

Study Questions for “Church of the Brethren: 2008 Pastoral Study Project”
By Steve Clapp

1. What factors in your job contribute the most to your happiness and satisfaction? What factors do you imagine contribute most to the job satisfaction for pastors? Discuss the relationship between competence in ministry and job satisfaction for ministers.
2. The report suggests there is a poor connection between pastors and the denomination. Is this primarily due to:
 - a) poor communication by church leaders?
 - b) the perception that there is a theological or sociological gap between denominational leaders and local pastors?
 - c) fewer pastors receiving their training for ministry from Church of the Brethren educational tracks (Bethany Seminary or the TRIM, EFSM and ACTS training programs)?
 - d) individual expression and viewpoint being more important than the sharing of common beliefs and values?
3. The survey results indicate generally high morale among pastors. Do you believe this reflects the situation for most pastors or are the satisfied pastors the ones who responded to the survey? What do you imagine the morale to be among all Church of the Brethren pastors? What is your opinion about the morale of your pastor?
4. Pastors rate their competence in preaching, worship leadership and pastoral care to be high. They rate themselves significantly lower in dealing with issues of sexuality, evangelism and work with young adults. What does this suggest about the people the church calls into ministry—their strengths, aptitude, predispositions? Does the church prefer empathetic, people-oriented leaders more than innovative, goal-oriented ones?
5. What does it mean that a large number of pastors (83%) feel that they are richly rewarded in their work while fewer believe that their pastoral work has been a blessing for their children (73%) and spouses (70%)? How do you account for the difference between pastors and their families? In what ways are you supportive of your pastor and his/her family?
6. Those pastors who have participated in the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) program, the Advanced Foundations for Church Leadership track or Vital Pastor track, have expressed appreciation for the two year continuing education experience.
 - a) If your pastor participated in one of the SPE program tracks, describe the effect on your pastor’s ministry and on your congregation’s mission and ministry.
 - b) If your pastor did not participate in the SPE program, what other continuing education experiences have influenced his/her ministry and the congregation’s mission and ministry.Would you consider participating in a two-year SPE program?
7. Please contact the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership (academy@bethanyseminary.edu) to share your responses to these study questions.