

# PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR YOUR TRAINING MINISTRY

## I. CONSIDER THE IMAGE OF YOUR LEADERSHIP TRAINING MINISTRY

- A. Consider the name of your Leadership Training Ministry
- B. Create the proper image
- C. Create the proper atmosphere

## II. COMMUNICATION WITH THE HOME

- A. Use Leadership Training stationery and forms
- B. Use forms when possible
- C. Type or print for neatness and clarity

## III. COMMUNICATION WITH CHURCHES OR WITH OTHER TRAINING MINISTRIES

- A. Communication should be very professional
- B. Communication should be prompt and accurate
- C. Explain differences in methodology only when people ask about it
- D. Establish good rapport

## IV. COMMUNICATION WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- A. Be careful with advertisements
- B. Become an employment agency for your advanced students
- C. Have a good relationship with a newspaper

## INTRODUCTION

Good communication is the vital link to good personal relationships. As soon as we begin our official ministry, we need to think about communicating with the public. You need to communicate with your students. You need to communicate with their relatives. You need to communicate with the churches, with the members of the churches, with the pastors or leaders of the churches. You may need to communicate with city officials or government officials. In some cases, you may need to communicate to the more general public. Maybe just generally with unbelievers. There is a lot of communication that needs to happen.

In communication there is a very interesting 4-step process. You **think** something and then you **say** something. What you think and what you say is not always the same thing. That is already two steps. Then the other person **hears** something, and then he **thinks** something about what he thought he heard. That is 2 more steps. What **you** think and what **he** thinks may be very different. Good communication closes that gap. Perfect communication is when the hearer understands exactly the idea that the speaker had. Now there are several things we can do to make it easier for people to understand us. When people understand us better, there will be less problems.

## I. CONSIDER THE IMAGE OF YOUR DISCIPLING MINISTRY

### A. Consider the name

The name is very important. One is named "Faith and Works." It's a good, Biblical name. "Faith and Works" is a name Christians identify with. It also immediately gives you an idea this is not just built on theory. There is the idea that we must be involved. I think it's an excellent name.

In one town there is a Christian school that is called "The School of Hope." It's a fantastic name. It's hope! It's a name that communicates something to people. Parents come to the school with a little child and the director says, "Welcome to the School of Hope." Immediately hope goes into the bodies and minds of parents. Consider the name.

## **B. Create the proper image**

Now you have a good name. Then you go to visit a church, but somehow you couldn't get all ready and cleaned up. Everybody finds out quickly that the last couple of hours you were busy with the pigs. There is no barber in your village, so you have not seen anybody to cut your hair for a month or two. Your tie is obviously twenty-five years old. You are creating an image! "Would you like to study with me?" They wrinkle their nose and wag their heads. Do you see that creating a proper image is important?

Let us say you go to a big city and look to see what is the latest style suit the mafia is wearing. Then you get dressed up real fancy. Now you visit a church there and say, "Hello, this is me. We are having something new in our province. We are starting a discipleship ministry. We are going to teach you." What image will those church leaders have? What do you think the pastor will say? Maybe he will say, "You know, there is a nice church over there. You can go there. I don't think you are our type."

There are many ways to create a proper image, not just your dress. Having good friendly manners, like introducing yourself properly. Having a brochure alone. Also being clean is very important. If you are a university professor, you don't have to be clean. You may stink. You stand on the platform, the students sit there in the hall, and nobody smells anything. But in mentoring MEN we sit in a small group in a circle and we have a discussion. Body odors become very important to take care of for a good leader.

While coaching you perhaps go to some very windy and cold place. You might think, "Well, it is very cold and windy here. I'll put my sweater on backwards, so it will be nice and warm around my throat and who cares?" What do you think your students will be doing? Nobody will care about anything. If you don't care they don't care, and standards will go down.

## **C. Create the proper atmosphere**

The atmosphere has to be intellectual because people want to learn. It has to be spiritual because we are talking about the Bible and spiritual ministries. It has to be on different levels. If you go to Kyiv the general level of the people is different than in a small village. It's not that people are worse or better but the style of living and the level of education is different. You need to be able to adjust it to your audience. You need to create the proper atmosphere.

