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What LBS Wants To Do

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I. What LBS wants to do:

A. For years I have pursued singlemindedly the reach to the so-called "outsider." That is, those who are empty, without direction, etc. whether inside religious institutions or outside.

In that quest the following dynamics emerged as highly significant:

1. Language. From the beginning it was clear that words were very important in the communication of sacred matters. Hence, translation of the message has been a central task. How can the basic message be communicated without the use of religious jargon?
2. Manipulation. How can the communication take place without misleading or manipulating those involved? How can the communication be redemptive, yet totally forthcoming and honest?
3. How can the communication take place in the world, that is, outside religious structures? How does one get out there?
4. How does one position oneself in such a quest--as an outsider or as an insider? And, what does this mean?
5. What are the implications such a quest has for the meaning of the biblical message itself? How is the message affected? What changes in my own personal views have been required?

B. LBS enjoys, has fun--

1. Speaking to live audiences of all kinds--especially seeking people.
2. Thinking and developing content for our age--literally, translating the biblical text, values, hopes, dreams into contemporary patterns, etc.
3. Communicating via electronic media--radio, audio-tape, video, film. Finds it very challenging, exhilarating.
4. Writing is becoming more challenging and

fun. I find it can utterly free my spirit of "mustiness." One warning: to date I don't have the knack for "longer" pieces of writing. I'm better at shorter pieces, "feeling" pieces although this may be a matter of outlining carefully beforehand.

C. Content

1. Creating awareness is a central key today rather than merely adding more words. This is the major thing that happened to the original pair when they ate of the tree of k. of g. and e.

This can be viewed as major thrust of the Bible--creating awareness in an area that was eclipsed by human choice...and still is. Awareness of what was eclipsed.

2. It is the "invisibles," the "unseen" side of human life that is at once the cause and the source of continuing pain and bewilderment. My communication must develop, create awareness of this dimension. To give awareness of the right things is perhaps the greatest gift we can give--technically, it's the "one thing most needful."

3. The content must avoid religious materials as well as psychological spiritualism. It must create a new language that properly speaks to the "built-in grammar" placed in each human spirit. (A child does not seem to be offended by "God" or "Monster" or whatever. Cf the movie, E. T.) This is very important.

4. Religion is becoming increasingly materialistic and political. It will, in time, again shed blood--in this country. It is the inevitable consequences of vying for favor--back to Cain and Abel. The reason being, the use of power to justify action that is considered "righteous." It is as old as man. It appears in nearly all religious struggles, witch-hunts, etc. We try to win with power tactics, PR, what we could not seem to win with servanthood. (Question: when is use of power legitimate? As driving out money-changers, Ananias and Sapphira?) (Is this solvable only by individual circumstances rather than by citing precedents?)

Are there levels of behavior/response to behavior that defy codification? Can God's response to human behavior be codified, and if not, should ours be? As--

- a. Thou shalt not commit adultery...
- b. Lust in heart is adultery...
- c. Desire mercy, not sacrifice
- d. Better to give life or destroy life

Or--

- a. Shalt not murder
- b. If don't love brother, a murderer
- c. If offend child, better a millstone...

If this were thought through, it could better enable us to respond. Particularly, to more complex issues, where all responses appear unacceptable. In these moments we have only character and courage to rely on.

5. Psychology has been accorded a powerful position by those who considered religion to have failed as a "map" for the "invisible." It now "pronounces" on the subjects of guilt/innocence with amazing power and persuasiveness. Has had major impact on both religious and judicial systems, as well as education, sexuality, values, etc.

6. "Babble"--result is religio/psycho-babble, which does not speak to nor correspond to that deeper "built-in

grammar" that enables a person to respond to the
"invisibles."

7. Where/how then does communication take
place? Who we are, genetically, has
profound implications on what we can know.
"Made in the image of God" has profound
consequences on what a person can know,
can't know. Involves
restrictions/constraints as well as a great
freedom.

