

Ranking The Final Group Of Candidates

Using the criteria in the last chapter (or some similar biblical approach) and the candidate profile parameters the committee has developed, it is now time to narrow the list and to rank candidates in priority order.

First, the number of biographical profiles under consideration needs to be reduced to a small number. A suggested ideal is five. How can this be done? The ways are numerous. A couple of sample methods are suggested:

One week prior to a committee meeting designated for reducing and ranking the profiles under consideration, each committee member is asked to take all of the profiles under consideration for a time of prayer and evaluation. The assignment is to assign each profile to one of three categories – excellent, good, or average.

If the search committee has seven members, collect those which receive at least four excellent rating. If the committee has five members, group those with three excellents. Once these profiles have been placed in a group, make sure every member of the committee has in hand a copy of each of these and only these. Have each committee member pray and meditate over them. Then review the profiles to rank them from one through the number of profiles (1 for the first choice, 2 for the second choice, etc.) This should not be rushed. When this has been done, the numbers on each candidate should be added with the lowest total being the highest rank. At this point the top five (can be expanded to six or seven, if that appears to be feasible) should become the active group which will be dealt with one at a time.

A second method is to divide the committee into teams of two (alternates can be added to even up teams.) Each team then reviews each active profile to determine a top 10 with the highest ranked candidate being given a 10, second highest a 9, etc. Then the total committee reviews every candidate. For those who were ranked by any of the teams in the top 10, that number is written by the candidate's name. When the number is added up, the candidate with the highest number is rated first, the second highest rated second, until a top five or seven is determined.

The committee should begin to deal with the candidates one at a time, beginning with the highest candidate. That candidate should be the only one being actively dealt with until a conclusion to call, eliminate, or, in some cases, rerank the profile.

With any method, as a top five or seven is being determined, committee members should feel free to discuss among themselves why they ranked candidates as they did. On occasion, this will cause someone to rerank the candidates. If a consensus is difficult or impossible to reach, more time may be needed. The committee may need to retreat to an early point in the process and move through the steps again. It may also mean that more candidates are needed. If that is the case, call previous or additional sources. This, also, may be a time to slow down and see if other biographical profiles are received.

Further discussion among the committee as to strengths and weaknesses, qualities or characteristics someone has detected, the reputation of recommenders, and other matters brought out in the open may be helpful. If no clear pattern develops, there is no need to panic. God is sovereignly in control of the entire process, and His timing will be perfect.

At this point the committee should make a decision about profiles they will continue to receive. If the committee feels good about the candidates under consideration, any new recommendations should be held by the recorder (or other designated person) until and if a

time comes when the whole process is reopened. This may happen if the process bogs down with the top two or three candidates.

Should the committee ever deal with more than one candidate at a time? Early in the process more than one candidate may be in the picture. For example, if three of the candidates obviously are ranked close and rise above the others, the committee may determine that the first choice will be more actively pursued while at the same time preliminary reference checks on the other two may be done. The danger in this is the potential of dividing the committee, especially if different persons are checking references on different candidates. The advantage is that, if the top choice turns out not to be the Lord's man for your church, the committee can more quickly move to candidate number two and so on until the process has been completed.