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Communicating faith through the legacy media. *Theological reflections and pastoral implication*

ABSTRACT:

THIS PAPER IS A REFLECTION ON THE THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMMUNICATION OF FAITH THROUGH THE MEDIA. ITS STARTING POINT IS NOT BASED ON THE DICHOTOMOUS CATEGORISATION OF THE MEDIA AS EITHER VERY BENEFICIAL, OR VERY NEGATIVE FOR THE COMMUNICATION OF FAITH; THUS AVOIDING AN EITHER/OR ATTITUDE WHICH IS VERY LIMITING. THE HYPOTHESIS EXPLORED IS THAT THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH IS ONLY COMMUNICATED THROUGH THE LANGUAGE OF A MEDIUM AND THAT SUCH A TRANSLATION, NOT TO SAY INCARNATION, HAS TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE TECHNOLOGICAL, ORGANISATIONAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF THE LEGACY OR TRADITIONAL MEDIA AS WELL AS THEIR VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE. THE CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION WILL THEN BE FOLLOWED BY THE PROPOSAL OF ELEMENTS OF A PASTORAL STRATEGY THAT BEST RESPECTS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITH AND MEDIA AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE AUDIENCES TOWARDS WHICH BOTH FAITH AND MEDIA ARE DIRECTED.

KEYWORDS:

CHURCH MEDIA DOCUMENTS; EVANGELISATION; LANGUAGE OF THE FAITH; LANGUAGE OF THE MEDIA; LEGACY MEDIA; MEDIA THEORIES

The importance of the media in contemporary culture is enormous. Although the new media have made great inroads into the role and influence of the traditional or legacy media these are still a force to be reckoned with and the dynamics used to communicate the language of faith through them can throw light on the dynamics of the communication of the language of faith. This paper examines the role of the latter without in any way reducing from the importance of the former. It avoids the either/or syndrome, that is the hypothesis that the media are either the definitive solution or a major problem for the communication of the language of faith. This paper studies the complexities of the process involved in the belief that the content of the language of faith is only available to humans through the language of a medium, with a privileged role assigned to the mass media.

1. Beyond the 'salvation' or 'damnation' syndrome

Ever since Socrates (Plato, 1973) criticised the invention of the phonetic alphabet as the undermining of memory, men and women generally reacted to the introduction of media technologies in one of two opposite ways. They either looked at the innovations as very dangerous or as very beneficial (Schoenbach, 2001). Deep concern accompanied the rise of newspaper reading, cinema going, listening to radio, watching TV and surfing on the Internet (e.g. Arheim, 1958; Postman, 1982). On the other hand, others hailed the introduction of communications technology with great enthusiasm (Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958; McLuhan, 1962; Negroponte, 1996).

A similar bi-polar reaction was constantly present in the Church and its teachings about the media which have been either shunned as if they are a modern version of original sin or hailed as the twenty-first century version of the way to salvation (Borg, 1995; 1999). In 1906, for example, Pius X prohibited seminarians in an absolute manner from reading newspapers and magazines, even those of the highest quality (Baragli, 1981). It is significant that the first Church document discussing the cinema, published in 1909 in the name of Pius X, prohibited priests, under the risk of suspension *a divinis*, to watch movies in cinemas (Baragli, 1973). This diktat remained in place until the First Roman Synod that was held in 1960!

Other Church documents (e.g. Miranda Prorsus and Inter Mirifica), on the other hand, are decidedly more positive and encourage Catholics to make greater use of the media (Pius, 1957; Council, Vatican II, 1963). The Vatican Council II strongly maintained that the Church is "obliged to preach the Gospel ... also with the help of the media of social communication and to instruct men in their proper use" as well "as an inherent right of the Church to have at its disposal and to employ any of these media" (Council, Vatican II, 1963, para. 3). The pastoral instruction *Communio et Progressio* (Paul VI, 1971) reflects the electronic optimism of the age (para. 6, 7). *Aetatis Novae* (Pontifical Council for Social Communication, 1991) underscores that the media must be at the service of ecclesial communion by providing the members of the Church with the means to exercise "the fundamental right for dialogue and information in the Church" (para. 10). The media must also be at the service of the new evangelization (para. 11).

