

STRATEGY REPORT MASS MEDIA

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A census of the 300 participants who attended the six sessions revealed that two-thirds were actively engaged in evangelism through the media. The numbers were as follows: radio (65); literature (45); cassettes (40); films (30) and television (20). However, fewer than five percent had worked for five years outside the parochial field.

Objectives

- a. To discover a blend of clearly defined goals, supported by a scriptural mandate, academic training, and professional expertise.
- b. To devise a means of coordination, so that an interlocking relationship is established between the diversity of media engaged in the global battle of evangelism.
- c. To recognize that if biblical evangelism is to be effective in mass communications, the content must be specifically prepared for the total range of unbelievers and not only for the small minority of "seekers."
- d. To encourage the proliferation of Christian publishing, broadcasting, and film production units throughout the world.

Radio

It is technically possible to cover an entire nation or continent by a single transmitter. Further, radio knows no geographical, social, political, or ideological boundaries. However, no one makes a "decision for Christ" as a result of listening to a single radio program. Such a decision is a process resulting from the many media influences to which the individual has been exposed. Therefore if radio is to succeed in penetrating societies with the message of Jesus Christ, a thorough analysis and understanding of the target audience is essential. It was agreed that the most effective role of radio is the sowing and watering of the seed — leaving direct proclamation to personal confrontation. It was pointed out that advertising does not of itself sell the commodity. That occurs only when the interested party comes face to face with the salesman. The basic problem in programming cultural, educational, or informational material is the risk of losing Christian sponsorship, i.e., the "saints" won't pay for the message which the "sinner" needs to hear. The message must be both heard and comprehended by the listener.

Christian communicators should not be afraid to expose their work to evaluation by secular researchers. There is a need for careful audience research and the training of national Christians in engineering, script writing, program production, and station management.

At a time when commercial radio and television are resorting to manipulation techniques, there is a danger of manipulation in gospel broadcasting. However, the thin line between persuasion and manipulation is determined by integrity of motive and issues in short or long term results. Manipulation occurs when the listener is unaware of the true message being transmitted to him. The media which the Holy Spirit uses are the media which open men's hearts.

Because Christian media are subsidized there is a tendency for substandard performances to be tolerated.

It is anticipated that in two years' time SONY will be marketing a radio set, within the purchasing powers of the masses, which will be able to receive a signal from the high-power communication satellites orbiting the Equator. This opens up a whole new dimension in radio evangelism because signal reception is not dependent on surface transmitter facilities.

Future goals

- a. There is a need for a genuinely biblical, theological basis for our use of mass communications media. Writing on the subject is needed as well as teaching in Christian schools and training centers throughout the world.
- b. There is a need for truly professional training and experience in Christian use of the media.
- c. Christian use of all media is essential — secular as well as church-related. This will require our realization of the strategic role of Christians in commercial and state media. It necessitates our bringing these men and women into fellowship and planning for evangelism through all levels of media.
- d. There should be a local-church centeredness to our use of mass media. Coordinated integration of the media is a priority. The local church must be seen as a part of that integrated plan — playing its unique and vital role in the total task of evangelism and discipleship.
- e. Communication groups should be developed in each country. These fellowships of communicators could provide encouragement and practical assistance for evangelism through the media.
- f. Evangelicals must make energetic efforts to discover what media are already available in their countries — opportunities are often lost due to lack of awareness and action on our part.
- g. An international communication resource center is needed which will provide for the exchange of information and ideas and provide for directories of people, materials, literature, and films.
- h. The church must grasp *new* media — satellites, data transmission, and other remarkable media forms which are already reshaping world commerce and political structures. They should be considered and used for evangelism.
- i. Communication congresses, on a regional basis, to be convened as quickly as possible. These congresses to provide for full display of current hardware; the exhibition of Christian communication output from around the world, including the field of films, audio-visuals, literature, television, radio, and other media.
- j. The coordination of audience research projects was considered to be a priority.

Conclusion

We need a radical change in the church's view of mass communications media. There must be a totally new awareness of how completely the media presently dominate our lives and the awesome potential for

evangelism. Whereas, earlier generations eagerly grasped the emerging media opportunities, e.g., morality plays and the printing press, the contemporary church needs to exploit urgently the vast communication networks available today. Power, communications, and action are available if the church, under God's Spirit, takes hold of this remarkable field, with vision and an aggressive spirit.

CITYWIDE CRUSADE EVANGELIZATION

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John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles G. Finney, Dwight L. Moody, Elias Schrenk, R.A. Torrey, Billy Sunday, John Sung, Billy Graham — what a sense of vibrating excitement grips the imagination at the very reading of the names of such great men! They are more than individuals; they symbolize potent movements of God. God used them to write history — nation-changing history. Their lives touched millions and brought hundreds of thousands into the kingdom of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Their powerful influence touches our own lives, even to this day. They are some of God's choicest servants in the last three centuries of the history of the Christian Church.

Moreover, all the above-named had one thing in common: each practiced citywide crusade evangelization. And the power of those crusades — by the continuing action of the Holy Spirit through their anointed writings, life-stories, and still-standing institutions — continues to inspire young men to serve Christ in every land.

1. Basic definitions

By *citywide* we mean the concerted effort by a group of local churches, preferably on a transdenominational basis, to thoroughly evangelize a city and its surrounding population centers. In some cases it may even involve a series of "satellite crusades." These are a grouping of cities that simultaneously hold citywide crusades. The purpose is to make a deep-seated, lasting impact on a whole vast region in a nation.

By *crusade* is meant:

- a. The harnessing of the spiritual gifts of all the believers in the Body of Christ in the city, to make a united Gospel impact on the non-Christian population.
- b. The ideal objective is that every individual in that city ... clearly hear the call of God and the claims of Jesus Christ ... experience the new birth (John 3:3,5), and begin a walk with God in the fellowship of other believers, either in previously established local congregations or by the formation of new house-churches.
- c. The expected result is that many hundreds, or thousands, of those who hear the Gospel and the claims of Christ will receive Jesus Christ into their heart and begin to walk with God in the fellowship as previously mentioned.

The desired and expected results of citywide crusade evangelization are many. But *the basic and somewhat immediate* expectancy is:

- (i) That all those called of God in that city, who have not yet done