



# SERVANT

A WISE PERSON DISPLAYS UNDERSTANDING BY HIS GODLY LIFE AS A GENTLE SERVANT. JAMES 3:13

## WRITING CHURCH PROMOTION

# Come in Through The Mail Slot

by Philip L. Ransom

**If** you build it, they will come." Don't you wish that were true for the church? Design and build an attractive, comfortable building with a good sound system and plenty of parking and the people will come to church—your church? The truth is, people drive past churches every day and never think about attending. We cannot expect people to come just because it's there—maybe a few decades ago, but not any more.

So the church must find ways to tell families and individuals it wants to help them. But how to get that information into their homes—that's a problem. Busy schedules keep newcomers safely out of the reach of visitation teams and pastors. Those who call visitors on the phone often find telemarketing defenses up on the other end of the line.

Have you considered coming in through the mail slot?

Mail waits for busy people to get home. It waits to be opened. And it doesn't care what time it is when it's read.

If you decide to use printed materials to reach prospective members, you'll soon discover you have competition there too. Don't worry, the first pieces to be thrown away are usually carelessly produced. You can thrive here if you know what you're doing. If you write well, read up on copy-

writing (especially *Herschell Gordon Lewis on the Art of Writing Copy* in your public library) and give it a try. If you don't have good writers on your staff, ask a copywriter to help you.

Professional writers know the marketing demands made on words and will be valuable to you. A copywriter can provide the edge you need to insure that your intended reader reads your material—and is motivated by it.

### How to Get Started

- *Define your objectives for the piece—in writing.* This is especially important when a committee defines the project. Start with a brainstorming session, then sift out all but the primary objectives. For example, to create a brochure describing the benefits First Church offers newcomers, and inviting them to specific activities and ministries is one thing. To also include the church's history, philosophy of ministry, and yearly calendar—and recruit for the softball team—is another story.

- *Determine the project's budget.* Treat the money you will spend on this project as advertising dollars. What do you intend for it to produce? How can you present First Church effectively, without depriving regular ministries of operating funds? Churches must plan for major projects, so

if you want a presentation package that is especially attractive, now is the time to start planning for it. Discuss the concept with your printer and friends who have produced similar things for their churches or businesses. What you learn will help you determine the size and scope of your project, and you'll avoid costly mistakes in the process.

### What to Look for in a Writer

When the time comes to find the copywriter for your project, you'll want your writer to be as interested in your success as in their own. Service is as vital to a writer's success as it is to your church.

Read samples recently written by any writer you are considering. Ask yourself, How clearly does this writer communicate? You'll be trusting your church's image to the writer you choose.

Your writer should understand and write to achieve the objectives you have defined. Some writers are extremely creative and will prove valuable early in your project's planning stages. If that's the case, take full advantage of their consulting skills.

Your writer should be able to write in your style, since some things ring true only when they sound like your words. This is particularly true of letters you will sign. Will this writer work with you to that end? Does this writer hear what you have to say?

Your writer should know what works in the marketplace. What's standard? What's trendy? If your writer knows, you'll be more inclined to be pleased with his or her efforts.

With today's technology (computers, modems, fax lines, and overnight deliveries), many projects are completed without face-to-face meetings. The number of miles between you and your writer is not as important as knowing that yours is a skilled writer.

Freelance writers write constantly. Their proficiency enables them to accomplish your goals quickly and efficiently.

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Advertising agencies often have copywriters available who can help you. If you have artwork to include in the project, you have some more details to discuss with your writer; be sure he or she knows how things will work early in the process.

When is your writer satisfied with his or her projects? In your case, you hope it won't be until you are satisfied. While most copywriters will require a deposit on the project you assign to them (usually part of the copywriting fee), it is wise to hold your final payment until the copy is approved and the project goes to the printer.

