

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE NEW MEDIA IN
DISSEMINATING THE EVANGELICAL MESSAGE
AMONG CATHOLIC COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the past, religious life of American youth has received little attention from social scientists (e.g., Desmond; Morgan & Kikuchi, 2010). But recently there has been a growing interest in this area of research (e.g., Regnerus, Smith & Smith, 2004; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith, Denton, Faris & Regnerus, 2002; Smith, Faris, Denton & Regnerus 2003; Smith & Snell, 2009). Desmond, Morgan and Kikuchi (2010) noted that many have argued that the experiences individuals garnered during youthful years are very important in establishing religious identity and in maintaining this identity throughout their lives. The issue then is: What really influences young people in developing their religious identities in this stage of their lives? The goal of this study, therefore, is to explore how the Catholic college students use new media in keeping up with their faith within this stage of their development. To explore this phenomenon, qualitative method of research will be utilized. And to generate data, in-depth interviews will be conducted.

Understanding this generation's traits is important for selecting the most appropriate method for reaching these young people. The people within this age bracket were born in the 1990s and afterwards. Elmore (2010) said among other things "More than any previous group, this younger population has been defined by technology – which is why I believe it's accurate to call their generation iY." (p.13). This iY generation is technologically savvy. For them, life revolves around their gadgets. Elmore (2010) noted that "Theirs is the world of the iPod, iBook, iPhone, iChat, iMovie, iPad, and iTunes" (p. 13). As a result of their dependence on technology they easily have

access to information they need because they know where to find it. Elmore (2010) observed that this generation is the first generation that does not need any help to get information because they have electronic access to every piece of data.

The world of college students is the world of the new media. Flew (2005) defined new media “as those forms that combine the Cs: computing and information technology (IT), communication networks, and digitized media and information content arising out of another process beginning with a ‘C’, that of convergence.” (p.2). The mediation of communications through technological forms have made communication a kind of meeting place of people and ideas. Flew (2005) noted that the Internet represents the newest and perhaps the most significant manifestation of the new media. DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman and Robinson (2001) observed that “The Internet constitutes the electronic network of networks that link people and information through computer, and increasingly through other digital media technologies, and allow for both interpersonal communication and information retrieval” (p. 306-307). These forms of the new media: Web sites, computer multimedia, computer games, social media, smart phones, CD-Roms, DVD- Roms and virtual reality thrive mostly because of their dependence on the Internet. Flew (2005) remarked that a form of interactive media has evolved through the Internet. And these give users a degree of choice in the information system, both in access to information sources and control over the use of such systems.

In research conducted at the University of Maryland, College Park by the University’s International Center for Media and the Public Agenda (ICMPA) in late February and early March of 2010, the research entitled “24 Hours: Unplugged” is based on the experiences of 200 students who were asked to stay away from any form of media

for the whole day. The research found college students are addicted to cell phones, social media and the Internet, and even experienced the same withdrawal symptoms as substance-abuse addicts do. This research demonstrates that college students cannot do without media. It has become an essential element of their lives. Flory and Miller (2000) observed that of all Americans, the youth are the most exposed and engaged with the digital and interactive communication technologies. This research poses the question: Do Catholic college students use new media to seek information from the Church and to grow in their faith? From a tactical perspective, can the Catholic Church engage this audience through technology?

The 21st century is the era of super speed transmission of information. Within this paradigm, people who have information to offer no longer wait for the audience. The information provider now goes in search of the client. With the tremendous growth and influence of the mass media, it has become pertinent to consider the mass media as a method for dissemination of the Gospel. It is in recognition of the power of the media that Benedict XVI (2010) has said “priests and other Church figures should make better use of the gamut of digital tools available to them to disseminate the Church’s message to the people.” (P.b6,b7). It is necessary that the Church should identify this means and use it to communicate the evangelical message.

Historical Overview

Following the example of the missionary activities of St. Paul who took the message of the Gospel to the Aeropagus “which is a place where all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas” Acts. 17:19-34 (The Devotional Study Bible). The Church in

today's world has the responsibility to take the evangelical message to the world of the new media. The Internet is the modern day Aeropagus where ideas are given, discussed and brought to the people. It is no longer the case where people gather together and passively listen to information provided, rather, the information is now constantly available for the people to consume at their convenience. One could liken the mass media to Milton's marketplace of ideas (1644), where all sorts of ideas are brought and made available to the people, and people can contribute to ideas that emerge and are being discussed.

Church leaders see this marketplace of ideas as appropriate to seize upon the great potency of the media in its services to humanity. Thus, John Paul II (2005) said

The Church is not only called upon to use the mass media to spread the Gospel but, today more than ever, to integrate the message of salvation into the "new culture" that these powerful means of communication create and amplify. It tells us that the use of the techniques and the technologies of contemporary communication are integral part of its mission in the 3rd millennium" (no.2).

The transmission of the faith is an evangelization. And like all evangelization, if it is to be effective, it must meet the people where they are, and it must make sense to them. Brandon (2011) observed that for the Church's work of evangelization, common good among others is to continue throughout future generations, the Church must harness these technologies and utilize them well.

Adaptability is important for the survival and growth of any enterprise. This takes into account the spirit of the time and its phenomenological advancement. It is in this

sense that the researcher can say that the mass media have become a phenomena.

Flannary (1968) noted "...it believes that its task involves employing the means of social communication to announce the good news of salvation and to teach men how to use them properly" (p. 284). Here it suggests the need for the Church not only to use and engage the new media in her evangelization but also to educate people how best to use it so that it enhances their knowledge of the Catholic faith.

Lambardi (2010) noted that the pathway of cyberspace is full of superficiality and falsehood. Against this background, college students, the subject of this research, are technologically savvy and prone to use the new media. The Church can target college students through the media in order to bring its evangelical message to their doorstep. College students are media savvy and can consume new media more than any other group; thus the media are a valuable tool for the church to reach to this audience. The ability to make the message accessible to people is important. A message that is not accessible to people cannot make any impact on them. Little wonder, that companies and organizations spend their fortune in order to reach out to people in the form of advertisements, billboards, jingles and promotion etc. All these are done to sell their messages to the people and to captivate their attention.

The hope and the future lie with the youth. To neglect this age group is to have a bleak future. Elmore (2010) noted "We must begin now to train the hearts and minds of Generation iY if we're to prevent crisis later". (p.190). Hence, this group can be called a "catchment group" for the future of any enterprise. Thus, the relevance of the slogan "catch them young." Rosica (2009) said "The Church cannot ignore the great potential of online media if it wants to keep the truths of the faith in close touch with the emerging

culture and the younger, growing generation” (pp. 1-2) This is more evident as the 21st century society is a digital society. Celli (2009) noted “It is possible using the new technologies, to present the timeless message of God’s love for His people more attractively and in ways that may engage new audiences” (p.4). This is the task that awaits the Church in this 21st century.

Significance Of Study

This study will examine the ways and means the new media promote the cause of religion. It will identify the process that college students use the new media as a vehicle to promote and retain the cause of their religion. This research is aimed at exploring if and how college students use new media in regard to their Catholic faith. This research also seeks to understand the effectiveness of new media in the dissemination of the evangelical message of the Catholic Church among college students. It will add to the literature on mass media and religion. Thus, it will contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of using the new media with respect to the Catholic faith.

Desmond, Morgan and Kikuchi (2010) noted the importance of establishing religious identity in the youthful period as a key player in maintaining such identity throughout life. The issue becomes these young adults, who have left their homes and their parents watchful eyes but are now in the embrace of their new peer groups, stand at the crossroad. It is for this reason, Warr (1993) argued “age-related changes in the importance of peers, the amount of time spent in their company, and loyalty to peers are substantial enough that they can reasonably be expected to exert strong, even profound, effects on the behavior of adolescents” (p.17). In view of this, Desmond, Morgan and Kikuchi (2010) found that religious service attendance and importance of religion may

change over time if family and peer characteristics change. However, previous research in this area has only served to expose the problem young adults face with regard to their religious needs when they leave their families for college without attempting to find ways of supplying the religious needs of these college students.

Since this is the case, this researcher intends to fill in the gap in this area by exploring the impact of using the new media to promote the Catholic faith to college students. This research seeks to understand if the new media can play a role in young adults retaining their religious beliefs and practices.

In carrying out this research, the researcher will conduct a review of the literature. This section of the research will be based on peer reviewed articles and journals in this area of study. The researcher will apply uses and gratification theory of mass communication to explore how and why college students use the different media and mostly the new media in receiving religious messages. Research questions will be presented, followed by methodology section. The final chapters will identify emerging themes from the research and implications for the Catholic Church in communicating the evangelical message to its youth.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will explore what previous researchers have done in this area of study. This is to identify progress in the use of the media in the dissemination of evangelical message, to discover gaps occasioned by technological development and change in the preference of medium by the subjects of this research.