When you visit a church, what's the first thing that happens? I think the very first thing that will happen is that they will take you to the pastor's room or leaders' room. You see different people there than you expected. You don't know what to do or think immediately, so you say "Uhuhhh," wrinkle your forehead and rub your hand over your brow in deep frustrated thought. You've just scored a minus, just by making a long face and saying, "Uhuhhh." Perhaps you go into a room like that and say, "Dear brothers, I'm so glad to be here. I'll tell you a Bible joke." But when you go to a new church you should not begin with a joke. It is not appropriate. You need to create the proper atmosphere.

During the lesson seminar you also need to have a proper atmosphere. You are creating a standard and routine for the students. Put up a map for the New Testament lessons or some pictures for the family lessons and immediately there is some atmosphere in the room. You've created something that communicates to the people.

# **II. COMMUNICATION WITH THE HOME**

## **A. Use stationery and forms**

All of us are acquainted with church forms where there is an emblem and the name of the church. This can be made very easily because people have computers and color printers. It communicates to people — this is official, this is real. There is a title, there is a name, and there is an address and a telephone number. As

soon as you begin to put it together it becomes an official ministry. Nowadays there are computers, so if you write a note by hand, everybody will look at you strangely and think, "I don't know." Years ago, there were no computers; there were no possibilities to print. Then it was totally different. But now there is that possibility and people expect quality. If quality is not there, people think you don't care.



## B. Use forms when possible

Use forms for student applications or information about the family: his wife, his children, their ages, work, maybe his testimony. You need some forms for information about churches. It's much better to use forms. People do a better job filling out forms than just thinking about things themselves. Another advantage of forms is that the information is all standardized. You can compute the information easily to make totals and then use the information. If I wrote, "I don't know", and another one writes, "Maybe", or another writes, "I forgot", what are you going to do? But if you have a column and it says, "Yes" or "No," it's so much easier.

## C. Type or print for neatness and clarity

Just as an example, it is easy to misspell a name like Luba and write Luda. There goes the letter addressed to Luba when it was supposed to be, "Dear sister Luda." You begin with an offence. you look over your group list and ask, "Where is Luda?" They answered, "We don't have a Luda." Writing clearly for neatness is important. Ask people to print in print letters not in cursive letters; it's so much clearer. Writing clearly is a habit that you need to get into. Titles of the lectures, subtopics and so forth, you can write in your notebooks in capital print. For birthday greetings and other communications with the student's home, write clearly in a pleasant, appealing style.

# III. COMMUNICATION WITH CHURCHES OR WITH OTHER TRAINING MINISTRIES

This covers 4 points.

## A. Communication should be very professional

That means some of you need to take additional lessons. Some of your grammar is not very professional. All of you have access to a grammar teacher. You haven't been to school for ten or more years perhaps. It is time for a refresher session. You could go right now to a schoolteacher and repeat some of the lessons from grade eleven. When you studied, you were already a teenager and you felt you knew everything so the teacher was not very important. Whether you got a five or a three wasn't important either. Now God is leading you in a special ministry and you say, "I need to be a little bit better prepared." What you experienced then as a schoolboy and what you need now as an adult is a completely different thing. All of you have access to a teacher to help you. I would recommend that you do that. I'm very serious about it. Once or twice a week spend two hours with her and do some homework. Give her a few grievance and she will be happy and you will be happy and your students will be happy.

## B. Communication should be prompt and accurate

"Prompt" is "at the right time." How do you feel when you get a Christmas letter around January the 20<sup>th</sup>? "Dear Tabitha, Merry Christmas." How do you feel about a letter for your birthday or a card for your birthday that comes a week late and says, "Dear Ivan, yesterday I realised it was your birthday. But I send you lots of love because it is better late than never." Have you ever received a note like that? I have. Lots of people do that in the West. It's rotten!

If you have birthdays that you need to take care of, write them in your notebook. Mark the names down on a day which is a week before the actual birthday. Then when you open it up you note, "Aha, I need to write a letter." Be prompt and be accurate. Be accurate in starting a lesson on time and also closing on time.

Maybe you plan to close at eight o'clock and people think it's just right, because the bus goes eight twenty and at ten o'clock I can be home. Eight o'clock comes and eight o'clock goes, and about eight fifteen people rush out saying "Excuse us, excuse us, we need to catch the bus." They run to the bus and the bus is just pulling away, "Bye-bye bus." For a training institution, for a leadership program, for a ministry that wants to prepare church leaders, accuracy is important. We had an interesting experience here at a 2-day year-end celebration. Invitations were sent to leaders, "Please, come on Friday, we will have a big banquet and some other festivities on Saturday." Saturday morning a director from a distant place arrived, "I came for the banquet." "Banquet? That was yesterday." He was really disappointed, and replied "Well, I thought one day late wouldn't make much difference. How is it possible? We have traveled a day and a half in the car!" Quickly we organized a special little feast for them. Perhaps we had not communicated accurately enough. This illustrates the importance of accuracy! Remember you are preparing leaders for new ministries. Set a good example!



