

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE CHURCH



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The importance of effective Communication in the Church cannot be over-emphasized. Communication plays a major role in the day-to-day running of the Church. Poor Communication can bring untold negative effects on the growth and development of the church. It is therefore most desirable to run an effective Communication in the affairs of the Church.

The Church is dealing with a congregation of people with the same belief and faith in Jesus Christ. The body of Christ is the Church and it consists of diverse people with different Languages, background, behavior, character, culture etc. These people have to be talked to, preached to, discussed with, and given information on the common shared faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Mission of the Church is to spread the Good News of Salvation to all People and Nations (Mt. 28:19-20). This can only be achieved through the use of effective communication.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNICATION?

Communication is the Link that creates a relationship between People. It is a means of passing message(s) across to people. It is a process of sharing yourself verbally or non-verbally with another person in such a

way that both of you understand and accept what you say, i.e. it is a process of information Sharing. The Second part of communication also invites Listening on the part of the receiver.

Everyone Communicates!

In the interest of the Church, Communication must seek to communicate effectively with members and not just speak to them. Communication can be used for good or evil. It is a matter of Choice. Good and effective communication tends to motivate, inspire and enlighten members. Communication has immense power, to promote members' happiness and fulfillment. It involves learning about people's needs and desires; and allowing for participation in good decisions. *"Those who are careful about what they say, keep themselves out of trouble."* (Prov. 21: 23, Eph.4: 15-25; Col. 3: 9-10, Prov. 6:16-19).

THE ESSENCE (GOAL) OF COMMUNICATION IN THE CHURCH

The world is creating a global Network for the transmission of information, ideas and value judgment in Science, Religion, Commerce, Education, Politics, Entertainment and every other field. The Church is committed to communicating the fullness of the truth about the meaning of human life and history, especially as it is contained in God's revealed Word and expressed by the teachings of Christ.

The Church's practice of communication should be exemplary, reflecting the highest standards of truthfulness, accountability, sensitivity to human rights, and other relevant principles and norms. The Right of expression must be exercised with

deference to revealed truth and the church teaching; and with respect for others rights.

The Goal of Communication is summarized as follows;

- To foster truth, prosperity and peace, intellectual and growth; understanding among people and Nations on a global scale.
- To help men and women in their age-old search for self-understanding in the Lord.
- To offer the ultimately satisfying answer to the deepest questions of life in Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION

The History of human Communication can be seen as a long journey from Babel which was the site and symbol of communication Collapse (Gen 11: 4 – 9) to Pentecost and the gift of tongues (Holy Spirit) (Acts. 2: 4-11)

Gen 11: 4-9 says *“Then they said, come let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth, but the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building . The Lord said, if as one people speaking the same Language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them, come let us go down and confuse their Language, so that they will not understand each other, so the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel – because there the Lord Confused the Language of the whole World”*

The Lord made restoration for mankind in Acts 2: 4 – 11 NIV which says *“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every Nation under heaven, when they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own Language.....”*

Communication was restored by the power of the Holy Spirit sent by the Son who was sent forth into the world to announce the *GoodNews* (Mt. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:15)

Human Communication is grounded in the Communication among the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son is the Word, eternally spoken by the Father, and in and through Jesus Christ. Son and Word are made flesh; God communicates himself and his salvation to us i.e. men and women.

In many and various ways, God spoke of *Old* to our forefathers through the Prophets, but in these *last days*, He has spoken to us by a Son. Heb. 1:1–2 NIV says: *“In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the Prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son , whom he appointed heir to all things, and through whom he made the universe”.*

The church has the mission of proclaiming the Gospel until the end of time. Today, the Church knows that in order to carry out this duty, it requires using effective communication as a tool to achieving the desired result.

**HUMAN REVOLUTION OF
COMMUNICATION**

From Human creation, human beings have been involved in a process of

communication, both with fellow human beings and also with God. Human communication is a process that evolved over-time from sounds to the sophisticated symbols that have been created for easier and faster communication. Our early ancestors communicated through non-verbal gestures and eventually through an evolving system of Spoken Language. As the world of our ancestors became increasingly complex, they needed more than just the shared memory but to recall important things. Thus an increase in communication led to the development of media to store and retrieve the growing volume of information.