Media and Evangelization

Paul VI (1975) noted the unique place the mass media occupy in this modern era. Celli (2009) noted “communication is not simply one dimension of evangelization, without communication there can be no evangelization” (p.1). This goes to show that no venture in this epoch will ever thrive if it neglects the power possessed by the media. This is all the more true when we consider the far-reaching effect of the mass media. It is capable of reaching millions of people and impose no limit to the extent the Gospel can be heard. In this regard, Paul VI (1975) called it a modern and effective version of the pulpit. This is because the use of the mass media to communicate the message of the Gospel makes it an instrument to reach greater numbers of people that traverses the frontiers of the traditional gathering of people in the Church to listen to the word of God.

However, because of media’s far-reaching effect, Celli (2009) observed that “ the voice of the divine word must echo even through the radio, the information highway of the Internet, the channels of “online” virtual circulation , CDs, DVDs, Podcasts, etc. It must appear on all television and movie screens, in the press, and in cultural and social

events” (p.2). The need to use all media to disseminate the word of God goes to show the importance of these means in spreading the Gospel.

It is on this platform that Ramo et al. (1996) found that the interaction between religion and technology is by no means a new alliance. In their research, they found that man has always used state-of-the-art communications technology to convey his deepest thoughts. Tracing the beginning of this adventure, they noted that 5000 years ago, the Sumerians etched their fears and hopes in Cuneiform. While centuries later, Egyptians used Ra on Papyrus scrolls. And the Old Testament was edited in the first century A.D., when the scroll was turned into primitive books called codices. And so we have seen that human invention right from the earliest times has always been at the service of the Gospel (Ramo et al.,1996).

Furthermore, Ramo et al. (1996) noted that when a German inventor named Gutenberg brought his movable-type press out of its secret hiding place and into history, the first book Gutenberg printed was the Bible. This singular event was the trailblazer in the use of media to communicate the Gospel.

Despite the enormous gain in this media and religion interaction, it is still an area that is fraught with controversy. Holbert and Armfield (2002) found that religious individuals were less likely to utilize technology than secular individuals. They attributed this to secularization theory as the reason in understanding technology usage by the religious. This is based on the belief that technology such as the World Wide Web will provide a door to the secular world. Thus, Swatos and Christina (2002) noted that secularization theory holds that religion is negatively related to all forms of mass media use and assumes that mass media typically reflects an anti-religious and increasingly

secularist view of society. Buddenbaum (2002) attributed this controversy to lack of generally accepted theory of communication of religion.

Essentially, as society changes, people are influenced as well. These changes may include people's perception of reality, ways of receiving information and interaction within the environment. One of the significant changes has been the amount of media usage. Nielsen Company (2009) noted that in the United States alone, an average person watches more than 151 hours of television a month (about 5 hours a day). This statistic goes to show the enormous influence the mass media can have on people. Ideally, the possibility of communicating with each household is feasible through some other medium. Horsfield (1991) noted that our average day is spent absorbing mass-mediated messages. This ranges from radio to records, television, newspapers, journals, books, bumper stickers, and even cereal boxes. He went on to say that the whole of our waking life is spent in some way in the presence of mass mediated messages. To support this, Valle (1992) said that "we have to accept that in our world today, mass media are more and more becoming the important source of information" (p 4). This goes to show the important position the media occupy in the dissemination of information.

Hoover (2008) found that religious issues and trends cannot be fully addressed or understood without the media. In this sense, they are rooted in the media. Hoover (2008) observed that much of what we know that is going on in our environment and in the area of religion, is known through the media. He then concluded that the power of the media is the power of publicity.

Furthermore, the Church, as the repository of the religious message, should be able to present it in a way that is suitable to each era. It is for this reason that the Church had

undergone different stages in her work of evangelization following the need and medium of the given society she evangelized. It is in this regard that John Paul II (2002) observed:

But the history of evangelization is not just a matter of geographic expansion, for the Church has also had to cross many cultural thresholds, each of which called for fresh energy and imagination in proclaiming the one Gospel of Jesus Christ. The age of the great discoveries, the Renaissance and the invention of printing, the Industrial Revolution and the birth of the modern world: these too were threshold movements which demanded new forms of evangelization. Now, with the communication and information revolution in full swing, the Church stands unmistakably at another decisive gateway (para.3).

Here John Paul II, noted the need for the Church to use the modern means of communication to present the Gospel message.

Since each epoch has at least one medium akin to it, we now enter the different media of evangelization. The evolution in technology does not make the old medium obsolete, but offers a new means of evangelization.

Disseminating The Evangelical Message Through Different Media

The Printed Word

Many researchers have underscored the necessity and importance of the printed word. Hardon (1995) found that the first stage of development was the rise of literacy. This was followed by the development in the discovery of phonetic writing and then the discovery of printing. However, Ramo et al. (1996) observed that with the invention of

the printing press, a literacy revolution started. Remarkably, the first printed book by Gutenberg was the Holy Bible. Ramo et al. (1996) further noted that with the invention of printing press “ ideas that once could be communicated only in person, or at large universities in cities such as London or Hanover, suddenly took wing across the continent. And though, Gutenberg printed just 200 Bibles before losing control of his invention, there was no turning back” (p. 5). This is a revolution that was at its beginning at the service of the Gospel message.

Interestingly enough, Martin (2010) discovered Gutenberg’s leitmotif for inventing the printing machine. He quoted Gutenberg, thus, “God suffers because of the great multitudes whom His sacred word cannot reach. Religious truth is captive in a small number of manuscript books which holds the holy things; give wings to the truth by a means no longer written at great expense by the hand that wearies itself, but multiplied by an unwearied machine, it may fly to every soul born in the world” (p1). To this end, Martin (2010) noted that the sole intent of Gutenberg for the discovery of the printing press was evangelism. This goes to show that this research points to the necessity of this medium in the evangelization.

The Church has continued to make use of the printed word in her evangelization work. The *Catholic Magazine* noted that there are over 50 officially recognized magazines. These are Catholic publications done either by the department of the communication of a given diocese or by independent Catholic publishers. This does not include diocesan newspapers like *The Eastern Oklahoma Catholic* that is owned by the Catholic Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Cinema

Whatever is good is not alien to the Church or to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Conner (1971) saw cinema as a vehicle of evangelization. He noted:

Many films have compellingly treated subjects that concern human progress or spiritual values. Such works deserve for everyone's praise and support. The Catholic organizations specializing in films should be among the first to support them. They should also promote these films in an organized manner. In this connection, it will be recalled that among films that have been widely accepted as classics, many have dealt with specifically religious themes. This not only proves that the cinema is a proper vehicle for such noble themes, but it is a strong encouragement to produce films of this kind. (para.144).

This goes to show that cinema plays a vital role in evangelization. In line with this, Hardon (1995) observed "Visual contact with lifeless print is now extended to warm intimacy with living persons where the whole person, body and soul and spirit, thought and emotion, become so profoundly affected and deeply influential in communicating the Gospel as to stagger the imagination" (p.3). Here Hardon is saying that the visual contact when used to disseminate the Gospel animates the human spirit and wells up to the divine in such a fashion that the printed word cannot do. In support of this idea, Kozlovic (2003) in his research found a convergence of faith and culture in cinema. He said:

Not only can film be used in a generic way to enjoin the progress of faith, or to brag about the Lord's creation as an example of virtuous entertainment but it can also provide basic information to those ignorant of the faith.

The use of the cinema as an extra-Ecclesiastical institution is in sympathy with Romans 10:14 “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” Cinema being a pseudo-extension of the pulpit, is a modern means of evangelization, and a potential device for homiletically based awakening. (p.4).

For the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be appealing to today’s visual-oriented world, the Church must use this medium akin to this time. This made Kozlovic conclude that unless theology (message) can say things in new ways, and unless it can say new things, it will cease to be interacting, and perhaps worst of all - cease to be relevant.

Kozlovic (2003) mentioned films that made an impact on the faith and lives of people as *The Ten Commandments*, *The King of Kings*, and *Samson and Delilah*. He noted that Evangelists who use the cinema as means of spreading the Good News link the past with the present in such a narrative fashion that it reinforces the truth of the Bible. Talking about *Ten Commandments* found that some people who watched the film made an effort to keep the commandments and to think about the next world.

Radio

The possibility to reach millions in an instant, which radio has provided, has been seized upon to disseminate the Gospel. Lochte (2008) found that by 2006 there were 1,209 stations with Christian formats and when added this to stations that report Gospel, inspirational and religious formats as Arbitron does, the number grows to 2,772 stations. However, Lochte (2008) noted that these Christian radio stations are essentially evangelistic in their work. Lochte noted this role in the vision statement of some of the

radio station. These radio ministries follow these guidelines: “To communicate the Gospel through mass media” (p.67). Lochte concluded that these radio stations describe their efforts as ministries and they draw listeners who see their work to be in line with their faith.