### C. Explain differences in methodology only when people ask about it

Don't go everywhere and tell anybody that you meet, "We are doing church-based training." Or, "We give homework assignments." Don't explain to everyone the details of the ministry. After the initial meeting you can explain the differences in methodology step-by-step in subsequent meetings. Such details you explain to a specific group of people like church leaders who have basically decided they want to be part of your program. Perhaps you have been to a church once before and now you are there a second time with a group of people who want to be your students. They want to know what they must do to be a good student. You need to explain all the differences to them. But other than that it's better not to go just everywhere trying to explain everything. Just talk about methodology on a request-only basis.

### D. Establish good rapport

Many of these people you don't see frequently. I meet some denominational church leaders only once a year. If during that time I have a bad cold and every time he wants to say something I cough, it doesn't make a very good impression. The situation is similar with many pastors and provincial church superintendents. You need to consciously make a good presentation each time. If he is busy with the mayor of the city, you don't say to the mayor of the city, "I've travelled a long distance, sir, and in two hours my train goes. I would like to meet with this man now." That would be rude and create a negative impression. Your ministry will become successful through building positive relationships with people. There are no lessons that are going to make you successful. There is no Bible that is going to make you successful. It depends on what you do with it.

If you don't have good rapport with people they probably will not continue to work with you or they will not come to your classes. There are many subtle nuances that are included in establishing good rapport. Look whether the man is in a hurry or has a lot of time in his schedule, and accordingly you make a short presentation or a longer presentation. Perhaps I come to a church office and hear a lot of loud voices, "No, no. It's not right. I think so. I think so. I'm sure. I'm sure. No, no, no, no." You hear all these noises. They seem to have a very hot atmosphere in there. When my turn comes to go in, I'm going to smile, I'm going to shake his hand and I see if he wants to give me a kiss. If not, I'm going to tell him that I heard something about him that was nice or something about his church, or about his wife, or about his daughter in Australia. I am not going to begin by making my presentation, but I begin by helping him to calm down. I'll help him to relax by making him think that I am a nicer man than the other man who was in the room just before me. That's already a big plus. Maybe you don't get to accomplish anything more than that. Two months later someone else will come, and he says, "Yes, there was a brother here but I didn't have much opportunity to talk to him. I even forgot what his name was. But he was a really nice man." Now he is ready to listen to the next man that comes. Two months later he is ready because the first man worked on building rapport.

A leader visited our coach and met a student who had a bit of a negative character and his relationship with the coach had not been strong. The relationship between other students and the coach was good, but not with that one person. The leader wisely advised the coach to "work hard on building a good relationship with that specific individual because it's important." Usually our feelings are "I have a good relationship with eleven people but unfortunately with one it is just not working out." The leader saw that it was necessary for the coach to have a good relationship with that one particular individual. Spend time thinking and praying about how you can establish good relationships—good rapport—with the people you need to work with and minister to.

## IV.COMMUNICATION WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC

This includes ordinary church members or maybe even unbelievers, possibly civil leaders. Three ideas are presented here:

### A. Be careful with advertisements

An announcement about your ministry is made in the local paper. The next day there is a telephone call, "Where is the address? Can I come and visit?" You say, "Okay." They come, "We are the mafia you must have money." You see what I am saying? It could be that you just put out your advertisements and the Orthodox priest phones the authorities to ask, "Would you please check this man's documents?" Maybe all the documents are there but it's already a lot of stress, and a waste of your time. Your name is already in their black book. Be careful with advertisements. A private letter to a pastor or to a leader is much more discreet.

