

17th July 2022

Publicity

"A man once said that the pinnacle of success was when you've finally lost interest in money, compliments, and publicity. A noble enough idea I suppose. How on Earth he does this, heaven only knows."

Todd Snider, *The Excitement Plan, Money, Compliments, Publicity*

In the middle of the three weeks of *Le Tour de France*, the most prestigious cycle race in the world, I'm going to limit myself to one *Tour*-related "Thought for the Day". And this time it's about publicity.

There are twenty-two teams in the *Tour de France*, each with nine riders, and each team has two support cars for food, medics, mechanics, and the like. So that's 198 bikes and forty-four cars whizzing along on the three weeks of race. And there's the Media! 650 newspapers, websites, TV and radio stations cover the *Tour*. 2,500 journalists, photographers, cameramen and consultants; 1,800 technicians, helicopter pilots and drivers; 260 cameramen and women; 121 TV channels, broadcasting the *Tour*, either live or in highlights packages, in 186 countries.

But all of that is nothing in comparison "The Publicity Caravan". 39% of spectators say they turn up to watch the *Tour* for the Publicity Caravan rather than for the cycling. It's a 20km-long parade that takes 45 minutes to pass, considerably longer than the whirl of the *peloton* and support cars. 16 million freebies – from hats and T-shirts to samples of washing detergent – are thrown from it each year. 33 advertisers spend between €200,000 and €500,000 to secure their spot. 160 decorated cars, trucks and vans and more than 600 people are involved. Publicity matters!

We're never likely to have a fraction of the budget the advertisers have on the *Tour*. And yet, doesn't publicity matter for us too? Isn't our enterprise – Church or community, charitable work or voluntary group – valuable and essential enough for good publicity to be important? We need to make publicity as good as it can be.

If we've reached "the pinnacle of success", let's be proud of what we've achieved and not be diffident about saying so. If we want to make sure people know what we're about, doesn't top-of-the-range publicity matter? We're all on a "tour" for good reasons. We want to do it well, and we want it to make a difference. Clearly, publicity matters!

A prayer for today

Lord, do you need publicity through the way I live my life? Yes? Amen

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>