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Heartbeat Long-range Planning Position Paper 1

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HEARTBEAT

Long-range Planning

Position Paper I
June 30, 1980

The following pages reflect an assessment of where the country is (as respects our work), of certain principles inherent in Heartbeat and ~~of~~ a proposed organizational structure that could support the work.

I. OUR UNTIMATE GOAL

- A. That people know Christ as Lord
- B. That people who so profess live in community (church)
- C. That the groups are self-governed and self-perpetuating
- D. That human beings in this relationship grow into their full potential as persons in all realms of human life

II. THE PROBLEMS IN OUR SOCIETY ENCOUNTERED IN REACHING THIS GOAL

- A. Religious institutionalism (organized religion)
 - 1. Clergy/laity
 - 2. Sacred/profane dichotomy that has isolated faith in the marketplace
 - 3. Ritual and ceremony
 - 4. Replacement of life with dogma
 - 5. Hypocrisy
 - 6. Commercialism
- B. No common language with which to communicate reality of faith accurately
- C. Cultural view/definition of Christ
- D. Optimistic humanism
 - 1. Self-improvement craze

- 2. Positive mental attitude as replacement for faith
- 3. Salvation through health foods, exercise, etc.
- E. Pluralism, as seen in growth of world religions alongside Christian faith
- F. Science when viewed as faith
- G. Widespread cynicism toward anything related to hope, genuineness
- H. Powerlessness, as felt by average individual
- I. Para-church trend
- J. Value change at root level

III. THE TRENDS IN OUR SOCIETY THAT AFFECT THE WAY WE APPROACH OUR WORK

- A. The United States is rapidly shifting from a mass industrial society to an information society, and the final impact will be more profound than the 19th century shift from an agricultural to an industrial society.
- B. For the first time in the nation's history there is more decentralization than centralization taking place in America.
- D. The American society is moving in dual directions of ~~high~~ high tech/high touch. The introduction of every new technology is accompanied by a compensatory human response --or the new technology is rejected.
- D. Ageism has replaced racism and sexism as the society's major anti-discrimination preoccupation. The recession of concern regarding racism and sexism will last from five to ten years.

- E. There are the beginnings of a job revolution in America, a basic restructuring of the work environment from top-down to bottom-up.
- F. Throughout the U. S. notions of "appropriate scale" are reshaping our physical and organizational environment.
- G. The most important trend in this century is the continuing shift of the U. S. from a representative democracy to a participatory democracy.
- H. Other important notes:
 - 1. There are five states where most social invention occurs, the other states follow: California, the key indicator; Florida, close to California; Washington; Colorado; Connecticut.
 - 2. It is felt that the 80's in the U. S. will be exciting though painful because of restructuring, but that it will be a more interesting and nourishing society.
 - 3. These trends are adapted from a paper entitled, "What's Really Happening in the U. S." by; John Naisbitt who is Senior Vice President of Yankelovich, Skelly and White.

IV. ASSUMPTIONS DRAWN FROM ABOVE MATERIAL THAT GUIDE OUR APPROACH

- A. Because of people's perception of religion (with which we do not disagree), we cannot appear to be religious in the sense that people perceive it (and which, again, we reject). There is much we can do with the Christian message before the doctrine stage is reached.

- B. Religion must be reinterpreted so that it does not perpetuate the cultural distortion ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ it currently reflects but rather reveals the real heart and reality of faith.
- C. The authority of the speaker who would be involved in this reinterpretation cannot exist by delegation of the religious world. Words like "preacher" and "clergy" do not provide real authority today.
- D. That need provides the point of contact with a world out of touch with God. The servant of God meets the world at this point rather than at the point of doctrinal belief. This established the servant as credible, caring, genuine. This is not simply a way to make the message palatable; rather, it is the way Jesus approached the task in His day. It is the way the servant serves in the marketplace of our everyday world. Unfortunately, meeting needs has been commandeered by the institutional church and given to the privileged elite who serve on its various "committees" and which is dispensed on the basis of the institution's own self-interest. It helps others, in other words, only if the "others" join it. Meeting needs is inherent to the Christian's life. Failure here removes the Christian from his/her real work everyday into ever deepening isolation that engenders the professionalism that grips us today.
- E. People today will respond at the grass roots to a credible voice of hope and direction.

- F. That the marketplace of today is media and business.
- G. That education must be provided Christians today that reorients them--helps them unlearn wrong concepts and learn right ones--that will help them know how to live in the world as a Christian.
- H. That enough concerned people can be found today who will see this and who will generate the resources necessary at least to "prime the pump."
- I. That people who become God's people can carry on the work without centralized control and bureaucracy.
- J. The Heartbeat's work is not to control but to provide tools, materials, ideas, strategies, inspiration, etc.
- K. That people grow in groups (church) rather than in "bedside services" provided by the "electric church" and other similar organizations.
- L. That Christian education must be returned meaningfully to the Home rather than being limited to Sunday School. It must become family-centered, life-centered again.
- M. That the segmentation of society (in which it's moving) makes it easier for us to reach people --not more difficult.
- N. That the work must be done by ordinary people--not dependent on specialists and experts.