Christian Music

Music, like any other medium of communication, is used in conveying Gospel messages. It is a form of language. Brigada (2000) noted that music is considered an ideal vessel for evangelistic messages. To this end, Brigada concluded that in recent years, Christian especially pop (Christian) music has become a significant growing part of the music industry.

However, Lochte (2008) noted that most popular Christian radio stations have heavy rotations of contemporary Christian music. He then argued that for Christian Radio stations music is the evangelical message that connects them to their audience.

Christian Talk Shows

Arbitron, in its *Radio Today* report (2006) noted that these stations present compelling talk shows throughout the day. Besides this, they are equally a source of other information like traffic and weather information, and broadcasts of local sport teams.

However, these stations have different formats that appeal to different audiences. To this end, Arbitron (2006) noted that formats with talk personalities appeal to younger radio audiences, and the news/talk/information has the highest average listeners. However, it must be noted that this study is not specifically on Christian talk stations but the discovery applies to Christian talk stations.

Television

The Church, in the face of staggering rate of technological development, has to keep pace in order to be able to address God's people through a medium relevant to them. In this sense, Butler argued that for the message to be best transmitted the medium, style of content and audience must match. Obviously, we are in a visual age and for any message to capture the attention of this age, the medium must match with the need of the time. To this end, Hardon (1995) said that the medium of television gives sense of communion and kinship built with others resulting from hearing and seeing someone which no previous means of communication could achieve. Hardon, then concluded that television, as an instrument of evangelization, is so powerful that it joins the audience with the preacher in such a fashion that there is a communion of mind and heart.

Horsfield (1991) noted that one particular person who was unique in the use of television to disseminate the Gospel was Roman Catholic Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. He traced his broadcasting career back to 1928 with the popular radio station WLWL in New York, but Bishop Sheen became a figure through national television. Sheen was so popular that his audience dubbed him "angel of the airwaves". Then later in the 1950s and 1960s other tele-evangelists emerged like Rex Humbard, Oral Roberts, Billy Sunday, D.L. Moody and Billy Graham, to mention just a few. These people used the television to advance the course of the Christian faith.

There are networks that are devoted to religious program like the Christian Broadcasting networks that owns such program as *700 Club*. There is also The Eternal Word Television Network.

Theater

Cameron (2004) has wondered why many innovations in technology have failed to push the theater out of existence. The reason for this failure, Cameron argued that the human heart craves for the theater because the human heart lives waiting for something that will reveal the meaning of human being. This yearning compels the human soul to look to the imitation of human beings in action. To be able to do this, Cameron (2004) posited that theater in the service of the new evangelization seeks to engage reason. This is because reason is an act of imagination that calls out for imagination.

However, this imagination to which theater stirs people into, disposes them to the divine especially when the action centers on God and His Good News. Cameron (2004) concluded that theater is an event in which experience thrives. This experience throws us into the rhythms of the real, drawing us irresistibly toward our union with the ultimate aspect of things and their true definitive meaning. This then is the true meaning and reason for disseminating the Gospel.

New Media

At the twilight of the 21st century, humanity experienced the birth of the electronic revolution that holds the promise of a great positive breakthrough for the world. At the center of this revolution is the Internet. John Paul II (2002) saw this enterprise as the new frontier opening up at the beginning of this new Millennium. He then argued “For the Church, the new world of cyberspace is a summons to the great adventure of using its potential to proclaim the Gospel message” (Para. 4). Here John

Paul II underscored the effectiveness of the emerging frontier in spreading the Gospel. However, Ostrowski (2006) noted that since the late 1980s, there had been a continuous growth of the use of the Internet for religious purposes. Campbell (2003) undertook the most detailed study on religious use of the Internet. This study explored the widest delineation of religion practice, belief and all forms of online use ranging from Internet, text messaging to chat rooms. Despite the apparent shortcomings of the study because of its lack of focus on the mainstream religions and its emphasis on Internet use by pagan religious communities, Campbell provided a necessary landscape to the understanding of current themes of religion and Internet enterprise. Campbell (2006) stated that “the Internet has provided religious practitioners with new ways to explore religious beliefs and experiences through a growing number of web sites, chat rooms, and e-mail discussion groups dedicated to a variety of faith related issues” (no. 3). This has really made possible the different forms of seeking religious online activities. Campbell (2006) went further to list most common types of on-line religious activities (a) religious information online, (b) worshipping in cyber churches (c) online worship/ rituals/ online missionary activities and (d) participating in religious online communities. He concluded that “recent development such as religious blogging (Web logs) and religious podcasting (disseminating audio based religious material for listening on an Apple iPod or similar portable device-referred to by the media as “god casting”) create new forms of religious out-reach and reception” (p.18). In addition, Campbell (2006) identified nine central themes of research on Internet use and religion that have emerged over time: theology/spirituality, religion, morality/ethics, practical, religious traditions, community,

identity, power, and online ritual. This is all about using the new media to spread the Gospel message.

Hoover, Clark and Rainie, (2004) noted that 64% of the nation's 128 million Internet users have done things online that is related to religious matters. This goes to show the preponderance of the new media in the spread of the Gospel message.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Communication researchers have been interested in the way media manipulate audiences. It was Katz (1959) who first described uses and gratification theory when he was reacting to Berelson who claimed that the field of mass communication appeared to be dead. Katz then argued that what was dying was the persuasion model of mass communication effect. He found a new way for mass communication research by directing its thrust to what people do with the media instead of what media do to people. The uses and gratification approach provides one way of understanding the relationship between the producer of messages (sender) and the audience (receiver). It presents a shift from the powerful (direct) effects models of communication research that dominated the field of communication around 1930 to 1960. This theory is based on the idea that the audience has an active role in making choices and being goal directed in their media use behavior. The experience one gets from media depends upon one's use of the media and the gratification one is receiving. Thus was the birth of uses and gratification model. In this model the audience is an active participant

Application Of The Theory In Evangelical Message

Ferguson, Greer and Reardon (2007) found in their research that uses and gratification theory is a better approach in understanding audience uses of traditional

media. The basic idea to this theory is that the audience is active in the choice of media and the content in order to satisfy certain needs. To this end, Celli (2009) said “Whereas in the past, we tended to see the reader, listener or watcher of media as a passive spectator of centrally generated content, it is clear that today we must understand the audience as more selectively and interestingly engaging with a wider range of media. The logic of communications has been radically changed – the focus on the media has been replaced by a concentration on the audience which is increasingly autonomous and deliberative in its consumption of media” (p.4). McLeod and Becker (1981) were of the view that people actively seek out mass media choices to satisfy certain communicative needs.

It is important to note that many assumptions have developed with regard to uses and gratifications. One such assumption is that media consumption is driven by multiple human motivations. These motivations are vital to individual media choice and exposure. Palmgreen, Wenner and Rosengren (1985) associated media consumption to different media effects including: (a) knowledge, (b) dependency, (c) attitudes, (d) perception of social reality, (e) agenda setting, and various political effects. Audience members are conscious of their media-related needs that arise in individual and social circumstances and can voice these in terms of motivations.

Studies on Religious Communities with Uses and Gratifications Approach

Laney (2000) in his research on Christian Web usage found that most people who make use of such sites do so to reinforce their faith and as a possible alternative to the religious practices associated with the mainstream in the International religious web user’s culture. This goes to show that there is no stated reason for the use of religious

messages and programs as each individual has his/her own motivation for the use of the program and the medium.

Horsfield (1986) noted that some of those who watch religious programs on television do so to gratify their needs of personal inspiration, companionship and support. He made use of the Hilton survey on the use of television worship services by members of the Irvington Presbyterian Church, and found that many people made use of the program for personal inspiration and uplift. While 55% said that music and singing were helpful to them, 4% said that the program had influenced their understanding in better of what it means to be a Christian. Again, Horsfield said that the CBN counseling center in Boston, in its first two years of operation (1977-79) received 36,225 telephone calls. And out of this only 2,724 calls for salvation while 36,497 were for prayers. This goes to show that people made use of the media for different reasons. Essentially, those who look for religious growth in their lives know where to get what they are looking for, their spiritual gratification.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the new media on Oklahoma State University college students with regard to their Catholic faith. The impact of new media will be investigated through the following areas: How new media impact the reception of the faith among college students; how this will impact on the retention and promotion of the catholic faith; and identify characteristics of new media users and their faith attitude or habits:

RQ1: Which media do Catholic college students prefer to use in receiving evangelical messages or information from Church?

RQ2: How often do they use it for spiritual purposes (to learn and deepen their faith through the teaching of the Catholic Church)?

RQ3: Do Catholic college students use websites or new media that is spiritual in content?

RQ4: Do college students use new media as a means of worship?