### Finishing on Time And Within Budget

Appoint one person to follow the project through to completion. Several people may have helped define objectives for the piece. Now your "point person" stays in touch with the copywriter, artist, and printer to make sure those objectives are satisfied as the project nears completion. To bring the writer back to full committee prolongs the process and runs the risk of uncovering previously unspoken demands. You'll want several people to proofread the project before it goes to press, of course, but proofreaders don't get to redesign the project.

### When the Completed Project Arrives

Admire it! Celebrate! Many energetic hours went into this! Stop to imagine how it will affect those who will see it for the first time.

Be sure to give a copy to everyone involved in its preparation, with a note thanking them for their help with the project. Send your copywriter and artist a "Thank You" along with a few copies for portfolios and sample files.

Post a few copies on church bulletin boards for your people to enjoy. Get ready to start licking those stamps. Oh—and if you send it, they'll probably come. You may want to add a couple more greeters for Sunday.

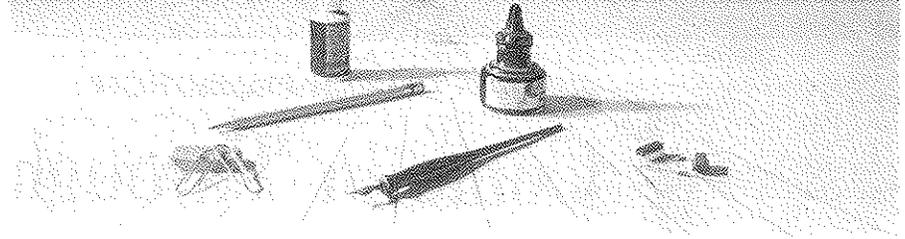
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## DESIGNING CHURCH PROMOTION

# Make a Good Impression

by Wayne Kiser



According to researcher George Barna, the average home receives over 1,000 pieces of unsolicited mail each year. In other words, when it comes to church promotional literature, the competition is staggering. "Local churches must take a hard look at their performance and dedicate themselves to excellence in all they do," Barna says.

Each year that passes, I see more and more churches taking a hard look at how they're perceived by people whose only contact with them may be literature.

Church literature is much like the clothing a person wears. Even before someone speaks others make decisions on his or her friendliness, honesty, credibility and heritage. Even political inclinations are often speculated from appearance alone.

Recently I attended a printer's trade show in Chicago wearing a jacket, open sport shirt and jeans. I was hard-pressed to get sales personnel to talk to me. One representative referred me to a competitor; another was curt answering my questions.

For a previous show I wore an expensive suit. Not only did the sales people answer my questions, but they were eager to give me samples of their products. The only difference was my appearance.

Although I believe the most significant part of any literature is the text, appearance is what wins the reader's attention or drives him or her away.

### How to Judge the Quality Of Direct Mail Design

Whether preparing a brochure that will be distributed by members of the church or a complete direct mail package with a letter, brochure, carrier envelope, reply

device, and return envelope, the design is critical. Here are some tips for designing your next promotion mailing.

•*Develop a philosophy of design.* "Design is not cake decoration," says designer Jan White. "Design is not cosmetic to make the page prettier or make it less grey. Design is not 'prettification'. Prettiness is not the point; communication is the point." Whatever goes into the design of a printed piece should visually demonstrate the text.

•*Follow the basic design rules.* Although designers follow many rules, the most significant may be the rule of eye movement. The eye enters a page three-fifths of the way up the left side and moves in a clockwise direction around the page. Designers use color, photos, type and illustrations to direct the eye on its path to the places they want the reader to read.

The page or brochure spread should be well-balanced. Don't be afraid of white or open space, as long as the design is pleasing. In short, good design appears to be simple, devoid of clutter and complexity. Avoid many small illustrations—so common with computer designed pages. Keep the number of different type styles to two or three—even though many are available with computer design.

•*Use the best paper you can afford.* Although the cost of paper is significant on larger quantities (those over 10,000), good quality paper is a wise investment for shorter runs. Textured and color papers give many brochures a feeling of sophistication. Gloss papers help photographs and color inks to stand out because the ink doesn't soak into the fibers of the paper.

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