

Getting the Executive Minister's Attention

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Last month, on a particularly good day, a letter arrived which read as follows:

“Dear Mr. Executive Minister,

I am a recent graduate of a seminary and am writing to you to find a job. Please help me in this, because I would like to live in your area. Enclosed is my ABPS Profile.

Thank you for your assistance.”

Searching the mail further, I discovered another missive. It was three pages long, handwritten, filled with detailed family history. A photograph of the family was stapled to a seven page theological statement that was followed by the ABPS Profile and a five page resume detailing employment from age ten as a paper carrier!

In the afternoon, a person called. She informed me that a resume and ABPS Profile were in the mail but wanted to indicate her interest in a particular setting for ministry. The conversation was brief and to the point.

My question to you is: Which inquiry received the most attention and interest from me? In our “information age,” how is a person to effectively communicate with region executives concerning a desired change in ministry setting?

Several assumptions lie behind the issue of communication. The first is that every person wants to place their “best foot forward” in any communication process. Secondly, executive ministers receive many requests for assistance in placement in the midst of competing demands. Unintentionally, some individuals may be overlooked in the search and call process. Lastly, executive ministers and area ministers are sensitive and caring persons who genuinely desire to be helpful. All assumptions are correct.

So, how will you get my attention and that of colleagues? I offer a few suggestions:

1. Write to me by name, and spell it correctly. Names and addresses are easily available.
2. State your career goal succinctly. I want to know where and how you wish to use your gifts for ministry.

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3. Complete the sentence... “What would really excite me in ministry is...” in 25 words or less.
4. Use the Ministry Opportunities Listing to make your requests more specific. It will assist both of us in determining mutual interest.
5. Send your ABPS Profile and any additional information that will help me know you.
6. If you want to provide references, include name, addresses and phone numbers.
7. I want to be helpful. Tell me “up front” if you are in a problem situation. I need to know your context.
8. Keep it simple, spell it right. Poor writing and spelling create nonprofessional images in my perception of you.
9. Call me a few weeks after you have sent your material. It will be a joy to talk with you and answer your questions, or ask some of my own.
10. Maintain a positive, hopeful and prayerful attitude during a potentially long process. You will be led to a setting for ministry wherein your call will be fulfilled.

The above are the “10 suggestions” and not the ten commandments—as there may be other ways to enhance the dialogue between the primary change agents and those seeking change. By the way, the third request caught my attention.