



MANAGING THE MEDIA

Communication is a key to affecting transformation, and effective communication is the “art of persuasion” in the media world. The role of “spokesman” is critical, for it involves communicating with reporters themselves as well as the general public who receives the news. The goal of spokesmen is ***managing the media to effectively tell your story and convey your message.***

NOTE: We encourage you to refer calls about national and international issues regarding the Anglican Mission to our Communications Department and/or refer them to the Media Center section of the national website:

Anglican Mission Office of Communications
Cynthia P. Brust, Director of Communications
843-237-0318 (Office)
cbrust@theamia.org
www.theamia.org

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING GOOD MEDIA RELATIONS

- Contact local media representatives – religion reporters if possible and introduce yourself. Make an appointment and take a Media Packet with information about your church.
- Build personal relationships with media representatives.
- Develop a media list of local (and national) media contacts (religion reporters and/or editors when possible).
- Provide quality, professional materials (press releases, public services announcements, etc.). Be careful to distribute only news worthy press releases, etc.
- Be accessible.
- Return calls promptly.
- For crisis communication with media, be proactive rather than reactive. “control the story” by providing it first and accurately rather than responding to inaccurate and potentially damaging media coverage.

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE TOOLS

- Distribute Media Advisories prior to a newsworthy special event or program.
- Distribute press releases announcing newsworthy items of public interest (for example, new church start-ups; ground breaking ceremonies; conferences; outreach projects, etc.).
- Follow-up media advisories and media releases with phone calls.
- Develop and provide helpful information about your church and or “background” material.

Note: Media advisories and media releases should be emailed to reporters, editors, assignment editors, etc. as appropriate. Include the document in the body of the email – do not send as an attachment. Advisories and releases can also be faxed.

INTERVIEWS

Types of Interviews:

- Background information
- Summary of events
- Response to events/decisions/actions (reactive)
- Announcement (proactive)

If you are contacted for an interview, ask the reporter what the focus/parameters of the story are and *then* schedule a time to talk. Don't be afraid to have notes unless you're on camera.

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

- Know your facts and your “message”; be consistent; identify two – three key points you want to offer and stay on message.
- Prepare, prepare, prepare...
- Know the information or issues.
- Anticipate difficult questions.
- Avoid saying, “No comment” as you are implying you have something to hide. If necessary, explain why it would be inappropriate or impossible to answer the question or provide the information.

- Don't hesitate to say you don't know, but do your homework before interviews and have as much information regarding the subject matter or issue as possible.
- Use everyday language – avoid “churchy” or theological terminology.
- Target your answers to your most important audiences – church members, potential church members and the unchurched.
- Keep it simple and succinct – learn to speak in “sound bites.”
- Develop “Talking Points” and stick to them – avoid “off the cuff” comments.
- Be forthright.
- Be pithy, “quotable” and accurate.
- Charm them with style, remember their names and appear relaxed... but never, ever let your guard down.
- Be careful with humor that can be interpreted as sarcastic or inappropriate; in fact use humor sparingly.
- Never speak critically or disparagingly of another individual or church.
- Avoid “off the record” comments.
- Don't let a reporter “put words in your mouth” or twist what you say.
- Avoid responding to hypothetical questions.

Broadcast Interviews/Stand-ups:

1. Be likable on camera. Television is emotional and subjective. Viewers remember how they *felt* when they watch you even more than what you said. Be engaging, winsome and yet strong
2. Body language – DON'T FORGET TO SMILE! Don't fidget or squirm. If you are standing – be comfortable and don't move around. Look at the interviewer, not at the camera.
3. Try to forget the camera – be conversational.
4. Stay on message – be particularly conscious of providing sound bites (15 second comments).
5. Keep your comments brief and simple – the more you talk, the more phrases can be lifted out of context.
6. When scheduling a broadcast interview, ask whether or not anyone else will be interviewed with you.

Print Interviews:

1. If you have never been interviewed by a specific reporter, research him/her up and read other interviews/stories. This will provide helpful insight into bias, style etc.

2. Responses should be in complete sentences and should stand alone – the reporter's questions won't be included in the article unless it's a Q & A.