Some media professionals also adopt a similarly ambivalent reaction to the relationship between media and faith. A positive attitude is taken, for example, by Tom Allen of the marketing agency Allied Faith and Family who thinks that there is a ‘God-moment’ breaking out in the entertainment culture that is partly driven by people’s never ending quest for transcendent meaning (Catholic News Service, 2012). He refers to a number of Broadway shows, including “Leap of Faith”, which deal with the themes of redemption and salvation. His positivism is not shared by others. Malcolm Muggeridge (1977), for example, posits the hypothesis of a big impresario offering Jesus a prime time TV show broadcast across all the Roman Empire. Muggeridge believes that Jesus would refuse the offer. Muggeridge considers TV to be a superficial medium and consequently cannot communicate the language of faith.

This debate is as old as Christianity itself. Tertullian and Augustine reflect this dichotomy. The high culture of the elite in the Roman Empire was rejected by Tertullian. In his book Prescription against Heretics he rhetorically asks what Athens has to do with Jerusalem, meaning that the Church can learn nothing from the Greek Academy (Dunn, 2004). Neither was he a fan of low culture; stating in *de Spectaculis* that Christians are forbidden from attending public shows (Dunn, 2004).

An opposite position is taken by Augustine. His theology incorporates the idea that cultural signs have the power to facilitate our enjoyment of God. He gives a guarded endorsement of all things finite, calling them blessings of God (Augustine, 2006). Augustine takes this position as he believes that “the little spark of reason, which was the image of God in him, has not been quite quenched” (2009, p. 767).

2. Beyond an instrumental approach

The relationship between the language of faith and the language of the media cannot be studied in depth and its implications understood, if an instrumental approach to the media is adopted. According to this perspective the media are looked at as little more than mere conduits of information. Within this limiting perspective, the translation of the language of faith into the language of the media is considered to be similar to the transportation of, for example, water from point A to point B through pipes. The content of faith is thus seen as being transported *tale quale*, for example, from the Church hierarchy to the faithful. This is a facile analysis of the process.

The media are not neutral transport vehicles as they are purported to be in the instrumental approach. Several theoreticians have shown how any topic which is mediated takes on the characteristics of the communications technology used in its mediation (Innis, 1951; McLuhan, 1964; Ong, 1977; Postman, 1982). An added source of influence is exerted by the organisational culture of the communicating organisation which imposes its bias on the message communicated (Croteau, Hoynes, & Milan, 2012). The content of faith, like everything else which is communicated, is also impacted by the different epistemologies inherent in different media technologies and by the preferences adopted by different media organisations. Both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of the

message are influenced. The Church is thus faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, it has to use the media to communicate but at the same time it cannot do this without having its message influenced to different extents by the technology of the medium used and by the culture of the organisation diffusing the message.

The Church's message is therefore mediatised both at the point of encoding/transmission by the communicator as well as at the point of decoding/reception by the audience who are also influenced by the media. At the point of encoding/transmission the language of faith exists through its translation in the language of some particular medium and, consequently, from the content of faith one can only communicate well that which can be effectively 'translated' through a particular medium. At the point of reception/decoding it is the language of faith as dressed in the language of the media, that is then received and decoded; accepted or rejected. This decoding/reception happens in an environment, saturated and influenced by a dominant medium of communication. However, the receivers are not blotting papers but active agents which can perceive and accept the Church's preferred meaning for the message, give a negotiated meaning or an oppositional one as other audiences do with other media messages (Croteau, Hoynes, & Milan, 2012). Instead of speaking of the language of faith and the language of the media it is therefore more correct to speak of the language of faith communicated through the language of the media.

