

“Serving on the Search Committee for a Director of Missions— A Firsthand Narrative”¹

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On several different occasions as a college student, I and a group of friends convinced “metro”-students about the adventuresome endeavors of “snipe-hunting.” We told them tales about driving out to the country and hiding out in bushes late at night during full moons so that we could jump out and catch unique birds in potato sacks. We would shake the bags and let the birds loose so we could watch them stumble around for a few minutes before they flew away. Interestingly, we convinced a few city-slickers of this sport only to turn around and tell them it did not exist—that is, we never actually took them out to the country to give it a try.

In June 2006 I was asked by our association’s moderator to serve on the Search Committee for a Director of Missions (DOM). Little did I know at that time that even though several pastors and lay leaders have talked about serving on such a committee, no one (to my knowledge) has ever shown anyone what it looks like or how to do it—I had fallen prey to my own snipe-hunting trick!

While searching for a pastor or an additional staff person of a church has its challenges, those challenges seem multiplied when looking for an associational missionary. Though tens of thousands may serve well in the pastorate, few are comfortable in a DOM role or are gifted to lead a group of pastors, lay leaders, and churches—each with different traditions, worship styles, visions, ministries, and more! That is to say, trying to locate a gifted and able DOM is not an easy task by any stretch of the imagination.

Though this account does not contain an ironclad step-by-step approach for a DOM search, it does tell you how we did it recently. This article also provides some lessons we learned

along the way. Hopefully, the Lord can use our committee's experience in aiding other associational endeavors to search for God's leader (rather than hypothetical snipes!).

How We Were Formed

Our search committee was formed during a special called meeting of the Executive Committee. Because our DOM had recently given his notice of resignation, our moderator appointed a six-person search committee.² This committee consisted of both pastors and associates ranging from large, medium, and small churches. We had four pastors, one associate pastor, and a minister of music on the committee. Our committee also represented the vast array of churches in our association—from city to community to mission spread out geographically (western, central, and eastern regions of the association). Because of a sizeable military presence in our county, the moderator even included a retired chaplain turned associate pastor. The search committee included two members who had served on the previous search committee (which had met only two years earlier!), so that we might follow some sort of pattern. We held an initial, impromptu meeting immediately following the Executive Committee meeting to elect a chairman and schedule the next meeting. It seemed obvious to elect one of the members from the previous search committee, and since only one of the two was present at that initial meeting, multiple choice was no longer an option!³

The Initial Process

We scheduled our first meeting three days later. Our main agenda at that time was to decide how to advertise the position of DOM. Because of the close proximity to two other states, we decided to run three-week ads in three Baptist state papers (Florida, Alabama, and Georgia) for the period of four weeks.⁴

In addition to advertising the position, we spent most of the first three scheduled meetings⁵ talking about a possible Interim Director of Missions. While a couple of professors and a soon-to-retire minister were contacted, none of these individuals were ideal because of their current works loads, travel time, and/or pay. Most of us agreed that the association expected at least 15-20 hours per week to help “referee and provide general oversight” of the staff and touch base with some of the churches.

After thinking and praying about the situation, one committee member recommended a local law enforcement chaplain. This individual had several noteworthy advantages: he had served as a pastor of a church in the association, he had a clear passion for both the Lord and the lost, he frequented the weekly ministers’ meetings, and he was well-respected by most, if not all, of the area ministers. While meeting with this individual, everyone agreed he would work fifteen hours per week with ten of those in the office and five spent visiting churches. Furthermore, his salary was set at \$300 per week.

Once we had finalized all the details with our prospective Interim DOM, we presented him at a regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting. As most of you know, it is difficult to get a group of Baptists to agree unanimously on anything. Now, imagine a committee represented almost entirely by ministers. Talk about compounding differences! Moreover, you should know that all of our committee’s work up to this point had occurred in a span of only three weeks, so for us to find a prospective candidate *and* put his name before others for a vote seemed just short of a miracle from God. Those things being said, our candidate received 84% of the votes—not great, but high enough for him to accept. We could now focus our efforts on finding a DOM.