RQ5: Does new media help them feel closer to God or feel more connected to the Church?

RQ6: What gratifications do they seek in relation to their spiritual growth or connection with the Church through new media?

These research questions are exploratory. Marshall and Rossman (2006) noted that exploratory questions investigate phenomenon little understood. This is because the nature of the problem investigated has not received much attention, hence, little or nothing is known about it. Creswell (2007) observed that qualitative research questions are often open-ended, evolving, and non-directional; restate the purpose of the study in more specific terms. These research questions take the above points into considerations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) noted that methods are the tools that researchers use to collect data. They argue that these techniques used in learning about social reality enable the researcher to collect data from individuals, groups, and texts in any medium.

Harding (1987) defines research methods as:

...a technique for...gathering evidence. One could reasonably argue that all evidence-gathering techniques fall into of the three categories: Listening to (or interrogating) informants, observe behavior, or examining historical traces and records (p. 2)

The method for this research work is listening to informants by way of interview.

Because this research work seeks to understand social meaning people attribute to objects of mass media, this work will be qualitative in approach.

Creswell (2007) defined qualitative research method as "...an inquiry process of understanding based on a distinct methodological tradition of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting." (p. 249). This suggests that qualitative research work extracts meaning from the data. It focuses more on words and texts unlike quantitative research methods that focuses on numbers.

The overarching premise of this research paper is that the mass media can be an instrument to spread the Gospel among college students. In this sense, the study seeks to understand ways and means the mass media can be used to achieve this purpose. This

approach finds its meaning within the interpretive paradigm. Hesse-Biber et al. (2011) noted that interpretive approaches “presuppose meaning is constructed via the interaction between humans or between humans and objects” (p.17). This process makes sense when interpretive approaches are seen from the perspective of hermeneutic tradition. Hesse-Biber et al. (2011) further noted that hermeneutic tradition “is about seeking deep understanding by interpreting the meaning that interactions, actions, and objects have for people. This perspective posits that the only way to understand social reality is from the perspective of those enmeshed within it” (p.17). Hence, in the context of this research paper the meaning comes from the use of the media (object) whose effect creates the social reality in our world today. However, because of the fact that not much is known in this area of study, this work will be exploratory.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews which is an aspect of the in-depth interview. Robson (1993) noted that the interview is a commonly used method because it seems to be a relatively straightforward and non-problematic way of finding things out. And so, Hesse-Biber et al. (2011) noted that in-depth interview is “a particular kind of conversation between the researcher and the interviewee that requires active asking and listening. The process is a meaning-making endeavor embarked on as a partnership between the interviewee and his or her respondent” (p.94). Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1990) defined it as interview in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined. Instead, they rely on social interaction between the researcher and the informant. Punch (1998) described it as a way to understand the complex behavior of people without imposing any *a priori*

categorization, which might limit the field of inquiry. Again, because of the thrust of this research paper, this particular method of in depth interview is fitting for it. Hesse-Biber et al. (2011) noted that in depth interview is issue oriented. This is the case because this research has the issue of the media as its impacts on religious messages to focus on and to gain information on it from the interviewees. Patton (2002) remarked that unstructured or in depth interview is a natural extension of participant observation because it so often occurs as a part of on going participant observation fieldwork. He further argued that it relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction. Basically, the goal, therefore, is to gain rich qualitative data from the perspective of the interviewees.

Sample

The sample for this research was a purposive sample of Catholic college students at a large Midwestern university. Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond and McCroskey (2008) noted that a sample referred “to the people or units that a researcher actually includes in the study” (p. 282). They were of the view that samples are necessary because it is impossible to include all the members of the population. Hesse-Biber et al. (2011) said that “purposive samples are respondents chosen to participate in a study based on their particular characteristics as determined by the specific goals of the research project” (p 55). In this case, the particular characteristics that qualify them to be chosen for this research are: They are active members of the Catholic Church and they are college students. There are instances where these samples can produce useful information and rich data. Riddle et al. (2002) in their study to examine the non-verbal behaviors displaced in physician-patient interactions used convenience sample.

Hesse-Bibler et al. (2011) gave the reason for convenience sample as “respondent who happens to be available and willing to participate in the research project and whose general characteristics fit the research study’s general goals” (p. 55). The reason for the choice of this sample group is because they are youths who are technologically savvy, spend much of their time on different forms of the media, and are conversant with current events in the world of today. Again, people within this demographic group are more drawn to the media than other demographic groups. Another reason for the choice of this research group is their availability and easy access to the researcher. The sample for this research will be students who are members of the Catholic Church Catholics. Again, they believe in all that the Catholic Church teaches, the Bible and the mission- thrust that Jesus Christ entrusted to his disciples in the New Testament. The choice of these subjects is because they are active members of the Catholic Church and participate in the program and activities of the Church.

The researcher interviewed 15 students and each interview lasted for about one hour. This was done to enable the researcher have enough time with each respondent and have detailed interview with each of them. The gender preference was eight male and eight female or equal mix of males and females. But during the course of the interview after interviewing the 15 respondent, the researcher noted that they were pretty much having the same idea. And so, the research felt that there was no need going further to interview the 16 respondent. The age bracket of those interviewed was from 20 to 24. The interview was held in the conference hall of Catholic Church of the University campus.

Recruitment

To recruit candidates for this research interview, the researcher with utilized snowball sampling. Dattalo (2008) noted that snowball sampling is a sampling from a known network. This is a kind of sampling that relies on ‘contact to other contacts’. The researcher thinks that this is a better method of recruitment for college students that count so much on peer-interest-dynamics. *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide* said snowball sampling is “considered a type of purposive sampling. In this method, participants or informants with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study.” This is a kind of chain referral sampling. The key informants to this study are those students the researcher knows and whose network the researcher relies on for the recruitment of others.

Consent

Lincoln (2008) noted that “all research with human subjects, regardless of level of risk, has become the focus of increased regulation and oversight” (p.223). This is actually the work of Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher obtained the IRB permission before going into the research. Collecting data, the researcher complied with the IRB ethical regulations concerning the protection of the human subjects. Lincoln (2008) observed that these ethical codes include “informed consent, deception, privacy of records, and confidentiality and protection of research participants’ identities” (p.223). Both the safety, privacy and the confidentiality of the human subjects were duly observed. Christians (2008) remarked that “confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. All personal data ought to be secured or concealed

and made public only behind a shield of anonymity” (p. 193). The human subjects for this research signed the informed consent form that showed their free, voluntary and willingness to participate in the interview.

Fine, Weis, Wessen, and Wong (2000) noted that this practice of informed consent reminds us of our accountability and position. They were of the view that informed consent is the basis of dialogue and mediation between the researcher and the researched. Smith (2008) observed that “The principle of informed consent is based on the right of individuals to give consent to participate once they have been informed about the project and believe that they understand the project” (p. 131). They also noted in some jurisdictions, this right does not necessarily apply to children, prisoners, or people who have a mental illness. These people mentioned are either impaired by sickness or are incapable to give consent because of age or lack the freedom to give their consent.

The importance of this form as Fine, Weis, Wessen, and Wong (2000) argued is that it establishes the concrete power relation between the researcher and the researched. Despite this advantage, the practice is still fraught with some concerns on the part of the researched. Smith (2008) mentioned some of these concerns to include “bleeding of knowledge away from collective protection through individual participation in research” (p. 131) and “the nature of what it really means to be informed for people who may not be literate or well educated, who may not speak the language of the researcher” (p.132). These concerns may be due to the fact the issue is framed more around the concept of human rights rather than principles and values.

The researcher owes it to the researched to be fair, respectful and honest with them. All the human subjects were free to withdraw at any point in time during the

interview. It must be noted that none of them withdrew although one person was not interviewed as the same data kept on emerging. It must be observed that the human subjects were not at any potential risk arising from the interview. They were not exposed to any danger or harm but to elicit their views with regard to how the media can be used in the dissemination of the evangelical messages among college teens. To ensure their privacy, the researcher during the process did not print or record the names of the participants but rather identified each by age and gender.

Interview Procedures

Before the interview, the researcher explained to the subjects the necessity of the consent form and how it protects their interests and safety. After this, all the subjects duly signed the consent form before the interview started and it was kept in a secured place by the researcher. The researcher made sure that the venue of the interview was well kept and secured. The interviewees were duly informed of the venue, date and time of the interview. In addition to this, the researcher made use sure that the audio tape recorders that were used were in order. The researcher used three (3) audio tape recorders to make sure that the interview was well recorded and to circumvent any untoward recording mishap. This helped the researcher to concentrate fully on the discussion rather than trying to juggle between the conversation and note noting.