3. The primacy of technology over content

There is a tendency, the origin of which is beyond the scope of this paper, to consider content as the most important dimension of any medium. The psycho-cultural theories of McLuhan (1964) and Ong (1970, 1977), among others, have shown that this is a partial approach. Content is important, but the realisation that it is greatly influenced, not to write, determined, by the technology of the media used should point towards the primacy of technology over content. Following this line of thinking McLuhan and Ong propose to divide the history of humanity into four phases each one dominated by a different medium. The spoken word with its concomitant multi-sensorial and emotive epistemology was the dominant medium of communication in the oral-aural culture also described as the culture of primary orality. The invention of the phonetic alphabet changed society from one based on sound to one based on sight. This was one of the most radical changes in the history of humanity. The chirographic or manuscript period brought with it the slow movement from a society dominated by the sense of community to one where the individual is paramount, from magic to science and from religion to the secular (Innis, 1951). The print or typographic culture initiated by the invention of printing from movable type consolidated and expedited the trends initiated by the invention of the phonetic alphabet. Among other things, scientific books substituted sacred books, the process of secularisation moved on in earnest and nationalism was the order of the day. The word was irrefutably silenced. The movement towards the era of the quasi oral-aural culture (or the culture of secondary orality, to use Ong's words) was



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initiated by the telegraph. The battery of media that followed included the cinema, radio, TV, computers and, currently, the new media. In this culture the word has passed through many phases. Radio magnified it; TV turned it into an audio-visual experience; computers originally silenced it; but the new media are giving it a new lease of life. This is the era of electronic interdependence, immediate participation, the total collapse of space, the emergence of the network society, together with instant and constant communication (Appadurai, 2010; Castells, 2001; McLuhan, 1964).

3.1 A few hypothesis about possible effects

The introduction of a new communications technology in a society starts as a technological innovation but it eventually causes a cultural, psychological and economic revolution. The implications for the understanding and communication of faith are enormous. Redemptoris Missio (John Paul II, 1990) recognises that the media bring drastic changes because of their new way of communicating more than because of the content communicated. He further states that this profound change results in a new culture, new language, new techniques and new psychology. The early Christians experienced the difficult dilemma of how to transform the oral teachings of Jesus codified in the medium of the word as sound to the written mode or the word as script. There was a tension between those two cultures. In the process of translation to script, the Evangelists authored and not simply transcribed.

St Paul, writing to the Romans (10:17) stated that faith comes from hearing, clearly privileging the word as sound over other forms of the word. Though Paul's period falls within the chirographic culture, the word as sound was still very strong. Would he have changed his statement had he been writing in the typographic age when the word became a silent visual instead of a living sound? Could he have said that faith comes from seeing? Ong makes a similar point when he suggests that our understanding of Trinitarian theology would be influenced if instead of using, almost exclusively, analogies "with imaginary construct in space - images - we use analogies taken from the world of sound (Ong, 1977, p. 23).

Is it a coincidence that one of the greatest upheavals in the history of Christianity, that is the rise of Protestantism, coincided with the invention of print which brought with it an important new stage of verbalisation? The technological invention brought with it a new cultural paradigm which resulted, among other things, in that schism (Eisenstein, 1983). The tenet *sola scriptura* privileged the written culture (now consolidated through print) over the culture that still considered oral traditions as essential. Besides, before the invention of printing, the Bible was the property of the ecclesial community not just theologically but also physically as, probably, the ecclesial community possessed the only copies. After the invention of printing the Bible became the property of individuals who could buy a copy, read it on one's own and interpret it on one's own. From the primacy of ecclesial and communitarian interpretation a shift was made towards the primacy of individual and private interpretation.

The invention of print brought with it a sequential type of mentality. Printing was part of the mechanical technology which meant that a whole was made up of many different parts. On the contrary, electronics are based on an integrated motherboard or integrated circuit instead of different and independent mechanical parts. Is it a coincidence that Trent – the Council of the print era – came up with a theology of confession which emphasised the confessing of sins according to number, species etc. while the post Vatican II theology – the Council of the Electronic Era – developed the idea of the fundamental option which looks at the direction of one's life not at its minutiae?

There is also a contrast between the ecclesiology of another print culture council and an electronic culture one. The ecclesiology of Vatican Council I's *Pastor Aeternus* (Vatican Council I, 1870) emphasises the hierarchy while the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium* (Vatican Council II, 1964) emphasises the People of God. Is this, at least partly, the result of the culture that accompanies the shift from organisations based on centre-margin relations pivotal to the Print Culture (Innis, 1951) to the Electronics' era emphasis on centre-without-margins organisations (McLuhan, 1962, 1964)? In a Print Culture characterised by relatively slow communications facilities one had to emphasise the essential importance of the centre to keep unity; otherwise the organisation would fall to pieces. Today, as Castells (2001) studiously puts it, the Internet is the technological basis for the organisational form of the Information Age: the network. This is a set of interconnected nodes which for the first time allows the communication of many to many, in a time of one's choice and on a global scale. In a network it is not necessary that there is a strong centre for an organisation to remain united. In a network there are many centres/peripheries. Is it a co-incidence that this development in the media dominated culture coincided with the re-discovery of the theology of the local church?