Going Back to the Future

In order to aid our search for a future DOM, one of our committee members invited our ex-DOM and the newly-elected Interim DOM to provide us with some things to consider in calling a DOM. We used the association's job description for the DOM as a starting point, and our ex-DOM shared what he believed the top responsibilities/characteristics were. He identified the following (in no particular order): ability to relate to and love pastors; ability to preach to fill the pulpit; have a heart for missions, especially in terms of Disaster Relief and the state convention; possessing a military background would be helpful (because of our military bases); ability to assist or envision condo resort ministry; able to administer staff, but not a great need because of several self-starters; desire to visit a number of churches; exemplifies grace, wisdom, mentoring, and listening; and convictional without it interfering with the diversity in the association (worship styles, divorced pastors, certain doctrines, etc.). Our ex-DOM also noted that a recent seminary graduate would lack the maturity and pastoral experience needed to serve as a quality DOM.

In light of this discussion, our committee decided to send out a survey to every church and Executive Committee member so that we might evaluate the entire association's expectations for a DOM. Ultimately, the time spent reviewing the past was both necessary and important in assisting our committee for our upcoming work.

Separating Wheat from Chaff

Two months after being formed, our committee sat down to begin going through the résumés. We believed that interested candidates would have had ample time to respond to the ads we had placed with the state papers. We had also received several surveys from numerous churches and pastors throughout the association. Every member of our committee received a

compilation of the surveys as well as copies of each of the résumés. Our chairman advised us to alphabetize for easier finding whenever we discussed an applicant. Moreover, he instructed us to place the applicants in three sections: plus, minus, and question marks. With approximately 75 responses, the task seemed at first to be monumental. We had one week to separate the wheat (strong) from the chaff (weak) before we would re-convene.

The following week's gathering was met with an additional résumé. We discussed whether we should still receive them. Realizing that we might be faced with an even bigger pile of résumés, we decided to proceed with those received by the previous meeting.

Rather than begin with the bottom-up approach, one member recommended starting with what we saw to be the best applicants. Our chairman recorded the names and tallied the number of "votes" from each member of the committee. He recommended that we keep anyone who received at least one positive score from someone in our group. This action limited our scope to some 25 applicants—67% had been eliminated.

Two weeks later⁶ we decided to narrow our focus to those who received at least three votes, since this criterion comprised half of our committee. We now had our list down to the top nine applicants. After a little more discussion, we agreed to look at those with four or more votes, leaving us with four applicants. Furthermore, once we compared the four, it was obvious to everyone that one did not fit with the rest, so we placed his résumé aside. Now we thought we had the cream of the crop!

Our chairman recommended sending a form letter to everyone but the top nine candidates, so that others could move on with their respective ministries. He also informed us that we had just received three fairly strong résumés that we might want to consider. While no one wanted to throw new names into the mix at that point, we were curious as to how strong the

applicants were. After hearing about each of the new applicants, one sparked our interest, because he was fairly well-known. We decided to include him with the other top three while resolving not to accept more applicants or else our work may never finish! The best news was that less than three months into our work, we believed we had a good short list of four candidates—surely the end was in sight (how short-sighted we all were!).

Prayer and Patience

Two more weeks passed and we convened to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the top four candidates. Each had several positives, but a few negatives caused us from getting overly-excited about anyone. Our chairman recommended sending the top four (Group A) a questionnaire that had been used two years previously. This questionnaire (see appendix) covered ministry philosophy, DOM uniqueness, individual giftedness, and doctrinal stances. We viewed this form as a helpful tool to gather necessary information about our top prospects. A final decision at this meeting concerned notifying the next five candidates (Group B) to see if they were still interested.

Though we wanted to get feedback from Group A, we also wanted to get an idea about who we thought was “the best of the best.” Thus, we discussed the top four candidates and quickly believed two stood out. Moreover, everyone agreed that one appeared stronger than the other in terms of leadership and effectiveness in ministry. Our chairman then assigned each member of the committee to contact a reference from the top candidate’s list. The search committee from two years before had a former insurance agent-turned-pastor serving on it. He advised checking references “three deep,” to get a clearer picture of a candidate.⁷ Though it would take a little more time, we realized that such a practice could prove beneficial in our

search, especially since résumé references tend to be best friends. We began the process of calling and (often) leaving messages, waiting to hear back, and praying for divine wisdom.