To make sure the interview is properly conducted the researcher conducted a pilot interview. This is to enable the researcher to know the reliability of the equipment, the usefulness of the questions in evoking the proper responses, and the necessary familiarity with the venue of the interview. The researcher through this process established a rapport with the interviewees. During the interview each subject was identified either as male or

female. Another identification of the subject will be his or her age. This is done to protect the identity of the interviewees and to ensure the confidentiality that is required the research. After the interview, the researcher hand transcribed the interview himself. This enabled the researcher to re-read and understand the interview well. After doing this, the researcher, coded the emerging themes. This is to bring out the salient points therein that were recurring all through the interview.

Analysis

Creswell (2007) noted that data analysis has to do with "...reducing the data into themes, through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion" (p.148). This is the process that the researcher has to undergo in making sense out of the data. Commenting on three different perspectives of these authors on qualitative research analysis, namely, Madison (2005), Huberman and Miles(1994) and Walcott (1994), Creswell observed, thus,

All three authors comment on the central steps of coding the data (reducing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names or the segments), combining the codes into broader categories or themes, and displaying and making comparisons in the data graphs, tables, and charts. These are the core elements of qualitative data analysis (p. 148).

These processes are not extraneous to the process but rather are custom-built. They are interlaced with each other within the process. To this end, they form the organic whole of the one unique process. Creswell (2007) remarked that data collection, data analysis and report are not distinct steps in the process but rather interrelated and are usually done concurrently in the research process.

At the end of the interview, the researcher transcribed the interview verbatim in order to get the clear information from the interviewees. According to Hesse-Biber et al. (2011), “Transcribing research data is interactive and engages the researcher in the process of deep listening, analysis, and interpretation.” (p. 304). Through this process of transcription the researcher gets more involved with the data and so enhances the trustworthiness of the data collection process.

Sequel to the organization of the data, the researcher continued with the analysis by getting a sense of the whole database. Agar (1980) was of the view that researchers “... read the transcripts in their entirety several times. Immerse yourself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts.” (p.103). The researcher wrote memos in the margins of the transcripts that helped in exploring the data in this initial process. These memos were in the form of short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that occur to the researcher in the process of going back and forth through the transcripts.

After this is done, the researcher coded the transcribed interview to see the patterns that emerged from the process. Hesse-Biber et al. (2011) noted that “Coding is the analysis strategy many qualitative researchers employ to help them locate themes, patterns, ideas, and concepts that may exist within their data” (p. 30). This helped the researcher to interpret the data in order to see how the research questions were answered. Creswell (2007) noted that code or category formation is at the heart of qualitative data analysis. In doing this, the researcher reflected on the larger thoughts present in the data to form initial category. This was followed by finding evidences in the data to support each.

The researcher then described, classify or interpret the findings. Creswell (2007) observed that “Here researchers describe in detail, develop themes or dimensions through some classification system, and provide an interpretation in light of their own views or views of perspectives in the literature.” (p. 151). This states the final result of the research based on the evidences that emerge through the data.

Credibility

To establish the “trustworthiness” of the study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) used unique terms, such as “credibility,” “authenticity,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and “confirmability,” as “the naturalist’s equivalents” for “internal invalidation,” “external validation,” “reliability,” and “objectivity,” (p300). After the interview the researcher transcribed and coded the interview. Through this process the researcher identified the recurring themes. In this case, when a particular theme/themes run/ runs across the whole of interview, one can assume that the source(s) of such findings are credible. In line with this, Eisner (1991) noted that to demonstrate credibility, the weight of evidence should be persuasive. Olesen (2008) see the task of credibility as “...how to indicate that the claims produced are less false, less perverse, and less partial...” (p. 339-340). This calls for the responsibility of the researcher to scrutinize the sources of data and methods of the research process.

The researcher in carrying out this research is not free from bias. This results from the different expectations and ideas each person has with regard to the results and the process. To overcome bias in this research, the researcher sought credibility. Creswell (2007) noted that naturalistic the researcher looks for confirmability rather than objectivity in establishing the value of data. This can be achieved by confirming with

sources of data, methods of investigation and experts. As Eisner (1991) noted “we seek a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility, that allows us to feel confident about our observations, interpretations, and conclusions” (p.110). The check back and feedback that the researcher did with the sources of the data, methods and experts will established credibility.

Verification

Creswell (2007) noted that verification is the first step in achieving validity of a research project. The researcher read the transcribed notes over several times to obtain an overall view of the interview. From the transcripts significant phrases or sentences that pertain directly to the interviewees were identified. Meanings are then formulated from the significant statements and phrases. The formulated meanings are assembled into themes allowing for the emergence of themes common to all the participants.

The results are then integrated into an in-depth, exhaustive description of the phenomenon. With the recurring themes identified and the findings made, the researcher took the findings to the interviewees in order to double check whether the findings are in tandem with their thoughts. Since the interviewees are the sources of knowledge getting back to them after the whole process re-enforces the findings and removes biases of the researcher. Meadows and Morse (2001) observed that methodological rigor is attained through the application of verification, validation and validity. Where necessary the interviewee(s) clarified the researcher in order to make the points clearer. When the interviewees accepted the findings as representing their thoughts, the researcher verified the sources of his findings. The researcher had a follow-up interview to clarify and

understand very well what some the respondents said that was not clear. This gave the researcher the assurance that his findings are real and verified by the sources.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The data produced came from respondents' interviews. Six major themes emerged from these respondents' interviews. They include: a) everyday use of new media; b) new media as a new channel the youth are familiar with; c) the catholic Church is buried in tradition; d) importance of credible sources; e) failure to programs toward the youth: and f) positive Effects of Christian Media Content.

Everyday Use of New Media

The first theme that emerged was everyday use of the new media. All of the respondents described their frequent use of the new media. They noted they used new media as a part of their everyday life. In their words, the respondents noted: Respondent 1 (Female, 20): "A lot of time, mostly the Internet and I use the computer a lot." Respondent 2 (Male, 23): "I frequent the internet probably four to six hours a day." Respondent 3 (Male, 24): "Several hours a day. Respondent 4 (Female, 20): "All the time. Almost every day I am on the Internet." Respondent 5 (Male, 20): "Daily I use the computer. I would say all times. I always have a cell phone and computer on twenty-four hours a day."

These respondents, like the rest, noted their constant use of the new media. The new media occupies an important place in their lives as college students. It is an everyday staple in their lives and communication.

Building on this theme of the respondents and their everyday use of the new media is using it to keep in touch with friends and families. This need necessitated their being constantly connected through new media. These respondents noted the necessity of the new media in order to connect with their friends and families when asked why they made use of the new media.

Respondent 2 (Male, 23): To keep in touch with my friends.

Respondent 6 (Female 20): I use it to keep in touch with people like family that I love in New York. It is hard sometimes to make sure you are available at the same time to do a phone call, or you call them and the hour is different and stuff. And even I have friends from Spain and stuff that from World Youth Day. And so it is really just to keep in touch with people.

Respondent 7 (Male 23): Mostly to stay connected with all my friends.

Respondent 15 (Female 20): It is a way to keep in contact with people that most of the time you wouldn't have time to contact with I like high school especially when I moved I was able to keep contact with some of the people I want grade school with. It was beneficial in a lot of ways.

Keeping in touch with friends and families is very important to the respondents, and the new media provide a means and a way to stay connected with their circles of intimacy. The need to maintain this flow of communication derives from the usage of the new

media. As the world becomes smaller and smaller because of the use of the new media, the college students, who are the technology generation, are emerged in the world of the new media.

Another aspect of the everyday use theme is the use of the new media to gather information. The new media provide easily accessible and constant sources of information. The respondents use new media to stay informed about respondents they care about. In their own words they described the vital role new media play in their ability to obtain information: Respondent 3 (Male, 24): "A lot of information comes on very quickly." Respondent 2 (Male, 23): "Sometimes to gather information for school research." Respondent 7 (Male, 23): "Get information that is going on in all aspects of the world." Respondent 1 (Female, 20): "It is the easy way to hear what is happening in other people's lives. Or if there is anything big going on like when we had the earthquake. And it keeps you up-to-date sometimes." Respondent 7 (Male, 23): "Yes! Whenever I need something that interests me, or looking for something I would say that I would usually turn to the media or the Internet, especially if I had a specific question." These respondents and others interviewed use the new media as a source for gaining information. People want to be in the know, and the new media serve as a vehicle to access information happening around them and in the world at large. This information is not limited to the news, but it includes other things important to them. The new media with its instantaneous provision of information makes the subjects reliant on it for information.

The information the respondents sought at times was faith-related information. Some of them use the new media to know certain things about their faith. They accessed this program through the use of the Internet.

Respondent 8 (Male, 23): I think the media can be a great resource for people to grow in their faith. I have a couple of friends that watch EWTN (Eternal Word television network), they are watching “The Journey Home” guests’ stories and those of other people they come across from TV, and it provokes them to investigate the Church and one day become Catholic themselves.

