

**MISSION: EVANGELISM AND PROMOTION:**

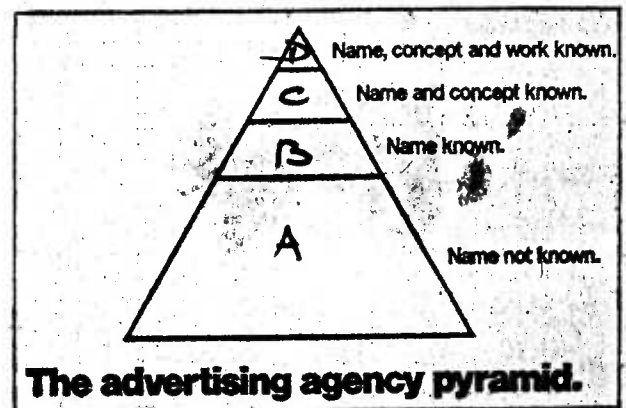
**SPINOFF VALUES FROM "THE DIRECT-RESPONSE INDUSTRY,"**

formerly called ADVERTISING, alias MAD AVENUE.....Elliott #665

1. As everybody knows, attention-getting is the name of the game in selling. It's true, too, in gospeling--in getting folks' attention for Jesus, and in getting society's attention for critical-creative dealing with problems toward a more humane world. Only a Manichean separation of "spirit" from you know what's lower--the social and political body, "institution," "bureaucracy," "planning," "promotion"--tries to deny paying intellectual attention to the attention-getting process. Or maybe there's an additional group, viz. those who've lost confidence in the product ["the message"] as well as in its packaging ["the institution"]....This thinksheet is for those who have confidence in the gospel but lack competence in getting the public's eye for the gospel package--and who won't cop out with protestations of prophetic purity and "spiritual" trust....who indeed may even occasionally use the doctrine of incarnation to counter false institutional modesty. It's an inter-face exercise. The diagram [from the Ries Cappiello Colwell firm, 41NYT29 June75] exhibits, upward, increasing degrees of intensity in a consumer's interest in a product or service. Advertising the product/service is said to "position" it on the diagram.

2. We Christians as Christians, which includes as churchpersons, are in "the agency business"--change agents for the kingdom of God. Let's have a look at the diagram, which I've keyed for easy reference:

A. Something's going on, but your operation's in limbo: "NAME NOT KNOWN." Run an ad? Enter a contest and get a reward? Tell a story about somebody benefiting from your institution's existence? All adpersons agree that the last is best--especially if you can get the story told instead of telling it yourself. Productivity and creativity are not enough any more: the public's sensorium is too sated to respond even to the best that's "not known" by "name."



B. You got your promotion-consciousness raised and did something about it. Now your "position" is "NAME KNOWN"--but not your concept, and not really your work, but only one story-angle on it. "Concept" here is vital. If you've got no clarity about what you're about--no "vision," as we say in religion--you top out, don't get any farther. For the church, persuading the public by weaving straw into gold ["the Rumpelstiltskin number"] is out; anyway, there's always somebody bright enough to tell that the "silk" purse was made of a sow's ear. Don't OVERpromote: it's dishonest, and besides it UNDERsells and even undercuts, subverts by plastic notice and fluff attention.

C. Even when you are "NAME AND CONCEPT KNOWN," you may fail in publicity to equal the quality of your product/service: you may not lift the work into public attention. Even when Jesus sent home a blessed one with the instruction not to tell, Jesus's work "went home" in the person of the blessed one: the work "spoke for itself," "home."

D. Two very different men, Graham and King--but we can say of both, "NAME, CONCEPT AND WORK KNOWN." Product/publicity capability realized. DANGER: We're so fed up with our civilization's oversell, especially in religion, that we're tempted to the false humility of antipromotion backlash.