By the time our committee met in two more weeks, two of our top four candidates said that they were no longer interested. Furthermore, two of the next five candidates declined from further consideration. Thus, we were left with two of our top four applicants and five of our top nine. Our selection pool was getting smaller each meeting and we assumed that the Lord was answering our prayers by making the choice easier.

Red Flags and Dead Ends

Because of conflicting schedules, it was four weeks before we could meet again. Everyone discussed their conversations with references about our top candidate, noting several similar strengths. A couple of negatives came up, but they were overshadowed initially by the numerous strengths.

One committee member questioned if we would lose the candidate to the state convention in a couple of years.⁸ Another member received phone calls from two people in the association, one of whom was a well-respected pastor, who knew the potential candidate and had learned that we were considering him. Both callers strongly cautioned against the candidate, because of questionable administrative tactics. Moreover, the committee observed that several staff had short tenures under the candidate, and we were concerned about our own associational staff. With a few other questionable items on his résumé, we began seeing all of these issues as red flags. While we may have misread an issue here or there, we felt obligated to heed so many warning signs. We all agreed to notify the candidate that we were pursuing other candidates.

With only one more candidate from the cream of the crop, we turned our attention to him. We were not convinced, however, that he should be the only one considered at that time—we

could not get overly-excited about him. Instead, we placed him back in the mix with the next four to see who stood out.⁹ Were we stalling or just coming to a dead end?

Waiting Too Late

Since we had not been able to meet as often the previous month, we met one week later to consider what the top five candidates at that time were. Our chairman asked who was at the bottom of everyone's list and there was consensus! Moreover, after a little research on one candidate's church, we were in agreement over the best two candidates, one of which had been the remaining candidate from the previous Group A list. Because of an ongoing concern related to him, we decided to pursue the other candidate and find out if he was still interested.

Two weeks later, after opening in prayer, we were informed that our new "top" candidate was preaching in view of a call to a church in three days. He had been interested in our position but we had waited too late to let him know! We had missed out on a very good candidate.

Furthermore, we were still unable to agree on the re-surfacing candidate. Therefore, we decided to look at the next highest on our list. We sent him the questionnaire to find out more about him.

Déjà vu All Over Again—More Red Flags!

Once we met in two more weeks, we were nearly six months into our work. Maybe we would have a candidate in place by the New Year. We covered our latest "top" candidate's questionnaire and were impressed with several areas. It did seem braggadocios, however, when he listed all but two of the areas as "his greatest strengths." Did he really believe he was strong in every area of consideration?

In order to speed up the process, we decided to begin calling references during our meeting. Dispersing to our vehicles or other offices and equipped with cell phones, we began

placing calls. Since it was the middle of the morning when most people would be at work, only one of us was able to reach anyone. Our chairman advised waiting to hear back from the other references and told us to contact him via phone or email about our findings.

We met the next week and discussed our contacts. Several positives appeared, but questionable areas included being arrogant and opinionated while not being fully honest. Now his self-evaluation on the questionnaire saturated with so many “greatest strengths” was beginning to make sense. We felt compelled to pay attention to these red flags. In the words of the great philosopher Yogi Berra, “It was déjà vu all over again!”

More Prayer and Patience

Since we would no longer consider our top prospect, we asked if any of the others from our short list were viable candidates. The committee was still not sold on the individual who kept re-surfacing, but we would keep him in the mix. To see where we stood as a committee, we reviewed what we were looking for in a DOM. The issues, in no particular order, were education (minimum MDiv at a Southern Baptist, or an accredited evangelical, seminary), experience (minimum of 10-15 years in the pastorate), and leadership (proven track record). One committee member asked if we knew of anyone that would make a good DOM, even if we had not received a résumé from him. This prompted another member to encourage us to take the upcoming Christmas holiday to pray fervently and ask trustworthy individuals to give us some names. After six full months of searching for a Director of Missions, it seemed as though we were starting afresh. As we gathered with family and friends the following weeks, we also gathered with the Lord in prayer.