### B. Become an employment agency for your advanced students

One of the key principles of a Mentoring Ministry is that every student must have a spiritual task to do. In their homework assignments you want them to have practical experience. Many pastors still think that new believers can't do spiritual work. Often it is you, the group leader, who has to help a student to begin doing spiritual work. It may be you, the leader, who needs to give them a bus ticket to go to another village and do their work. We have had fantastic mentors in Ukraine. In the beginning they gave money to students so they could come to the classes or so they could do a spiritual ministry. Some mentors even gave their own car to the students so that the students could do a spiritual ministry while their mentor took a bus. Others would give their whole salary to the students so that the students could do spiritual work. The mentor then had to go fishing at a lake to get food in the winter and things like that. However you do it, you need to provide opportunities for your students to do spiritual service.

The following is a splendid sample of a homework assignment. It can be done by all students and can be done several times a year. Mentors desire that all students complete this assignment during the initial years of their study program.

For the next few months, we want all of you to be involved with unbelievers. Personally I would like you to teach many groups of boys and girls at schools. You can do that in the daytime or else work with young people Friday evenings and Saturdays. Wonderful opportunities exist at such times as New Year, Christmas and Easter. These are fantastic opportunities to do evangelism with unbelievers. People are open at these times of the year and are used to having people knock at their doors. People are open to talk about spiritual things at Christmas and Easter time. There are all kinds of holidays. We want to get a report from you next time of what you've done; how many meetings did you have? You should be out there every day with unbelievers.

When you begin your ministry and are leading a group of students you need to provide spiritual work or opportunities for them. There is always, always one more village that needs a Bible study for unbelievers. It just depends whether someone has a vision, whether someone is crying about people going to hell. Your students are going to be spiritual leaders, but **you** are supposed to do the crying. You are supposed to be concerned about their people going to hell. Your students don't know how yet. They need to learn yet what it is to have passion. That's the job of a leader.

### C. Have a good relationship with mass media

That could be just a regular worldly newspaper, or it could be a radio or TV station. But there are also many Christian newspapers or bulletins and provincial papers that are sent around. There are other people out there who are communicating. If these people don't like you, what will they communicate? Do not exaggerate, do not be prideful, but you need to be friendly to them. If they ask you for a little article or for a picture you should check where the newspaper goes. In other words, is it wise or is it not wise? If you are not sure that it is a good idea you can say, "I really appreciate your interest, I'm sorry I'm not quite prepared for this. I just didn't know you were interested in our ministry but I really would like to think about it. It is not the best to do it right now, but let



me think about it in the future.” But in the future you may want to contribute an article. Just be careful and wise in what you say to those people.

## CLOSING

Here is a closing thought you may want to take special note of. **Remember! No amount of public relations will help a “sorry” Training Ministry !** In other words you may be able to talk very nicely to the church leaders. You may give them a little snack, tea or something. But if your materials are late in coming or something else happened so that you can’t lead the group, nothing you can do will make up for that. You make a lot of promises, “Oh, I’m so glad I can come here and we are going to have a good group.” Then later you find out that in the winter there is only one bus every week. If you are badly organised or if there are other problems, no amount of good public relationships will help. The background of public relations is a **good solid effective** Ministry . As a negative example. Let’s say the church superintendent comes to your apartment and says, “I would like to have a telephone number for the New Life for Churches office.” You say, “Oh, come on in, sit down, have some tea.” He says, “Well, ok, I have thirty minutes before I need to go on the bus.” You sit there and you talk and then he says, “Well, I need to go pretty soon.” You say, “Oh yes, the telephone number. That’s right here. Where is it? Is it here? Is it here? Honey, what did you do with that paper? You were supposed to organize that. What’s the matter with you? You never organize things very good.” She answers, “Well, I’m sorry, I can’t help it. The table fell over and the dog ate the paper.” Your guest says, “Well, it was nice meeting you, brother. Bye.” What will he say to other people? “The tea was excellent and the cake too. And he told such nice jokes. Therefore, he is doing a good job ?” What am I saying? If it’s a “sorry” training ministry no matter how many times you smile and shake hands it won’t help. Public relations are important, but they are useless if there is no foundation of an organized, active, effective Discipleship ministry .

Think about God’s public relations with mankind. How many quality things He has done to communicate His love and salvation to us: creation, the Lord Jesus, the Bible, miracles, great spiritual leaders, prophets, apostles and much more. I hope you will imitate your Heavenly Father. God bless you all. Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

## *Practical assignment*

Completed

- Do three things which will immediately improve your Training Ministry’s image. Be prepared to share at the next seminar ☐
- Make a list of three long-term goals that will improve your Mentoring Ministry’s image. Get started on one of these. Write a brief report ☐