

Questions about

Questions for a Prospective Pastor

About half of your questions address specific doctrinal concerns. Do many search committees give doctrinal issues enough attention or do they often assume if the candidate is a Southern Baptist and has "been to seminary," then that qualification has been satisfied?

I think it's generally true that if a man has been raised and educated in a Southern Baptist context that search committees assume he's orthodox in all matters of doctrine, especially if he has already pastored in an SBC church. A few doctrinal questions may be asked, but they are mostly *pro forma*.

I remember an incident in my own experience back in the spring of 1981. I was at a church for three days in view of a call. While showing me around the area on Saturday, a member of the committee very sheepishly asked, "I'm kind of embarrassed to ask this, and I hope you aren't offended by it, but I think that I should. Would you mind telling me what you believe about how a person is saved?"

"I'm so glad you asked that question," I replied, "and I'm not offended, rather I'm encouraged that you asked it. Questions like this one are exactly the kinds of questions you ought to be asking me."

Committees should take nothing for granted theologically about a candidate. With more than 45,000 SBC churches and even more ordained ministers, you just can't assume that they are all doctrinally sound. That's especially so in a day such as ours when there's so much change occurring on the theological landscape. The best way to find out a man's theology is to ask him directly about it. Furthermore, I think that the most theologically solid men will actually appreciate the concern for correct doctrine expressed by asking good questions.