A New Year's Resolution—Find a Director of Missions, or Resign Our Positions!

With a new year ahead of us, our committee came together prayed up and ready to move forward. We met weekly throughout the month of January, hoping to come to a resolve on a potential candidate.

We had three people referred to us the first week of January and three more the second week. Of those six, four notified us within a week that they did not feel at liberty for us to consider them. We also finally came to a conclusion that our committee should no longer pursue the candidate who kept re-surfacing. Of the two remaining candidates, both had been given some strong recommendations. Our chairman sent a questionnaire to our top pick and we began contacting references on him. Furthermore, we began contacting references on our second pick, to speed up the process if things failed on our first selection. Hopefully, we were learning from the past.

Progress and Reward

By the end of the month, we had received positive feedback on both of our top candidates. We awaited the questionnaire from our top pick. Once it was received, we were confident about proceeding. After conversing via phone and email, five of the six members of our committee could meet the candidate at a neutral site for lunch and an interview. Everything went well throughout our lunch appointment.¹⁰ On a side note, since we had spent very little money on our work, the association picked up the tab. After eight months of hard work, we decided to splurge—we ordered dessert!

Everyone, including the candidate, was excited about the possibility and would continue praying for the Lord's will to be done. The only concern our committee could foresee at this time was the candidate's family. He had two teenage daughters, one of which was finishing her junior

year of high school. We knew that teenagers do not like to leave friends. We knew that this could prove to be a tough hurdle to overcome.

Scheduling an On-Site Visit

After a couple more weeks of prayer, everyone was in agreement to pursue this candidate. We wanted to give him and his family a chance to tour our area. Different people on our committee scheduled meetings with a school principal, our associational moderator, and a dinner with spouses. To maximize the candidate's wife's time off from her school job, they opted to come at the end of March as part of their kids' Spring Break.

The time with the moderator included an informational tour of one-third of the church locations. The discussion also covered several other churches and associational matters. The evening dinner helped our committee get to know the candidate's wife. While the wives spent time discussing who-knows-what, the committee briefly met with the candidate about a couple of questions he had and how we would proceed.

Meeting with Personnel and Budget Committees—Pay Package Unanimity

Since everyone believed God was leading us to call this candidate as our next DOM, our committee scheduled a meeting with the Personnel and Budget Committees of the association. We met on April 12 and wanted to make sure we were all in agreement about the pay package. We set the salary and benefits, which could be divided as the candidate felt. We also discussed ministry-related expenses along with moving expenses and related issues. Expecting that it would take the candidate a few months to sale his home, we agreed to offer a gas allowance of \$50 per week towards a 7-hour round trip commute on the weekends. Unanimity abounded—either from excitement over the candidate or readiness to have the position filled or both!

Since everything was moving forward expectantly, we believed it was time to call a special meeting of the Executive Committee for the purpose of voting on our candidate as the DOM. We invited the candidate to be the main attraction at our regular Monday morning Ministers' Conference (11 am). The Executive Committee would then meet at noon to vote and eat lunch. The date was set for April 30.

Looking Fastball, Thrown a Curve

On April 19-20, each Search Committee member began receiving phone calls from our chairman. Several people in the association had been informed that the prospective DOM would not be on the field permanently for at least one year. Others had heard that his work week would be Monday through Wednesday of each week during this twelve-month timeframe. Some wondered if he was trying to abuse the generosity of the \$50 gas allowance. Our chairman offered to contact the candidate to clarify these matters.

The candidate sent our committee an explanatory email on April 22. We realized that some issues had been exaggerated, such as the gas allowance (he expressed gratitude but also understood if it could not be granted) and the work week. The question about when he could move still remained. Since email is one-sided, our committee nevertheless had a few questions and we needed to meet, again!

We met on April 26 to see where we stood as a committee. Some were unsatisfied with the candidate's apparent unwillingness to try to move right away. Others recognized the housing market and the family situation. After a few hours of discussion, we were forced to cancel the April 30 Executive Committee meeting until we could get some more resolve on these matters.