Respondent 9 (Female 20): I think a lot of people, especially the students, use the Internet to find information, probably about the faith as well.

Respondent 7 (Male 23): Yes! I would say that the Internet is very helpful because if you where to look for stuff like that you can always find it. I had instances like that where if someone would ask me something about a Bible verse or something like that, if you don’t have it right there with you, you can always look it up very quickly on-line.

These respondents know the importance of learning from new media. It serves not only as a means of keeping in touch with friends and families but also as a means of getting information about God for the faith and other relevant matters. The internet makes information handy and accessible at any given time.

New Media as a Channel the Youth are Familiar With

The generation that makes up the respondents of this research is technologically savvy. Their lives revolve around technology and the new media fuels the use of these gadgets. This is because the common feature of the applications is the worldwide web (Internet). It forms an essential part of their life.

Respondent 10 (Female 21): The generation I have grown up with and the generation following me are growing up with technology. We are growing up with whole means of communication that were not even seen a couple of decades ago. It's kind of like everyone is speaking this new language.

Respondent 11 (Female 20): I use it because I guess that is just today's generation what we do.

Respondent 12 (Male 20): They are getting more and more like personal things, apps and stuff like that on the iPhone.

These respondents see the new media as a language, a form of communication. This is the kind of communication that they have grown up with. It makes sense to them and they are very much in tune with it. As one respondent noted this form of communication is one of the best and easiest way to get their attention because it speaks it speaks directly to them in a manner that they properly understand.

Respondent 10 (Female 21): If you are shouting this wonderful message to us in an old language, you are missing the opportunity to understand

the message. Speak to us in a language we've grown up with. We can hear the beautiful message you send to us.

This mode of communication makes the message accessible to these subjects. This suggests that they are easily turned off to any form of message that does not come to them through the medium of communication. The new media is that communication language that appeals to the college students. And they use it 24/7 in their everyday life.

Respondent 9 (Female, 20): ...They consistently have their phone that is connected to the internet with 24/7 access to it. They use that and are constantly on their phone and iPod, iPad, and everything like that, and computers. So it is becoming more and more people's daily life. It is something they think in their mind they cannot live without.

This respondent and others in this study speak in the language of the new media on a daily basis. It is their way of expressing themselves. Through smart phones, tablets and laptops they have new media at their fingertips 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is something they cannot live without. This suggests that to truly reach them, one must address them in through the channel that appeals to them, which is new media. The new media carries the message to the doorsteps of the college students. In this way it bridges the gap that exist between the sender of the message and the receivers who are the college students. It serves as the bridge builder in this context.

Respondent 3 (Male, 24): Absolutely. Because if you really meet the students where they are, that really helps to get your message out, I think.

Respondent 1 (Female, 20): I think it is a good idea. It is a way of coming to people in a way that they would understand, because these days especially teenagers, high school students and college students are so in tune with social media and electronics, that is their primary form of information and contact of anything. If they can hear the Church's messages through that, I think they would be more receptive to that. And it is a good way to connect with it.

One can say that to speak to this generation it becomes compelling to use new media. Young Catholics may see it as a resourceful tool to get information and to learn about new things. One uses the new media to meet the subjects' generation where they are. It is critical to engage them in their own familiar language on order to capture their attention and keep their interest.

Catholic Church is Buried in Tradition

The 21st century has witnessed tremendous growth in technological communication. It has eased the means and method of communication. As a result, any organization that does not adapt and evolve in using this method of communication is risking its future. This becomes more acute when it comes to the generation that grows up with it and knows it. To this end, respondents said:

Respondent 13 (Female, 20): Maybe we are so based on tradition that it might seem wrong to some people, trying to bring it more and more to the modern world.

Respondent 4 (Female, 20): It is all about tradition. There is nothing new That happens in the Catholic Church...

Respondent 7 (Male, 23): Maybe first they (the Church) are just kind of behind the technology and researching it and developing it in ways that they want to use it. Maybe they do not agree with that. It is a new thing, and maybe they do not agree how it works or something.

The respondents suggest that the Church has not embraced the new technology. They feel that the Church has continued to do things in the same way she has been doing it centuries ago. From the respondents' perspectives, the Church is essentially buried in tradition without being open to the new developments that are taking place. And this could create a disconnect between the Church and the younger generation. Responding to the question of how far the Church has gone in the use of the new media in her evangelical outreach, some respondents suggested lackluster effort on part of the Church in this enterprise.

Respondent 7 (Male, 23): I would say it is almost non-existent. I usually don't find much stuff out there, I guess. If it is something, it is usually something general and not specific.

Respondent 13 (Female, 20): Not very present. The only one I have noticed is the one from Mormons. That one has been on YouTube a lot. It seems to be targeting younger kids, just saying that they are, like, a good person.

Even though it cannot be ruled out that the Church has done a lot in the use of the new media, its efforts from the perspectives of the subjects' generation are not enough. They feel that the Church has not stepped up to the level where it becomes conspicuous and easily seen in the new media. Many of the subjects were of the view that the Church is lagging behind in utilizing new media to communicate the message of the Church.

Respondent 14 (Male, 21): I have not found the Catholic connection, but I think there are a couple out there. I really have not found any connection. I feel there could be a good use...

Respondent 5 (Male, 20): I think it is good, but my point is that I do not find the Catholic message on the new media. I do not know whether it is because of my friends or Catholics are shy. Usually those who send some links are not Catholic. And it is usually to do with some kind of brainwashing.

These respondents felt like the Church is scared of using the new media. Aware of the inherent dangers, the respondents still see something positive and rewarding about the Church using new media to communicate. The respondents in this study see it as a necessary tool in enjoying life in today's world. When asked if the Church can utilize the new media, the subjects gave positive feedback.

Respondent 10 (Female, 21): I think it is a good idea. That is the way people are getting information. And the most important information they can possibly get is growing up in their faith and their spiritual life.

Respondent 1(Female, 20): I think it reinforces that the faith is alive. And not the old thing that you sit here and look at a 50-year-old Bible. It makes them know that we really love our faith and have embraced it and are trying to spread it.

For these respondents, using the new media adds life to the faith. It makes it new and fresh because it comes through a fresh and new medium. This suggests faith the message of is open to new development and does not need to stay cloaked in an outdated garment. This newness makes it attractive to the younger generation. Furthermore, this suggests that the cutting-edge nature of new media could make the message of the Church attractive to the younger generation.

It provides the opportunity to shows young adults that the faith and the Church are alive, and they have something to offer. By using the new media, the Church can communicate the evangelical message through a language the younger generation can relate with and understand. The respondents indicated the Church might be afraid of communicating through new media because of it poses worldly threats that may lead members of the Church astray. Some respondents indicated that the protestant Churches are better at using media to engage and communicate an evangelical message.

Respondent 4 (Male, 20): I mean, I will definitely tell the Church we need to step up our game. I think the big problem is we are scared of it. A lot of people are scared of it. They do not use it because the Internet is a horrible thing and it can screw you up and it can mess up your families, it can bring

up addictions you never knew you had. It can be a horrible thing. But if it is used right it can do, I really believe, can do God's work. So my advice to the Church is not to be scared of it.

Respondent 14 (Male, 21): The only talk show I really know is from the Baptists and Methodists, like the *700 Club* or *ABC Family* and one guy from Texas. You can see they are not Catholics. EWTN is the only Catholic TV station. I really never heard about a Catholic radio station where Catholics teach. It's only the Baptists and people from other denominations.

Respondent 5 (Male, 20): I would say when I have gone to Catholic websites I am usually very, very disappointed. They are not nearly on the level if you go to this ChurchontheMove.com. The website is easy. It is friendly, you know where everything is. You can find everything instantly. You go to the Catholic Church website and you cannot find the Mass time.

These respondents noted that when you check on other churches, their level of application of the use of technology in their ministry is far better than the way the Catholic Church operates. This suggests that integration of technology in evangelization would have tremendous value because it opens the Catholic Church up to the younger generation.

Credibility of Sources

Another theme that emerged was the importance of finding credible sources when using new media. The respondents reported that new media is good for learning

information and that the sources of information are unlimited. But they also recognize that they must be cautious in believing everything they read or access through new media. It was likened to an open market where everything is sold, ranging from the good, the bad, and the ugly. Several respondents were aware of the inherent danger of accepting information, through new media, at face value without know if the source is credible.

Respondent 2 (Male, 23): I think it can be very good, but you have to be cautious. I understand that it's also subject to interpretation, and I have to be careful who is writing it, where it is coming from to make sure I am aware of that, so that I can get what the message is saying, nothing more and nothing less.

Respondent 5 (Male, 20): Well, I will tell you this, the Internet is like talking about a double-edged sword. I mean, the Internet can totally ruin you. I mean it can ruin you as a man. We have sexual pressure today. I mean, if you Google anything and you have images come up like pornography...I mean, it's everywhere.

