

What Should We Ask of the Association?

Kentucky just finished our annual Director of Missions Leadership Advance which is an annual retreat and continuing education experience for DOMs. It was a great experience with many wonderful presenters who stretched, challenged and equipped DOMs in their role of associational leadership.

Ed Stetzer of Lifeway Research did an awesome job challenging DOMs to be “interventionists”. He talked about the interventionist as one who asks questions and chooses to intervene. An interventionist engages in the situation because he knows the association or church and how to help it. He is proactive and offers assistance before being asked to do so.



Most of our DOMS in KY were pastors prior to assuming their current role and therefore their default is to pastoral care. Pastoral care is needed, but the role of a DOM must be much more than that if the association is going to be effective and of value to member churches. Pastoral care alone doesn't bring about the substantive change that is needed in most of our associations today.

DOMs who desire to change the trajectory of the association and point it in a healthy self-sustaining direction, must have an interventionist mentality. An interventionist will ask questions that require us to assess reality and examine the direction of the organization. Here is a list of questions I use regularly to help associations with assessment and examination:

1. What year is it in your association?
2. The role of the association has changed over the years. What is the role of your association today? Or, for what reason(s) does the association exist?
3. What is the vision and mission of the association?
4. How effective is the association? If the effectiveness of the association is evaluated by the effectiveness of member churches - how effective is the association?
5. Is the association a good steward of God's resources (financial, volunteers, churches, community, etc).
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your association?
7. What associational changes must take place in order for churches to continue participating in the years to come?

I want to challenge DOMs to ask these questions of their association. Lead your association to assess current realities and examine its direction. Don't be afraid of the answers or what you'll learn about yourself. Lyle Schaller, in his book, *“The Interventionist”*, states *“the most effective way to influence both individual and institutional behavior is to ask questions.”* Why not influence your Baptist association's value to local churches today by asking some good questions of it? Don't be afraid of the questions ... or the answers. Allow the questions asked, and their answers, to stir you toward more effective ministry that is valued, rather than paralyze you in fear.