as are suitable to fill those positions to which the church gives the committee responsibility for nomination. Generally, the nominating committee is responsible for general and department officers, teachers, leaders, counselors, church committees, general church officers (clerk, treasurer, trustees), and key music personnel.

The work of the nominating committee determines largely the level of consecration and competence of a church's leadership.

In a democracy, the whole constituency is called on to select its leaders, but obviously the entire body cannot or will not make the necessary detailed investigations to determine the persons best equipped to hold office. It is therefore essential to the democratic process that responsibility be delegated to a smaller number who will represent the whole body in the inquiry as to available and suitable persons to be considered for places of leadership. Historic democratic procedure has long justified the wisdom of the committee plan of searching out those persons whom the church later could more intelligently and competently elect.

How is the nominating committee chosen? The nominating committee should be elected and instructed by the church. The moderator (usually, but not necessarily, the pastor) may be authorized to name the committee; or he may be given a committee to aid him in this responsibility. (The pastor, minister of education, and minister of music, are, in most cases, ex-officio members of the nominating committee.) Embarrassment may arise, however, if the committee is composed of people who must face the task of nominating its own members.

Many, if not most Baptist churches, prefer to authorize naming of the committee by the moderator, who will be careful to make it representative. Whatever the method of selection, the church should elect the individuals chosen to comprise the committee. The nominating committee serves throughout the year, making all necessary replacements and additions in the church-elected personnel.

Work of the Committee

1. Assuming its work several months before the new church year begins, the nominating committee will do well to set up a simple standard of essential qualifications for determining eligibility for office holding, and a schedule of dates for reporting its nominations to the church. Among these qualifications might be: (1) evidences of spiritual mindedness; (2) membership in good standing of the electing church; (3) availability for office—not too old nor too young, reasonably regular in attendance on the worship services; (4) participation in the organization to be served; (5) evidences of potential leadership ability; (6) some

assurance of co-operative spirit and loyalty to the basic faith and program of the church.

The standard should not be set so high that few could reach it nor so low that discrimination would be unnecessary.

2. Having established some general principles of selection, the committee should then canvass the entire church membership roll with a view to compiling a complete list of those members who are available and acceptable. In most cases much of this detail may have been attended to before the larger committee meets. The church secretary and/or church clerk, working together, may eliminate the names of non-resident members, the inactive, those too young, those too old, the shut-outs and shut-ins, those already holding office who should not be overburdened, and the others obviously unsuited for consideration. The list of names thus sorted out will usually constitute a surprisingly large number of possibilities.

3. In the light of needs to be met, careful study should be made of (1) those already holding office; (2) those needed for replacements or additions, (3) those needed for expansion purposes.

In the case of those holding office, prayerful thought should be given to the possibility of making desired changes. Frequently such study will disclose that an officer or teacher or leader would be happier and more fruitful if transferred to another job or even relieved. The committee with tact and love should determine to recommend what is best for all concerned, and not just renominate unreflectively those currently holding office.

From the list of "availables" should be selected names of persons who seem best fitted for each of the vacancies. In the case of those for whom changes are suggested or for new nominees, interviews should be conducted to clarify understanding of the position for which the worker is sought, and to gain consent for the change or the nomination. The committee, of course, has no power to declare that the change be made, but can avoid misunderstanding by such thoughtful conversation. Individuals, currently holding office, who are to be renominated should also be contacted before their names are presented to the church.

4. The nominating committee, having determined the places to be filled and having interviewed the desired persons and found them available for nomination, may well go a step further in providing a certain amount of pre-training, especially for those who have not had previous experience. This may be done (1) by placing in the hand of the prospective workers pamphlets and books descriptive of the position which he or she is being invited to consider; (2) by inviting the person under consideration to get acquainted with the job through observation of those already engaged in it; (3) by joining a training class where an appropriate textbook, relating to the new work, may be studied.

Such pre-training will give the prospective worker opportunity to determine his interest in and suitability for the place. He may then accept or decline the proposed nomination more intelligently. Such pre-training courses will usually be conducted under the direction of the church by the organization for whom the workers are being pre-

pared. The nominating committee must begin its work early if there is to be time for any period of pre-training.

5. The nominating committee is representative, not authoritarian. It is the servant of the church and its organizations. It should therefore act in a consultative capacity. For example, the committee will ordinarily nominate the general superintendent of the Sunday school, director of the Training Union, president of the Brotherhood, and the president of the Woman's Missionary Society, before nominating other officers, teachers, and leaders of these organizations. The heads of these organizations having been elected, they may well be added to the nominating committee. (If this is the case, the original committee should be small in number or the final committee may be too large for efficient work.) They will thus be able to represent the several organizations in the nomination of needed personnel. A better distribution of leadership may also be obtained and no one organization is given undue advantage in the selection of its workers. There is further value in that the combined wisdom of these representatives of the organizations will be available in selection or rejection of persons who are brought forward for consideration. "In the multitude of counselors there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14b.)

6. The high point of the nominating committee's work comes when, in congregational business meeting, its report is made to the church. Usually the committee will nominate one person for each office to be filled. The committee should be careful not to assume that its nominations are the practical equivalent of election. Any member of the

church may object to any nomination. Every member has the right to make other nominations which, if sustained, will call for the vote of the church to determine its choice. Most churches have the rule that voting in such case shall be by secret ballot.

If the committee has done its work well and representatively, there will ordinarily be little, if any, objection raised to its nominations, nor will other nominations be proposed. The committee, however, should welcome rather than resent discussion of its report from the floor, or the making of other nominations.

7. Since replacements and additions must be made from time to time in the church-elected personnel of the organizations, the nominating committee should be retained as a permanent committee throughout its term of one year. The policy of "church control" of all its organizations will thus be maintained at one of the most vital points—the selection of leadership.

8. The nominating committee, following with freedom and desired modifications the suggestions given above, will not render a perfunctory service; renominating uncritically those already in office and merely confirming "appointments" which have been made by leaders of the organizations. Rather, the nominating committee will become the mind and heart and conscience of the church, as it seeks the leadership of the Holy Spirit in finding and doing the will of God in discovering and proposing to the church those men and women who will honor Christ and serve his kingdom most fruitfully.

Church Administration Materials

The following church committee pamphlets give suggestions concerning the work of individual committees. The pamphlets are designed to give to each member of a church committee.

Available from the Baptist Book Store, the eight page pamphlets are wrapped, six identical titles to a package, and sell for fifty cents. (6 for .50)

Pamphlets

- Baptism Committee—G. Allen West
- History Committee—Norman W. Cox; Judson B. Allen
- Library Committee—E. Hermond Westmoreland
- Recreation Committee—Sabin P. Landry
- Flower Committee—Versil S. Crenshaw
- Personnel Committee—Leonard E. Wedel
- Properties Committee—Parks Warnock
- Pulpit Committee—J. W. Storer
- Lord's Supper Committee—Henry Allen Parker
- Nominating Committee—Gaines S. Dobbins

Booklets

Church Administration booklets give comprehensive and practical helps for more efficient service. (3 for .50)

- Church Council—J. Marvin Crowe (20 cents each)
- Church Clerk and Efficient Church Records—J. P. Edmunds (20 cents each)
- Church Treasurer—R. A. Springer (20 cents each)