He preached upon "breadth" till it
argued him narrow,-
The broad are too broad to define;
And of "truth" until it proclaimed him
a liar,-
The truth never flaunted a sign.

Simplicity fled from his counterfeit
presence
As gold the pyrites would shun.
What confusion would cover the innocent
Jesus
To meet so enabled a man!
E. Dickinson

No rack can torture me,
My soul's at liberty.
Behind this mortal bone
There knits a bolder one

You cannot prick with saw,
Nor rend with scimitar.
Two bodies therefore be;
Bind one, and one will flee.

The eagle of his nest
No easier divest
And gain the sky,
Than mayest thou,

Except thyself may be
Thine enemy;
Captivity is consciousness,
So's liberty. E. Dickinson

You left me, sweet, two legacies,-
A legacy of love
A Heavenly Father would content,
Had He the offer of;

You left me boundaries of pain
Capacious as the sea,

grammar" with which a person arrives in the world,
already possessing, and which must be nurtured, further
instructed, awareness of created more fully, acted on
with love and trust, the communication that most
awakens, enlivens, nurtures this profound element
within a human being. This affects, profoundly, the
nature, mode, content, aim of our communication. This
is primary. When clear, the constraints within every
"grammar" become clearer. Also, the enormous power of
forgiveness/trust which keeps the growth going in the
right areas rather than de-railing even further.

(Religiously, we make people wear "braces"
for life! You
never get to take them off!)

(We commit them to surgery, then forget to
quit operating; we
just keep cutting them for the rest of their/our
lives.)

(We do cosmetic surgery and often wind up
leaving people without tongues, arms, or
legs. Even lobotomized.)

(We "bury" them in baptism and then never
allow them to get up.)

(We point to "models" of people as
perfection rather than pointing to models of
people who knew how to overcome their
continuing failures.)

(Preachers who are most scared are the ones
who are most demanding; preachers of great
humility are ones who are most bold.)

We're in such bad shape that a brother had
to write a whole book to tell us God is
bigger than the church of Christ!)

(I think we should go back to writing
letters instead of books.)

II. What are the ways that have been used to accomplish this task?

1. Radio has been used from the beginning.
2. Personalized follow-up by mail.
3. Meeting listeners in their home communities
was developed early and later evolved into
fullscale community workshops, the most

successful of which were called "Feeling Good About Yourself."

4. Audio-cassette learning courses were developed for the seekers. One was called "The Course of Human Events" and one was called "Feeling Good About Yourself." This covered 18 weeks of study.

5. Small group dynamics were used as workshop follow-up and were organized around the learning courses. Most were led by members of the churches of Christ.

6. Films were developed primarily for use by the churches that emphasized some of the things learned in the outreaches. The first of these was "The Heart of the Fighter" and the second was "Hearts of Fire."

7. In addition several printed pieces were used on the radio and in the workshops as "The Five Ideas," etc.

8. Some speeches were made to business and professional groups as well on self-image, relationships, joy.

Where does all of this leave us now?

Certain conclusions seem clear:

1. The working base must be broader than churches of Christ. A way must be found to involve directly those who want to be involved regardless of where they are at the moment.

2. The funding base must go beyond the churches of Christ and beyond direct solicitation (because of high costs, management, etc.). Diversified funding sources are required.

3. More dynamic ways must be found to enlarge the market for our oral and written materials. Existing methods as radio and workshops must be continued but they must be made far more effective and many new ways must be added if the mission is to be realized.

4. With a greatly reduced staff that has now been achieved staffing must be approached with the new realities in mind. A staff must be tailored to fit the new realities.