Respondent 15 (Female, 20): I can actually see it in both ways that it is strongly misused today by a lot of people because it causes a lot of harm. Like Facebook, I know, even Myspace and everything, they hurt young girls, like bullying and stuff goes on.

Respondent 3 (Male, 24): One of the areas that is a very dangerous place you send somebody is the Internet. Because there are many sources that

can easily mislead.

The respondents recognized that new media is fraught with the tendency to be easily misused because the Internet is an open-ended source of information. No one has total and complete control of what comes out of it. Respondents reported that one of the inherent dangers of the use of the new media is the issue of anonymity. It is open both for the mature and the immature, or professional and non-professional on any issue. Some can claim to be expert or someone or someone they are not. No one is in control or in charge of this information landscape, which puts the credibility of the new media in question according to the respondents.

Respondent 1 (Female, 20): There is always a danger, I guess. Because there are going to be people who put out what is not true.

Respondent 2 (Male, 23): I would say that is definitely a real danger. There was a Facebook page some time ago that just went from bad to worse. It was a page called "Ask the Priest," and the problem with the page was that the page was open to the public, so people would submit their question and you have various members of the laity or maybe even people who were not Catholic trying to answer the questions. This poses a problem and is also the reason why I completely stayed away from the blogs.

The respondents expressed that anonymity is at the root of the issue of finding credible sources. Some people post things but do not have the competency to do so. This makes the source problematic. But they also acknowledge that not all of the information found

on the new media is suspect. There are professionals and experts who put across information out there through the new media.

To combat this problem the subjects suggested the Church having official websites that will really portray and put across the position of the Church on issues. This includes the Church's personnel putting up information about the Church and her teachings and positions on issues.

Respondent 11 (Female, 20): It would have to be from a source that is respected among the people of my generation. Because it's kind of like the same thing I said about Facebook. I get information through the people who I trust already because they are my Facebook friends' circle. It's got to be from a respectable source.

Respondent 3 (Male, 24): If it is something, let's say Fr. Stuart put something on Facebook or any of the priests I know that are on Facebook accounts, or someone that I know that I trusted, if somebody like that put something religious on there, then that would be something I would read and look into it.

So the source is very important.

Respondent 2 (Male, 23): It was very valuable because he was a Catholic priest making this blog about situations and things occurring in our world today. It was a very useful source to help me prepare myself, whatever the world throws at me.

The issues of trust and credibility are important to respondents. They want to know whether the person who is sending the message knows what he or she is communicating. With respect to gaining information about the church, they want to know whether person-sharing information has the confidence of the Church, which shows he or she has the competence to speak and write on behalf of the Church. They would also want to know whether the source is credible. This means the source must have the quality of believability and be able to teach and portray what the Church teaches in an authentic and reliable way.

Failure to Program Towards Youth

Respondents' comments revealed that the Catholic Church does have some programs in the new media, but these programs are not targeted to the younger generation. These programs appeal to those who have already found their faith, unlike the youth who are still searching for their faith. Some of the respondents noted that these programs are not geared toward building up their own faith:

Respondent 5 (Male 20): I have gone to EWTN, and I am just, like, what am I watching? Sometimes I will go to EWTN, and it would be kind of boring. Like nothing is really capturing my attention.

Respondent 2 (Male 23): The talk shows seem to talk to people who have already found their faith and who are already well-developed Catholic and things like that. I don't think they reach out to us much at the age level of

college students with the mentality that they are still trying to find out those answers. They don't know who they are – we are discerning and there are different kinds of discernment.

Respondent 1 (Female 20) I think if they have shows geared toward college students and young adults that would be a lot better. But a lot of it outside Mass and specific prayers, a lot of it is little kids' programs. They do not have programs that are geared toward the young adults.

These respondents noted that there is a vacuum in the programs because the college student or young adult is not often targeted. The programs do not capture their attention and interest. They need to be directed toward young adults specifically in order to captivate their interest and hold their attention. The available program tend more toward people who have already found their faith unlike the respondents of this research who still discerning their faith.

Respondent 2 (Male, 23): It touches more on the older person's discernment Level, Most of the programs, from what I have seen, discuss topics of discernment for someone going through the later stages of their lives and not the earliest stages of their lives. If they try to gear it more to younger people in their typically uneducated mindset or searching mindset that they have. I think that would be very good for that program.

Respondent 5 (Male, 20): Every time I have to EWTN I have been kind of disappointed with the delivery. The shows, they look like they're from

the 1980s. The website is like they are 15 years old. I think the media is something that could be utilized really to reach out to people and get them back. Definitely among young people, because we are on the Internet all the time.

These respondents feel that when programs are directed toward them it will go a long way to help them in their faith. These programs must take into account that they are in the discerning stage of their lives. They recognize that they need to be directed and guided in their faith journey. Because the programs are not tailored to them that and do not speak in language they understand. They fail to pay attention. Respondent 2 (Male, 23) remarked that he or his friends have observed that these programs are not geared toward people of their age group, but appeal more to older audiences. This suggested that the Church could reach young adults if the create content geared toward the college level or even the high school audience, as this would make it have a more wide-spread view and vantage point.

Positive Affects of Christian Media Content

The subjects interviewed noted when they do find Christian media they relate with, such as Christian music, they derive gratification from using this new media with regard to their faith journey. They noted that listening to Christian music and receiving religious content from the media makes them feel (a) inspired, (b) happy, (c) focused, positive and (d) even closer to God.

Respondent 4 (Female, 20): I feel very inspired and also as an individual I feel like being different. I like listening to Christian music. It's something that the whole campus does not listen to. Maybe I feel a bit unique about that, to be able to listen to something no one listens to, or a huge majority of people do not listen to. Praise and worship music definitely inspires me. It makes me focus on Christ.

Respondent 13 (Female, 20): Well, as soon as I listened to the words, it kind of made me think about things in my own life. And sometimes when I listened to things more religious, I feel like it brings me closer to the Church. Sometimes everyday things seem to pull me away, but it is like I am affected by the Holy Spirit again.

Respondent 2 (Male, 23): Well, I would definitely say that they definitely bring me closer to God. You know, the Liturgy of the Hours is something where you stop and pray. When you are praying I do not know how much closer to God you get other than that. And certainly the hope for me is it helps me keep my spiritual life in a favorable state and helps me stay in communion with the holy Catholic Church.

These respondents reported how gratifying Christian music and media religious content can be. They derive joy and happiness when using media with a spiritual or evangelical message. It enriches their lives and helps them to be more positive in their everyday lives.

Respondent 13 (Female, 20): I like them because it kind of reminds me that there are other things on television that are more enriching to my soul. And I always feel more relieved and better once I watched them with my family because it connects the soul.

Respondent 6 (Female, 20): It makes me feel real good. There are times when you like you need to go to Church because that is just what you need either because you are stressed out or upset about something. And so, if I cannot to Church whenever it is 10 pm at night, obviously, then I usually try to listen to music and it helps me relax and stay positive. And be a little bit more relying on God for whatever I need.

Respondent 10 (Female, 21): Music can be a beautiful form of prayer. Some of the lyrics are really, really convincing. The lyrics sound right inside my heart. Some of them are less deep, they are really simple lyrics. But there are conferences I have gone to where they sang such songs, then I will remember that moment of prayer. That moment of feeling that the body of Christ is there with me. And so, the songs will take me back to the feeling I had on that retreat and how close I was with the Lord and how I want to find that again.

These respondents received feelings of happiness, being inspired, growing closer to God and being positive, by listening to Christian music or receiving religious content through the new media, which is in line with the uses and gratification theory of this research

work. This theory of uses and gratification theory espouses that people go to the media for different reasons that they seek to gratify.

However, there are other specific needs which the subjects noted the new media provide and gratify them, such as happiness, the need for God, and the need to be positive and focused.

Need for Happiness: Many respondents noted that listening to Christian music and receiving religious content through the media makes them to feel happy. Respondents suggested that the stress that comes with a busy lifestyle can be eased by using new media with a spiritual message that comes from a credible source, such as the Church. Respondent 5 (Male, 20) noted that Christian music makes him happy. It keeps him peaceful and gives him a lot of hope. In her view, Respondent 9 (Female, 20) noted that listening to Christian music is a great way to come to the end of the day. It releases some stress and makes her forget all her troubles of the day. The need to be happy propels the subjects to go to seek Christian media either by way of listening to Christian music or by way of watching some Christian program or by reading faith-based articles to give them some sense of succor and relief, thereby making them feel happy. In the same vein, Respondent 1(Female, 20) observed, “Last year, there was a phase where I just had my radio on K-Love station, which is a good Christian station. And in general I was a lot happier and the situation looks better. It really makes my day to go better.” The new media provide the means to make the subject to be happy. That is the need that is

gratified through listening to Christian Music either online, You Tube or through other applications on their gadgets which the new media guarantee.