The Revolution of Communication can be broken down into:

- Non-verbal
- Spoken language
- Sign language
- Writing e.g. books etc.
- Printing e.g. one of the first being the **Bible**
- Mass circulation e.g. Newspapers, Magazines, Bulletin, Posters, Journal etc.
- Wire-less Communication i.e. transmission through sound which resulted in Radio which links Continents/Nations.
- Television i.e. transmission changed pattern of news coverage. It covers large area of the world and more audience.
- Computer (Digital Age) i.e. it has the capacity to store volume of information and disseminate same.
- Internet i.e. it gives the possibilities of inter-connected with the worldwide web.
- Internet services e.g. e-mail

- Electronic gadgets e.g. mobile phones etc.

This historical revolution shows the way human beings have developed the communication skills from a very simple process to a more complex one. Human beings are the genius and at the centre of this communication development and information technology, which has made the world to be a 'global village'. It has broken down barriers, boundaries and limitations to the expansion and proclamation of the Gospel.

MODERN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

The major means of communication is the media and other devices which are:

- Oral (verbal)
- Written
- Printed
- Television
- Radio
- Computer
- Telephone i.e. mobile phones
- Photos
- Posters
- Internet services
- Dialogue/Discussion
- Circulars
- Consultations/Interactions

The range and diversity of media accessible to people are: books and periodicals, television and radio, films and videos, audio-recordings, electronic communication transmitted over the airwaves, over cable and satellite via the internet.

JESUS CHRIST AS A MODEL OF GOOD COMMUNICATOR

While Jesus Christ was on earth, he revealed himself as the perfect

Communicator. He gave his messages not only in words but in the whole manner of his life. Throughout Jesus' public life, crowds flocked to hear him preach and teach the word of God (Luke 5:1) and he taught them as one who had authority (Mt.7:29; Mk 1:22; Lk 4:32). He told them about the Father and the same time referred them to himself, explaining that: *"I am the way, and the truth and life"* (Jn 14:6 NIV) and *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father"*. (Jn 14:9 NIV).

Oftentimes, Jesus' teaching took the form of parables and vivid stories expressing profound truths in simple everyday terms. Not only his words but his deeds, especially his miracles were acts of communication, pointing to his identity and manifesting the power of God.

In his communications, he showed respect for his listeners, sympathy for their situation and needs, compassion for their suffering (Lk. 7:13). Jesus taught that communication is a moral act. His Message was taught and received without coercion, deception, manipulation or force. Jesus is the Model and the Standard for the Church in the art of communication. It could be said of Jesus that: *"He committed no Sin, and no deceit was found on his mouth"* (1Pt. 2: 22 – 23 NIV). The Church should emulate the Model of Jesus Christ!

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

We are living in a world of communication where competition is the order of the day. We are exposed daily to mass communication and the media. Communication technology becomes a source for growth and development instead of destruction. The Church is involved in

various activities and programmes which require the use of the modern means of communication:

- During these events/occasions, it is highly important to choose the appropriate media of communication. It is very imperative to be kind and courteous to one another, differences in Language, character, personality and values should be taken into consideration.
- The right word should be spoken at the right time and place. Prov. 25: 11 KJV says: *"Word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver"*
- The Church should promote a two-way flow of communication and views between Elders and members.
- Those who represent the Church must be honest and straight-forward in their relationship to members.
- The Church should encourage free-expression and opinions from members with due regard for the integrity of faith and morals, respect for God and the Church leadership.
- No one should be allowed to speak for the Church unless properly designated to do so, and personal opinions should not be presented as the church teachings.
- The Church would be well-served if those who hold offices and perform functions in her name, received communication training.
- Guidance and support (spiritual, moral and financial support) should be given where necessary to members by the Church Elders.
- The Holy Spirit should be allowed to guide the Church i.e. the Church must be Spirit-Led, and not flesh-led. Romans. 8: 14 – 15 NIV says: *"because*

those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a Spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of Sonship, and by him we cry, Abba, Father.” 2Cor. 3:17 NIV says: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

- The Church sometimes needs to practice secrecy and confidentiality, but this should not be for the sake of manipulation and control.

HOW TO MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE CHURCH

The Scripture is clear that our words have the tremendous power as they can heal, support and comfort or they can wound. By our speech and preaching, we can ruin the Church, turn harmony to chaos, and send the whole Church up in fire. It is the therefore necessary to maintain a peaceful and mission-driven Church through effective communication.