Other theological reflections could be made in the light of McLuhan's (1962, 1964) statement that the current era is one of electronic interdependence; an era associated with the collapse of space, the emergence of the global village and the possibility of feel-

ing more than ever close to others and involved in the lives of others. Does not this electronic interdependence give, as McLuhan, predicted, a new dimension and interpretation to the doctrine of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ? (Playboy interview, 1969)! Is it a coincidence that the liturgical reform of Vatican II, based on the concept of participation more than on the concept of mystery is more in tune with the new psychology of interdependence? _

4. The organisational challenge

When the encoding/transmission of the language of faith is made by means of a mass medium, another stratum is added on top of the characteristics of the language of the medium due to its technological features. The encoding/transmission is also moulded in the ethos, structural constraints/strengths and communication conventions of the media organisation responsible for the transmission of the message. It is difficult to communicate the language of faith unless it is fashioned in some way or manner in the ethos of the media organisation carrying the message. This can prove to be quite a challenge, particularly in organisations with a commercial ethos.

The transmission of faith through commercially owned media organisations, particularly television, will meet exacting challenges. In such organisations all TV content is generally reduced to entertainment of one type or another, for example, infotainment, edutainment and even irritainment.

Within such an environment, television programmes have to have drama, conflict, cliff hangers and be person, not concept, centred. Faith related content will only find a place on television or commercially owned media if it respects these criteria. Otherwise it will only find a place in some unpopular time-slot, for example the famous so-called God's hours on some American networks, and probably, only if someone pays for that slot.

There is another challenge. While within the ecclesial structures the content of the language of faith is in the total control of the ecclesial institution, the media-transmission of the language of faith content generally is in the control of the media producers and managers who may or may not be knowledgeable of the requirements of the language of faith. In the case of the new media there is generally no control at all; except, that is, by whoever creates the content. It is a free for all. Can the Church as the "proprietor" of the language of faith adapt itself to this situation given that its vertical and hierarchical communication structures are diametrically different from the communication structures of the media, particularly the new media?

Many Church people do not understand these dynamics and consequently wrongly conclude that there is a media conspiracy against the Church or worse still that the media are all out to abolish the communication of the language of faith. This belief is many times an excuse to justify an attitude of ineptness and lack of creativity instead of the intelligent adaptation of the language of faith into the language of the media and in their dearth of expertise to aptly communicate its content.

5. The “alternative religion” challenge

The media, though, besides shaping the language of the Catholic faith, also propose and propagate a media generated secular faith. The media, in a certain sense, also propose alternative religions. These secular religions, just like the traditional religions, have their own myths/systems of belief, values, and rituals (Geothals, 1981) and their theology – in line or in contrast with Christian theology – can be found in the products of popular culture including such television shows as *The Simpsons* (Pinsky, 2007).

Myths/dogmas: Every culture creates its myths/systems of belief as a response to the basic human questions about the meaning of life, death, and suffering (Eliade, 1963). The religion of television and the new media propose, for example, a soteriology that is solely anthropocentric as amply witnessed in *Superman and the Westerns*. Horsfield (1984) describes this media-created religion as a simplistic one that promises immediate satisfaction and sensationalises life and events. White (2007) states that “... it is clear that a telenovela (in Latin America) is more of a theological statement rather than a mirror of reality where brutally unjust people usually gain triumphant power” (p. 12).

Values: According to Johnson (1972), “television not only distributes programmes and sells products, but preaches a general philosophy of life... there are instantaneous solutions for the very personal problems of life” (p. 11). On the other hand, Fore (1993) analyses the value system preached by television and discovers, among other things, that it preaches that the acquisition of happiness consists in purchasing material wealth; that consumerism is intrinsically good; that wealth and power are more important than people; and that suffering is to be shunned at all cost. Television dictates that actors more than saints are the models to emulate. Advice is dished out by counsellors and media people rather than by confessors. Public confession has become *de rigueur* during phone-in programmes.