The new plan:

1. We must operate from our base as a take-off point. This means we will work with a translation of the biblical message for the marketplace. We will not align ourselves with the strident "right" sectors of religion found in "fundamentalism" and portions of the "evangelicals." Nor will we align ourselves with the neo-psychologists of our time who have become for millions the new priests of our age. Rather, we will provide an alternative to both that is based solidly on Judeo-Christian values, that centers in the home and small group meetings, that focuses on the person rather than the institution, that works with the polarities of the tragic and joy, in short, that provides the kind of life and instruction that is embodied in the message of Jesus. Its activities and work will take place in the marketplace rather than among religious circles. We will use the communication vehicles of the world rather than creating our own. We will establish an academy of ideas where the research and testing of material and dynamics will take place.
2. We will continue to use radio as a means of reinforcing certain positive ideals for persons, families, and other social groups.
3. We will organize the workshops into three levels allowing people to go through each level, teach the material in the presence of a trained leader, and then be certified to go on and teach others.
4. We will use the courses we have but will add a video component that will be marketed to homes but that can also be used in follow-up groups to community workshops. This will be the chief flagship of the work, the chief generator of ideas, etc.
5. A group will be trained to provide additional resource and training for those who will be developing to lead seminars. These can be held regionally. Probably, once a year this special group might get together for a period of time with LBS to receive the updated materials, content, etc.
6. An academy of ideas will be launched on the basis of an endowment that will serve as the idea center and will develop content on the leading

issues of the day such as the new physics, bio-genetics, issues that have moral and spiritual implications for human life.

What will LBS do?

1. LBS will hold a select number of workshops, speeches, each year that will keep him razor-sharp in content, relationships, and communication.
2. HE will develop thinking basically through the workshops and the video of the month. This will be the central thing he thinks about and works on.
3. He will work on spin-off products like books, articles, tape of the month.
4. He will provide leadership and inspiration to the whole of the work. This will involve time away from his central tasks, travel to other parts of the world, visiting with people who are resourceful and encouraging.

What will be needed?

1. Funding: A money-raising arm that operates apart from LBS; a marketing arm that markets and distributes products that is separate from the fund-raising division; an endowment for the school.
2. Staffing: A personal secretary and an assistant who can envision and manage the total effort for LBS and a creative director/manager who understand quality and can manage the creative and production process. Beyond LBS will be needed a small fund-raising arm, and the marketing and distribution company, and the training dimension, and a workshop manager.

LBS could work with his secretary and managing assistant.

MANAGING ASSISTANT could be responsible for the creative director/manager in the sense of everyday details, the fund-raising arm, the marketing/distribution company, as well as manage any liason between LBS and others.

New Directions:

1. Certain things become obvious: 1) a core content/message/direction must underly everything 2) new and dramatic inroads must be made into new market sectors 3) leadership that is national in scope would be provided by the general effort 4) a crack production capability must be in place. This must be focused, must possess real excellence, must have the capability to respond with immediacy and quality.

2. Newspapers and magazines. Quality materials must be prepared and then half and whole-page ads must be taken out in leading metropolitan newspapers and national magazines. The copy for these ads must be refreshing, of real immediate value, must call to a new direction, must offer a way for interested people to respond, must have a way to follow-up. Content/response ads could have real impact and could reinforce other activities. These would be dramatic not only for intended audience but for support base, investors, as well.

3. Radio. New programming must be developed on a consistent, high quality basis. Award-winning in content and in production. Good enough to find their way onto hundreds of stations across the land. These should at times provide for a response mechanism. This might be accomplished with general 30- or 60-second ads that are then occasionally supplemented with two-minute spots that offer something free to the listeners. Availabilities such as "The Larry King" show should be worked for all they are worth. Should not, must not be taken cavalierly.

4. Billboards could be used in certain markets that carry a one-shot, powerful message that reinforces everything else.

5. Special efforts could be made with Amway, Mary Kay, certain companies that are known for their employee-development programs to get certain of our products into their regular mailing lists.

6. Special efforts should continue to be made in prisons and with various social organizations that are dealing with drugs, with abused wives, abused children, alcoholics, as well as the new social and community challenges that are constantly emerging out of our changing culture.