

The Challenge of Public Relations: “What we have here...”

By Bob Young

Many movie buffs can complete the above quote: “What we have here is a lack of communication.” Said another way, “What we don’t have here is communication.”

In my work in multiple-minister church settings, and even more in my work in Christian higher education, communication is one thing we constantly talked about and worked on. We also talked a lot about how to handle miscommunication. One can hardly overstate the importance of communication. The failure to communicate, and the problems that come with miscommunication, greatly hinder the mission of any organization. Good communication is a key to success. Unfortunately, we human beings do not always know how to communicate effectively or how to improve our communication.

Point people in any organization have the incredible responsibility of communicating the mission, vision, and values. These must be communicated to those who should already know, and to those who do not know. These must be repeated again and again. These must be communicated to employees, supporters, leaders, and also to potential supporters. Without this kind of repeated communication, it is unlikely that a ministry will flourish.

The need for communication is reflected in the concept of “public relations” (PR). To talk about PR is to acknowledge that the story has to be told. The vision must be cast, the dream shared, the results published. This is the purpose of PR, and is the job of the primary point person. Failure to communicate will dry up funding. Lack of communication will cause supporters, even those intensely interested, to lose interest.

How amazing is it when organizations—churches, universities, mission works, and other church-related groups—fail to tell their story?