

7. Why must interim ministers “stir things up.”

The departure of a pastor may be met with a variety of emotions—grief, anger, frustration, surprise, relief, hope. These emotions are a normal response to transition. The interim pastor can become the focus for this emotional energy. Some people may perceive the interim pastor as being the one to blame for needed but stressful adjustments of the congregation’s practices.

In addition, unresolved issues sometimes re-emerge during the interim time. Addressing these issues is difficult but necessary for the long-term effectiveness and mission of the congregation.

In Conclusion

Using an AUCCIIM interim will help congregations work through the five tasks that lead to a healthy congregation.

- Coming to Terms with History
- Discovering a New Identity
- Managing Leadership Shifts
- Renewing Denominational Linkages
- Commitment to a New Future

Congregations using an AUCCIIM Interim break the cycle of short, **unintentional** interims (called pastors).

God is our refuge and
strength, an ever present help.
Psalm 46:1a

**Do You have
other
Questions?
Contact your
Conference Office
or
AUCCIIM**

**An informational brochure
prepared for congregations in
transition**

Copying is permitted for
distribution to Conferences,
Associations, Congregations and
pastors.

AUCCIIM Contacts:

David Travers Treasurer
112 South St
Concord NH 03301
email: David@IntraScope.org

www.aucciim.org



God is Still Speaking

**THE ASSOCIATION OF
UCC INTENTIONAL
INTERIM MINISTERS
(AUCCIIM)**

PRESENTS

**AN
INTRODUCTION TO
INTERIM MINISTRY
IN THE UNITED
CHURCH
OF CHRIST
OR**

**SEVEN QUESTIONS
LAY LEADERS ASK**

Let the people renew their Strength
Isaiah 41:1



1. What is an “intentional interim minister” and what is a “Professional Transition Specialist?”

An “intentional interim minister” is a pastor who is called to interim ministry. Since the skills need for interim or other transitions are the same, many are calling intentional interim pastors “church transition specialists.” “Professional Transition Specialist” is the designation from the Interim Ministry Network of an Intentional Interim Minister with additional training and experience.

Not all church transition occurs during the interim time (a church may undergo a radical size change in a relatively short time, for example, or develop intense conflict). Therefore, occasionally a non-interim situation can benefit from the leadership of a church transition specialist.

Intentional interim pastors–church transition specialists–are committed to serving churches in transition and to improving their understanding of interim ministry, through:

- Basic education in interim ministry
- Continuing education and
- Discourse with peers.

2. Whom do we call if our church needs an interim minister?

Your Conference Office is well equipped to assist congregations in finding an intentional interim minister (now often referred to as a church transition specialist). Churches should contact their conference office as soon

as the pastor’s departure is announced. The conference office will provide the church with counsel and resources relating to the interim time and search process.

3. Why do interim ministers “always change things”?

In a world full of change many of us look to our church for stability and security. When a settled pastor leaves, that sense of sanctuary is disrupted as the changes that occur are felt in all aspects of church life. Interim pastors enter an environment where change has already occurred. They more frequently work to stabilize the situation than to change it. In fact, intentional interim pastors are trained to be cautious about change, and have guidelines regarding when and when not to change.

However, they cannot overlook opportunities to address issues which relate to the well-being of the church and its readiness for a new leader and a new ministry. The changes that might be indicated are not undertaken arbitrarily, but only with the support of the lay leadership of the church.

4. Why do interim pastorates last so long?

Consider all that must be done to prepare the congregation for a new pastorate:

The congregation must reflect on its history and tradition, identity and vision. In order to know what strengths it wants in its new pastor, it will need to consider where God is calling it to

go. It must prepare a congregational profile.

The Search Committee must then seek, get to know, and evaluate potential candidates. The committee needs to be able to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit without feeling rushed. This spiritual and organizational preparation is well worth the 15 to 18 months that is often required. Such a careful process will pay dividends well into the next pastorate.

5. Why is it important for an interim pastor to have special education?

Basic Education in Interim Ministry helps pastors focus on three things: (1) the unique dynamics of a congregation in transition, (2) the kind of leadership needed to serve such congregations and (3) developing those leadership skills. This education will not make good interim pastors out of mediocre clergy, but it should equip each one to be a better interim pastor than he or she could have been without the training.

6. Will our church grow if we hire an interim minister?

There is a temptation to go on hold during an interim time, but many congregations actually grow during the interim period.

It is important to continue to offer membership classes and opportunities for integration into the church. The new members will understand they are joining a congregation of people, not joining a particular minister.