

## **FIVE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF INTERIM MINISTRY**

The major agenda of an interim ministry period centers on five developmental tasks first spelled out by Loren Mead in a monograph entitled *The Developmental Tasks of the Congregation in Search of a Pastor* and then elaborated on in his book *Critical Moment of Ministry: A Change of Pastors*.

### **1. Coming to Terms with History**

It is important for congregations to know their history so that they can appreciate their heritage and at the same time be aware of the issues and concerns that need to be resolved in order to move freely into the future.

### **2. Discovering a New Identity**

Identity is the task of understanding "who we are now in our present context and what it is we understand God is calling us to be." It is the task of developing the vision to which a congregation is being called.

### **3. Shifts of Power/Leadership Changes**

In most congregations over a period of time the leadership begins to take on much of the style and values of the previous pastor. When that pastor leaves, there is often a time when persons who have been in leadership rethink their commitment and determine whether or not they want to continue in leadership positions. Other persons often find the interim time an opportunity to take leadership roles. This is an opportune time to empower those who are out of power and to welcome leadership gifts from all parts of the congregation.

### **4. Rethinking Denominational Linkages**

Congregations often are not aware of the support and resources they receive from their middle judicatory and national denominational structures. That relationship is normally more visible while the structures of the church beyond the congregation are engaged in working with the congregation in moving through the interim period and seeking to find the right pastor to call. The transition time helps raise the awareness of a congregation to its denominational heritage, ministries and resources.

### **5. Commitment to New Leadership and to a New Future**

When a congregation has developed a shared vision of its future and has sought to call a pastor to help lead it in moving into that future, there will probably be a new commitment both to that new leader and to that new future.