After our chairman contacted our prospect over the weekend, we met the following week on May 3. We discussed the last several days' collaborations with the candidate. All of our

questions were answered satisfactorily. Our concern was that we could not set the best possible atmosphere for our candidate to hit the ground running. We were unanimous that he was still God's man for the job. Thus, we re-scheduled the special called Executive Meeting for May 14 with a similar format as previously scheduled. Expecting a sizeable crowd, we selected a medium-sized, centrally located church so we could hold both our meetings and a lunch afterwards.

In retrospect, after our April 12th meeting, we were expecting smooth sailing or, in baseball terms, a fastball. When we got ready to swing, however, we realized it was a curve. Thankfully, we recognized it before it was too late so we could correct our swing.¹¹

Electing a New DOM

Prior to the Executive Meeting, our Ministers' Conference showcased our candidate and his family. After introductions and welcoming, one Search Committee member led in an interview with the candidate. Questions ranged from the candidate's call to salvation and ministry to his philosophy for a DOM and special interests and hobbies. After thirty minutes of interview, another Search Committee member addressed the special concerns that had been raised in recent weeks. Then, the candidate took about twenty minutes to field questions from attending ministers and lay people. It was a very interesting and informing hour—none of us believed it could have gone better. As we were completing our swing, we thought we had hit a homerun.

With the Executive Committee meeting at hand, our chairman presented the motion to call our next DOM. The motion read, "The Search Committee moves that Rev.____ of _____, be called as the next DOM of our association to start on June 1. The pay package is set at \$_____

with ministry-related expenses at \$_____.¹² The chairman then accompanied the candidate and his family into another room of the church.

With very little discussion, the ballots were distributed and votes were cast. After a few minutes of tallying votes, the moderator announced that we had voted to elect the candidate as our next DOM. The candidate, however, was praying about his response. Everyone was invited to stay and eat lunch while the committee held a brief meeting with the candidate to handle his concerns.

While we each thought our job was now over, little did we know what would await us in that room. Upon arrival we discovered that only 69% voted in favor to call the candidate (strangely enough, our By-Laws required only a simple majority).¹³ While he felt a divine call to our position, he did not want to hurt the association. We prayed and offered counsel. Ultimately, we all believed him to be God's man and supported him in accepting the call. We were able to enter the fellowship hall with a joyous announcement: "Welcome our new DOM!" The joy of the committee also concerned the fact that our work was finally finished.

There and Back Again—Hardly a Hobbit's Tale

So, there you have it. That is what we did. Was it perfect? Hardly. Would we do some things differently? Certainly. Was it longer than we expected? You bet. The entire process took us 11 ½ months. Most, if not all, of us expected the process would take 4-6 months. There were definitely some times when others in the association wondered what was taking us so long. We always responded by requesting prayer for the task.

We have come full circle. I have re-traced our steps. Now we have a DOM, and a good one at that. I do not expect for one moment that taking you "there and back again" (to borrow a phrase from J.R.R. Tolkien's classic *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*) will result in

millions of copies being sold. Maybe a few copies will circulate to help others in their search. Before closing, however, let me offer a few, brief pointers.

Things We Learned Along the Way

Keep Things Quiet—we found out that we needed to keep things among ourselves, because even a word spoken in confidence to another friend in ministry could spread like wildfire (and boy, did it ever!). I learned this lesson the hard way, because I had a very casual conversation with a friend where a couple of questions were asked in confidence. In less than one week, several inactive members in the Executive Committee suddenly thought they knew who our next DOM was going to be and passed on their prophetic insights to others on our committee. Before anyone could think this matter was of the Lord, I stated my “mea culpa” and promised to keep my lips tight. To the credit of the rest of the committee, I do not believe any of them placed any blame on me.

Lower Our Voices—with additional staff at the associational office, it is possible that things were overheard (even unintentionally) in our meetings that could have caused extra questions and concerns to come from every corner of the earth (or at least of our association).

Meet on Neutral Ground (when necessary)—when information might be extra-sensitive, such as well-known names in our association, we found it helpful to meet at a nearby, local church. Moreover, when our normal meeting space at the association was already reserved for other functions, we could still carry out our work.