Effective Communication can be achieved as follows:

- In Order to relate as brothers and Sisters, it is necessary to know one another. To do this, it is important to fellowship with one another in Love and harmony as a body of Christ which the Church is supposed to be.
- The Church should emulate Jesus Christ as a Role Model for Communication
- Information to be passed across to members/people must be authentic, and true
- Nasty or untrue things should not be said to one another
- Always Cross – Check Information before dissemination.
- Message(s) given by the Church must be clear and well understood.

- Church Announcements must be comprehensive and translated in various Languages for the benefit of everybody
- Preaching of the ‘word of God’ must be done by competent and trained Ministers of God. The Messages(s) can be translated into various languages for understanding, and it must carry relevant and meaningful impact that will be useful for the Life of the Hearers.
- Church activities and programmes must be done according to their purpose and intention. Wide publicity in the form of hand-outs, letters, Notice-boards, Posters, etc. for members to be fully aware. Church services, Band meetings, Band Anniversaries, District meetings, Harvest thanksgivings, Conference/National Meetings, etc. fall into this category.
- Media has opened doors to evangelization. Effective use of the media must be promoted by the Church for the propagation of the Gospel e.g. use of Radio, Television, etc.
- The Church can have its own official Website through which people can always be informed of its happenings.
- The Church must respect the privacy of individuals.
- Relevant trainings should be organized by the Church in form of Seminars, Conferences, Workshops, etc. for Church workers, Band Executives, Wardens, Choir, Ministers of God, etc. in communication, Inter-personal Relationship, Administration, Conflict Resolution, Crisis Management etc.
- Church choir must endeavor to minister and communicate the message of the Gospel to the people/members through their songs, drama, videos etc. Choir ministration must be properly

performed and must take into cognizance the diversity of the people/members

- Media must be used by the Church for its growth and development e.g. Radio, Television, Mobile phones, e-mail, Printed matters, News-bulletin, Journal, etc.
- The welfare of members must be taken into account, and not be neglected. This will enhance the retention of members and guarantee their Needs and Support.
- Church must operate an open-door communication system; this will guarantee the interest and participation of members.
- Suggestion box must be put in place by the Church for members' comments, opinions, and suggestions; this will guarantee a feedback mechanism.

BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TO THE CHURCH/MEMBERS

Effective Communication has religious, economic, educational, cultural and political benefits. The Religious benefits would be emphasized as follows:

- It facilitates the sharing of spiritual and liturgical resources
- It helps people/members to pray with a greater sense of closeness to those who share the same faith.
- It reaches out to more people through the use of the media e.g. television, radio and other means of communication.
- It offers spiritual enrichment to a huge audience, giving information about events, word of God, ideas, etc.
- It involves knowing the needs of members
- It provides inspiration, encouragement and opportunities to the people/members.

- It fosters the mission of Evangelism i.e. it serves as a vehicle for evangelism.
- It seeks the well-being and fulfillment of members
- It allows for participation in decision-making
- It fosters dialogue and interactions among members/people, and with the leadership.
- It produces a peaceful and result-oriented Church.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Church should be desirous of having an effective communication in all its ramification. The Church can be better positioned through meaningful and purposeful communication. The mission and vision of the Church can be attained by means of communication technology. Collaboration with other religious bodies is very important and should be encouraged.

Today, the world as a 'Village' is increasingly moving forward in the use of modern ways of communication. The Church should not be left behind. It should move along with the trend in order to maintain its relevance and usefulness in the mission of proclaiming and spreading the Gospel of GoodNews of our Lord Jesus Christ to the people and nations. Let us always remember the biblical injunction given in 2Tim 3: 16 -17 NIV which says; *"All Scripture is God – breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, Correcting, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* We should *"Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it become more and more ungodly"* (2Tim 2: 16 NIV)

The Message of Jesus Christ to the Church is very clear: *“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body”* (Eph. 4: 25 NIV). Jesus went on to say: *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”* (Eph 4: 29 KJV). May God in His infinite Mercy strengthen and empower the Church and His people for His purpose and glory in Jesus Name – Amen.

Wishing you Happy 25th Founder’s Anniversary

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