V. DYNAMICS OF THE PLAN

- A. The field is taken seriously.
 - 1. Work must begin where the field is--not where the sower is.
 - 2. The field must be taken ~~where~~ in its present condition rather than assuming an ideal condition. Thorns, briars, thistles, etc. Must start here.

B. Time is critical to the plan. Timing.

1. God worked with "kairos."
2. We do not impose the timetable that pleases us.
The soil and environmental conditions have something to do with the timing and outcome.
3. Considerable time was spent by Christ in preparing the field before any reaping was attempted.
4. The investment must be made up front and in faith--not in our efforts but in the power of the doing of God's will. This means our certainty cannot be confined to "results." ~~Rahter, our certainty is rooted in our relationship with God and remains solid and intact if no results occurred. It is better to do what God directs than it is to achieve results based on the exercise of human wisdom, compromise and distortion.~~
Rahter, our certainty is rooted in our relationship with God and remains solid and intact if no results occurred. It is better to do what God directs than it is to achieve results based on the exercise of human wisdom, compromise and distortion.
5. The greatest movements of history were planted by one generation and harvested by another. Do we have such faith?

C. Relationship is at the core of the work.

1. We have a relationship with the field and the seed that is crucial.
2. But we also have a relationship with God as co-laborer. (Even as does the farmer)
3. The Gospel is relationship--a relationship with God is made possible by Christ where no relationship existed and a relationship between persons was made possible where alienation existed.

5. Anything can happen where there is relationship; nothing happens w/o it.
6. Hence, the approach must create the maximum number of possible relationships.
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4. That we must study carefully the way relationships are formed and nurtured. This becomes the vital work of each Christian. (Meeting needs is critical part of this.)

D. That reaping will follow. This will be detailed in a later paper.

VI. BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THE PROCESS

- A. There will never be anything larger organizationally than a single local unit. No hierarchies, etc.
- B. That authority derives from authentic work rather than by delegation. No one has titles, etc., to get in the way.
- C. That trainers/training must draw and must be perpetuated on its own inherent value rather than simply because it exists. Its identity is the valuable work it does rather than an institution. When it can no longer support itself, it dies.
- D. That umbrella media be used but that this is done alongside the concentration of media where the people are located to do the follow-through work.
- E. The strategy must allow each individual involved to grow as much as they can without organizational limitations.
- F. People within cultural units are found and trained to reach those within the unit. This will help overcome the problems of cross-culturation.
- G. That no large groups will be transplanted from one place to another.

VII. BASIC STRATEGY DECISIONS

- A. That the organization be constructed for maximum impact
- B. Education, training and materials will be provided churches
- C. Intensive training program will be provided.
- D. National media will be tied to a newsletter.
- E. Focus will be on all the cities of the country over 1000 population.
- F. That HB structure will provide for maximum support from all sectors.
- G. Heartbeat's organization will be streamlined for maximum efficiency and for maximum flexibility with resources.
- H. Minimum effectiveness will be insured. This means that if entire long-range objectives would be abandoned for whatever reasons that investments made up to the point of that breakdown would be valid.
- I. LBS will have an identity that will work in the secular world, that will not cripple effectiveness of work.
- J. Our marketing strategy will include PSA, sponsorship and purchased time.
- K. Television will be an integral part of the work.
- L. Continual research will be conducted into new technologies, etc.
- M. A "whole" curriculum will be developed.

VIII. PHILOSOPHICALLY, THERE IS A PUBLIC AND A PRIVATE DIMENSION OF MESSAGE

- A. The Public Sector--The Public Sector basically includes everything up to the point of doctrinal instruction. Jesus did some things publicly and some privately. Meetings needs, etc. is compatible with the public sector.

- B. The Private Sector--The Private Sector includes the special instruction in conversion as well as all that follows. Conversion involves a very profound decision that is not best made in the public sector (except at times of a great movement toward God).
- C. This view is compatible with Jesus' approach. The reason Jesus did some things privately was not His fear of the people; rather, it was appropriate to do it that way. He did not do what he did publicly in any attempt to trick or deceive people; he did not withhold information at certain times out of duplicity. It was normal in His view for
- 1) everyone not to know what his real aim was
 - 2) everyone not to know all the deeper implications of what he was about
 - 3) large public gatherings to be impacted with the benefits of his message while the
 - 4) actual belief structure was presented privately to those attracted.
- D. If we attempt to ~~do public things in the public domain~~ do in the public domain the things that are better done privately, we will move
- 1) without biblical precedent
 - 2) will be unweildy and ineffective
 - 3) will reduce the audience enormously
 - 4) will once more convince Christians they can do nothing significant on the job, the stores, etc. because the Bible Study cannot be done there.
- E. We must decide what can best be done in the Public Sector and what is best done in the Private Sector. But, this must be thought through carefully and specifically so that neither sector fails. Neither without the other is complete.