

God Speaks Billboards

In 1998, an anonymous donor contacted an advertising agency with an idea for a local billboard campaign that would create a spiritual climate and get people to think about a daily relationship with a loving and reverent God. The agency came up with the idea of creating a series of quotes from God to be placed on billboards.

The billboards would be simple and easy to read – black boards, white type, and all “signed” by God. No logo. No address or phone number. Not religious or condemning. Just straightforward messages that would rightly represent God. Eighteen sayings were selected to run on billboards in south Florida, ranging from serious to moving to funny. All were intended to make the reader smile and think about God – perhaps in a new way. The campaign was scheduled to run for three months.

As the original billboards were coming down, following their planned three-month run, the agency got a call from Eller Media, one of the largest billboard companies in the world. Eller wanted to run the campaign nationwide if the client would donate the sayings. Then the Outdoor Advertising Association of America, the trade group made up of all the companies who own and rent billboards, offered to use the sayings as its national public service campaign for 1999. The result was that GodSpeaks sayings appeared on some 10,000 billboards in 200 cities across America – and all free of charge. The donated space was valued at \$15 million.

Naturally, the campaign attracted media attention everywhere. Print and broadcast media were intrigued with the sayings, and perhaps more inquisitive that someone would invest in an advertising campaign without wanting anything in return. “Just who was this anonymous client?” they wanted to know. The client chose to remain anonymous and keep the attention focused on God.

Today, three of the sayings are printed. Tuesday, we will finish the group of original sayings. Wednesday, we will share the newest campaign featuring sayings developed in 2005.

- “Let’s meet at my house Sunday before the game.” –God.
- “C’mon over and bring the kids.” –God.
- “What part of ‘Thou shalt not ... ‘didn’t you understand?’” –God.

The wisdom speaks for itself.

--Beecher Hunter