Ritual: One of the characteristics of television according to Geothals (1993) is to empower millions of people to escape from space and ordinary time to ‘enter’ in sacred sites thousands of miles away. “Live transmission by television bestows a quasi-ritual aura on various political and sporting events. Across the world, television pulls ordinary individuals into extraordinary events and offers what the traditional religions provided in the past: pageants, crowds, special days” (p. 30). Geothals gives a number of examples extracted from American life, among them events taken from the political and sporting arenas.

6. Implications for the communication of the language of faith

The discussion so far mainly centred on the point of encoding/transmission of the language of faith through media technology and structures and on the challenges thereof. The section will emphasise the other end of the continuum: the point of reception/decoding the message and discusses two possible implications for the communication of the content of faith, mainly a pastoral strategy build on the primacy of the audience and secondly a strategy built on the narration of stories.

6.1. The primacy of the audience

A communication strategy which gives primacy to audiences in the communication of the content of faith finds support from both communication theory and theology. Communication theories amply prove that audiences are not passive recipients and consumers of information as they either accept the meaning by the communicator or give a negotiated or totally opposite one (McQuail, 2010). Messages not designed with the primacy of the audience in mind are doomed to failure.

A theological perspective part of the project of new evangelisation which gives due importance to the audience is referred to as the Pedagogy of God (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997; Farey, Linnig, & Paruch, 2011). This concept which is the foundation of a theology of communication was first proposed by the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation – *Dei Verbum*– which states that the Word of God in Sacred Scriptures was adapted to the audiences it addressed (Vatican Council II, 1965, para. 13). This theme means that when constructing messages the Church should strive to strike a balance between fidelity to God – the originator of the message – and to humans, the recipients (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). The content of the revealed truths themselves has to remain intact but it would be futile to attempt communicating these truths in a language which is unintelligible to the target audience (John Paul II, 1979). The project of the new evangelisation launched by the Church can only succeed if it is in tune with the ‘frequency’ of the contemporary audiences immersed in a media culture (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

What is being proposed is a strategy relevant, first and foremost, to the hopes, anxieties and existential concerns of the men and women of today (Vatican Council II, 1965a). The Church’s use of the media for the communication of faith has to make a paradigmatic change from a message-oriented strategy to an audience-oriented one. This has to be accompanied by the abandonment of the assumption that the concerns of the Church necessarily are the concerns of the audiences or that the institution knows it all. Jesus Christ himself adopted a similar audience-centred communication strategy based on the recognition and respect for the existential concerns of the persons he was communicating with. Two episodes stand out as illustration for this anthropological approach to evangelisation: the meeting with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-42) and the post-resurrection meeting with the disciples of Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35) (Gevaert, 2005).

When Jesus met with the Samaritan Woman on Jacob’s well his starting point is a purely human need: material thirst. He then slowly moved on to other topics and other types of thirst to finally introduce himself as the one who could quench the existential thirst of humans. Jesus first entered into dialogue with the Samaritan woman about her manifest and immediate needs but moved on to her latent and more deeply structured needs (Gevaert, 2005; XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 2012).

Jesus met the disciples of Emmaus on the road – the locus where life events unfold, and where difficulties are unravelled. He approaches the disciples not as an intruder in their private conversation, but as a person who wants to share in their worries. It is after listening to what was burdening them that he offered an explanation of how

one was to interpret the events that had taken place in Jerusalem and were perturbing these two disciples (Gevaert, 2005). He walked with them literally but also symbolically through the evolving of the conversation.

This style of evangelisation was later on taken up by Paul, the greatest communicator amongst the apostles. The dialogue at the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-31) is a clear example of this same communication strategy which should now be adopted to the media dominated Areopagus (Pontifical Council for Social Communication, 1991). The mass media offer the Church new possibilities to creatively put this strategy into practice. Television, for example, “is accustoming viewers to see many different angles. Angles that we never dreamt before of seeing” states Buttrick (1987, p. 55) who adds that “we have to do the same thing with our texts. A speaker who adopts a one camera point of view may seem slow and turgid to an audience used to rapid shifts in angles.” This creativity challenge, although not an easy one, was taken up by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), saying that “the Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilise these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect” (Paul VI, 1975, p. 45).