Pray Early and Often—although we prayed at every meeting and we at least claimed that we were praying in-between meetings, we were reminded of our utter dependence upon the Lord, especially when the process was lasting longer than any of us had imagined. With a bunch

of ministers on a committee, you would think prayer would be the linchpin of our work, but like Jesus' first disciples, we had to be reminded all-too-often of the necessity of prayer.

Give Feedback to Prospects Often (in or out of the mix)—I think it is fair to say that we missed out on a very strong candidate just a few months into the process because we had failed to give him multiple reminders that he was still in the mix. Because he had not heard from us for a few weeks, he proceeded toward a new pastorate. That is not to say that the Lord was not working in his life nor that He was not involved in our committee to lead us to the eventual DOM, but the entire process could have been much shorter for us if we had practiced this principle. On a related note, we were much stronger about notifying candidates when we would no longer consider them, so that they could proceed as they felt the Lord's guidance.

Listen to Committee Members' Concerns—a significant part of our committee was its composition. This aspect gave us a vast array of perspectives in our meetings. Our chairman did a stellar job throughout the process, but I believe his greatest strength was getting everyone's input on a regular basis. No "head-honchos" or "low-on-the-totem pole" people existed among our group, because we were all treated equally. Because of the mutual respect for each other, our members had greater reasons to attend every meeting—each person was important.

Inform the Entire Committee of Communication with Key Prospect—whenever we narrowed our search toward one candidate, our chairman would inform the rest of the committee of the correspondence they had shared (usually e-mails or phone calls). This practice proved helpful on several occasions, as it gave us extra insight into the candidate's character, interest, disinterest, and such. The reason our committee was caught off-guard by the curveball from our eventual DOM (see above) was because one piece of correspondence had accidentally been overlooked.¹⁴ What the candidate believed would be okay with everyone actually resulted in a lot

of raised eyebrows and question marks. After a few meetings and ironing out the details, everything proceeded along fine, but we had definitely learned our lesson!

Have Faith in God's Leading—again, this lesson should go without saying, but our diligent efforts (even when others thought we were dragging our feet!) were not so we could find someone we would be satisfied with to do the job. Our work was to carry out the responsibility assigned to us by the Executive Committee to find our next DOM. We interpreted that to mean, “Find God’s man to lead our association.” From that viewpoint, a search could take some time, because we must trust God to lead us. It is no surprise, on that note, that one of the key elements of faith in the Bible is perseverance—the Lord definitely taught us to wait on Him!

Conclusion

Hopefully, this account will provide some ideas for those associations that face the challenging task of finding God’s man to lead all of their churches to cooperate in missions. If all else fails, at least you can be equipped the next time someone asks you if you want to go snipe-hunting! May we use this process as a means for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Appendix

Director of Missions Questionnaire

1. Why are you interested in serving as a DOM?
2. Please give us a short statement of your philosophy of ministry for a DOM position. In this statement try to make clear what you believe to be the major functions of a DOM and the major emphases that would characterize your ministry if the Lord called you to this position.
3. Please tell us how important you believe each of the following areas is to the DOM's work. Rank each item as:

V = Very Important
I = Important
S = Slightly Important
N = Not Important

 - ☐ Ability to administer the Associational Staff and Office
 - ☐ Ability to relate personally to Pastors and other Staff members in the Association
 - ☐ Passion and ability to lead in planting new churches
 - ☐ Ability to lead, develop, and work with the Associational Staff
 - ☐ Ability to publicize, promote, and interpret denominational emphases and programs
 - ☐ Ability to maintain close working relationships with the state/national conventions
 - ☐ Ability to counsel Pastors and other Staff members who have personal problems
 - ☐ Ability to relate and work with lay people in the Association
 - ☐ Preaching ability for pulpit supply and other opportunities in the Association
 - ☐ Ability to develop and communicate a dynamic vision of the Association
 - ☐ Ability to help declining congregations find ways to become revitalized
 - ☐ Ability to assist churches and pastors where there is conflict
 - ☐ Vision for developing new ministries within the Association
 - ☐ Ability to develop and coordinate Resort ministries
 - ☐ Passion and commitment to personal soul-winning
 - ☐ Commitment to maintaining a personal walk with the Lord and to prayer
 - ☐ Passion for seeking Revival for the churches within the Association
 - ☐ Passion for developing an evangelistic and mission spirit in the Association
 - ☐ Commitment to maintaining a strong personal family life
 - ☐ Ability to guide Pastors and churches doctrinally and theologically
 - ☐ Ability to mentor Pastors and coordinate a program of professional development for Pastors and Staff
4. Now that you have ranked each item as to its individual importance, please go back and put a numerical ranking 1-5 on the 5 areas above where you feel the most gifted and qualified (#1 being your very strongest area of giftedness).
5. As to your doctrinal stance, can you fully affirm the latest edition of *The Baptist Faith & Message* (2000)? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If you cannot, please indicate your areas of disagreement or tell us the doctrinal statement that most clearly reflects your convictions.
6. Please tell us any additional information about yourself that may help us make our decision.

¹The information from this essay comes from both my recollections as well as the minutes. Since I served as the clerk of our committee, I kept all of the minutes, except for one meeting when I could not attend. In any event, I always rely on the minutes for clarity, even when my memory recalls it a bit differently.

²The moderator serves as ex-officio of every committee in our association. Because of the pastoral demands of his own church, however, he was unable to meet with the committee more than a few times. He did stay abreast of our gatherings via phone calls and emails. Four months into our search, our association's annual meeting saw the vice-moderator promoted. He was even less involved, because we were considering him as a candidate in our search. After deciding not to pursue him for the position, we requested his participation, especially toward the last few weeks of our committee's search.

³To protect their identities, I have left the names of committee members and various candidates out.

⁴One must not underestimate the work of the chairman on this committee. He had the responsibility of keeping a group of ministers focused as well as assigning tasks to various members. The chairman often took personal responsibility in seeing that things were accomplished, such as contacting the associational secretary to place the ads or make copies of needed paperwork. Furthermore, he scheduled meetings and made phone calls as reminders. Our chairman did stellar work!

⁵The first three meetings after our initial impromptu meeting were June 8, June 22, and June 26, 2006.

⁶Because our committee members were so spread out across the association (one drove an hour one way to our meetings), not to mention each of us had plenty of ministry to do in our respective churches, we thought it would be helpful to meet every other week rather than every week while we narrowed our search.

⁷Going "three deep" means asking a reference on the list for the name and contact information of someone else that we might be able to talk to about the candidate. After talking with such a person, we would ask for the same information on one more possible reference, hence, giving us three levels of references.

⁸Our previous DOM served less than two years with our association before leaving for a state convention position. While nobody blamed him for doing so, we certainly did not want to repeat the same search process every two years!

⁹Sometime during the previous month, another strong candidate had been passed along to us for consideration. Due to an oversight on my part, I forgot to record this addition in the minutes. My hunch is that he either asked to be withdrawn or that he did not appear to be as strong as the other candidates we considered.

¹⁰Since we had to await feedback from the candidate and schedule several hours away to meet for lunch, we were not able to interview him until March 1, 2007.

¹¹After finding out "the rest of the story," none of us believed the candidate intentionally threw us a curve. Without him knowing it, some of his collaboration had failed to get filtered through the committee (accidentally). Thus, like a budding pitcher can suddenly discover movement in some of his pitches, both the candidate and committee were surprised by something new.

¹²Obviously, to protect the identity, and especially the privacy, I left some of the specifics out.

¹³It came to my attention later that one or two multiple-staffed churches influenced their staff to vote "No," because one person could not understand how the DOM could function without moving immediately to the field. Therefore, it appears that a much higher percentage of the churches were in favor of the new DOM.

¹⁴This accident was the only oversight on our chairman's part, to my knowledge. When he realized that he had forgotten to pass some information along to us, he was quick to apologize and no one cast blame on him. With all the work he did for our group, it is amazing that he made but one error in nearly twelve months worth of work. I would take that fielding percentage on my team any day!