6.2. A strategy built on the narration of stories

The media, particularly television and the cinema, convey stories of fictitious people but based on real life experiences. Moreover, the recounting of real stories is on the increase and on different talk shows and newspaper/magazine features. People gladly volunteer to narrate their own life story. Audiences find it easy to connect with the stories of other people – real or fictitious – trying to observe or learn how other people deal with particular situations. The media, particularly the audio-visual media, are more concerned with stories than they are concerned with concepts.

This cultural phenomenon is beneficial to the communication of the language of faith as it is mainly concerned with the communication of a real person, Jesus Christ, than it is concerned with the communication of concepts. Communicating through stories is similar to Christ’s way of communicating since he “spoke in parables because abstract, conceptual language inadequately conveyed the reorientation entailed in living in God’s reign. The parables provided a means of engaging his hearers, involving them in a new way of thinking, and pressing them to a decision without provoking defensiveness” (Boys as cited in Mitchell, 1999, p. 41). Though Christ’s parables are still today a great means of communication, the Church has to create contemporary stories and parables if it really wants to communicate faith in the language of contemporary media.

Under the influence of the mentality of the manuscript and print culture, the Church privileged the communication of faith through the communication of concepts instead of the communication of stories as the Apostles had done. . The Acts of the Apostles (2:5-42) registers the impact which Peter had on the crowds on Pentecost when he opted for the kerygmatic preaching about the Christ experiences instead for the preaching of a creed (Jungmann, 1983). Under the influence of the culture fostered by



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the audiovisual media the Church re-discovered theology through storytelling as an interesting and viable way of communicating the language of faith (Tonelli, 2002).

Quite naturally the narration aimed at communicating the language of faith will be partly similar but also in parts different from the narration (and depiction) of stories for television or other audio-visual or audio media. The narration of religious experiences does not consist only in the simple re-telling of a story. A good narration which is aimed at proclaiming the Good News of Salvation should include three particular aspects weaved together: “the story of Jesus, of the faith and the life of the Church; the story of the narrator and the story of those who receive the narration” (Tonelli, 2002 p. 60). de Mello’s (1982) narration of the parable of the lost sheep is a good example of this synthesis. His story is a re-telling of the story recounted by Jesus in order to show the tender love of the Father who seeks those who decide to leave the flock in order to wander by themselves. In line with Tonelli’s schema, de Mello includes his personal experience as a follower of Christ, who, on occasion, strayed in order to experiment on something new. The third dimension of Tonelli’s schema is also present in de Mello’s story as those who receive the narration must have gone through the same experience as the lost (or better still, escaped) sheep. The narration of true as well as fictitious but realistic and believable stories is one of the best media available to the Church to reach contemporary persons.

7. Conclusion

The communication of the language of faith through the legacy media is, as amply demonstrated in this paper, a complex process. A simplistic attitude, whether positive or negative, towards this process can result in the distortion of the communication of the language of faith. On the other hand any strategy respecting the language, technologies and structures of different media can bear fruitful results. The media are not neutral communication vehicles. Their technologies give rise to particular epistemologies thus

making it easier to communicate some aspects better than others. The commercialisation of the media presents those involved in the process of evangelisation with particular challenges, particularly the trivialisation of the message.

The Church has to overcome the temptation of considering the ecclesiastical institution as an end in itself or a self-serving institution. The Church is a service institution as it exists to serve the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ and the audiences saved by his life, death and resurrection. While taking note of the differences between today's culture greatly influenced by the legacy media and the culture wherein Christ lived and preached, the Church should also take note of the similarities. Christ's audiences were fascinated by the stories he recounted in a similar way that today's audiences are enchanted by the stories spun by and through the media. The Church, in Christ's fashion, has to come up with its own stories to communicate the message of God's love eminently shown through Jesus Christ to contemporary audiences. The centuries' old message is in more sense than one always new as God is always new. The methods used by the Perfect Communicator, Jesus Christ (Paul VI, 1971) are still valid and useful today when adapted to the technologized world so heavily influenced by the legacy media. ■

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