Need for God: Some of the respondents expressed their need to be connected to God. Because time constraints may not permit one to be in the Church when one may need it for some private and quiet time with God, at times the media provide a means of drawing close to God according to the respondents. They indicated that using spiritual media can enhance personal and private moments with God. In this regard, Respondent 1 (Female, 20) observed that Christian music helps her get closer to God. This accounts for the reason she enjoys praise and worship music, believing that he who sings praises twice. On a similar note, Respondent 9 (Female, 20) noted that music makes her feel she is drawing closer to Christ. This makes her enjoy singing, which for her is another kind of prayer. Respondent 10 (Female, 21) remarked that music equally makes her feel close to God and also how she wants to be close to God. However, apart from media content that is faith-based evokes such poetry in the subjects. Respondent 3 (Male, 24) noted that anything that helps one to deepen his or her knowledge about the Church will definitely make one feel connected to God.

The need to be closer and connected to God drives some of the respondents to listen to Christian music and to seek religious-based articles and programs through the media. This suggests that new media can be utilized by the Church to reach young adults and gratify their need to grow closer to God.

Need to be Positive and Focused: The respondents reported that with all of the influences coming from the media and the society, the need to be focused and positive cannot be overestimated. The college students who are plugged to their gadgets 24 hours a day, 7 days a week consciously recognize this need for a positive attitude. Many of them noted that listening to Christian music and receiving faith-based content from the media helps them to achieve this. Respondent 11 (Female, 20) observed that anytime she listens to Christian music she never feels down afterwards. When she feels down she listens to Christian music and she feels better as a result. This is the positive influence that Christian music has on those who listen to it. Respondent 2 (Male, 23) noted the overall influence of the Christian music. He indicated that the Christian music he listens to applies to all aspects of his life: for him it intertwines in every part and makes one who he or she is. He reported that Christian music always has a positive message and a positive influence on those who listen to it, unlike the vulgar and profane messages that come from secular music. These positive attitudes are part of the gratification one derives from using the new media to listen to Christian music or receiving religious-based content from the new media.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings in this research demonstrate how Uses and Gratifications guides choices of media among those interviewed. Rubin (1994) noted that the deliberate choice of users of media content in order to satisfy their needs is the core concept of the uses and gratification model. The desire to satisfy these needs propels the individual's use of the new media. The theory can also guide the Catholic Church in using new media in reaching out to young Catholics.

Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) observed that the mass media are means used by individuals to connect or disconnect themselves with others. They listed 35 needs taken "from the literature on the social and psychological functions of the mass media" and classified them into five categories:

Cognitive needs - acquiring information, knowledge and understanding.

Affective needs – emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience.

Personal integrative needs – strengthening credibility, confidence, stability and status.

Social integrative needs – strengthening contacts with family and friends.

Tension release needs – escape and diversion (pp.166-167).

In the everyday use of the media one sees the uses and gratification model. The use of the new media every day can be seen to fall under the cognitive and social integrative needs. Here the respondents' need for the use of the new media includes getting

information, knowledge and understanding. The new media provide a plethora of information for the subject who utilizes them for his needs. In the social integrative needs the subjects use the new media as a way of keeping in touch with friends and family members. All the subjects noted the fulfillment of their needs through the use of the new media. Catholic college students, who are far away from home, need to keep in contact with friends and family members cannot be underestimated. And the new media provides the avenue to gratify this need.

Listening to Christian music can be said to fall under the affective and tension release needs. This satisfies the emotional and pleasurable needs of the subjects. The respondents noted that the Christian music provides them the atmosphere for relaxation. It serves and provides both entertainment and spiritual needs.

The need for finding credible sources fall under the personal integrative needs which satisfies the respondents' need for strengthening, credibility, confidence, stability and status. These respondents reported wanting to learn more about their faith. They want to be sure that the information they garner through the new media is credible so as to boost their confidence, stability and status in their faith.

Findings and Research Questions

This research sought to explore the impact of new media on Catholic college students with regard to their faith. Based on the data, six main themes emerged from subject interviews. First, there is the everyday use of the new media. The data supports past research of Ostrowski (2006), who noted that since the late 1980s there had been a continuous growth of the use of the Internet for religious purposes. John Paul II (2002) saw the new media as having great potential in the spread of the evangelical message.

Campbell (2001) noted that the Internet has made possible new ways to explore religious beliefs and experiences.

A second theme emerging from the data was the new media as a new channel with which youths are familiar. Valle (1992) noted that in our world today, the media have become the most important source of information. Hoover (2008) observed that religious issues and trends cannot be fully understood or addressed without the media. Respondent 8 (Male, 23) noted that in this day and age where everything is computerized and Internet compliant and one has access to information wherever one goes, the new media has become a way to reach out to the college students and people of their age. Respondent 7 (Male, 23) similarly remarked that today with technology so many people have the Internet, usually on their phones or laptop or computer, it is so accessible, handy and useful to use the new media communicating with the college students and their generation. Respondent 6 (Female, 20) said that the Catholic Church has a huge opportunity to make use of the new media. But the Catholic Church is missing opportunities to communicate with and evangelize to the younger population in failure to utilize new media optimally.

The third emerging theme was that the Catholic Church is buried in tradition. It is very surprising that respondents noted that the Catholic Church has not made enough effort in using the new media in her course of evangelization. The body of literature shows that the Catholic Church is aware of the awesome benefits that accrue from using the new media in her evangelization. Celli (2009) remarked that the Catholic Church ought to employ every aspect of the new media in her evangelization work. But the current study reveals that the subjects would like to see more from the Catholic Church in

new media. Respondent 14 (Male, 21) said that the new media is a huge area of outreach that the Catholic Church has not really touched yet. Respondent 5 (Male, 20) observed that the Catholic Church has done poorly in this area. He noted that he has gone to Catholic websites and many of them are unfriendly. He felt frustrated because hardly does one find sermons or homilies of priests on-line or even videos of Masses.

The findings also suggest that Catholic college students use media, such as Christian music to gratify their need to feel close to God, happy, focused, and positive. The data supported past research of Brigade (2000) who noted that music is considered an ideal vessel for the evangelistic message. The respondents noted the evangelistic messages imbibed in the Christian music. Respondent 2 (Male, 23) remarked that the message of Christian music is so important because it touches on all aspects of one's life. This makes one grounded in his or her faith because it helps one realize that faith is part of one's life. Respondent 10 (Female, 21) said that the message of the Christian music is so convincing that it sounds right inside her heart. Respondent 6 (Female, 20) noted that Christian music makes her feel real good. She sees it as a way of expressing herself a little more without having room for inappropriateness. Respondent 11 (Female, 20) remarked that Christian music and artists speak to a lot of people through their music because they are big and influential. The subjects accessed Christian music online and through their apps on their smart phones.

In answering RQ 1 (Which media do Catholic college students prefer to use in receiving evangelical messages or information from the Church?), the emergent theme of everyday use of the new media addressed the first research question. The respondents noted their everyday use of new media. The subjects made use of the new media for

various reasons ranging from keeping in touch with their families and friends, getting information both on the Church and other related issues or needs. Essentially, the respondents used the new media to garner information about the Church. The Internet with its unlimited access to information makes it handy for the subjects to seek information that borders on their faith. This includes: You Tube, Facebook, Twitter, and other apps that make operate with the Internet.

The second theme that addressed the first research question is the new media as a new language the youth are familiar with. The respondents preferred the new media as a vehicle for receiving evangelical messages or information from the Church. They saw the new media as a form of language they are familiar with. The subjects' demographics is defined by technology. Elmore (2010) noted that "Theirs is the world of the iPod, iBook, iPhone, iChat, iMovie, iPad and iTunes" (p.13). Their dependence on technology makes it easy for them to receive evangelical messages or information from the Church through the new media. The respondents themselves noted that to use the new media as medium of communication is to meet them where they are because it speaks directly to them in a manner they understood.

In answering RQ 2 (How often do they use it for spiritual purposes (to learn and deepen their faith through the teaching of the Catholic Church)?, the emergent theme of everyday use of new media indicated that the subjects frequently used the new media that is spiritual in content and for spiritual purposes. The respondents noted their use of the new media to read articles about the Church in order to learn more about their faith. Some of them noted that they have used new media like You-tube to watch programs that spiritual in content or Facebook. Respondent 3 (Male, 24) remarked how he learned more

about Our Lady of Guadalupe by following a Catholic artist on his Facebook. Respondent 4 (Female, 20) noted how she would exchange interesting articles and videos on the World Youth Day or on the Pope with her friends.

In answering RQ 3 (Do Catholic college students use new media that is spiritual in content?), the importance of credible sources emerged because the desire and the need to use websites that are spiritual in content and for spiritual purposes the importance of credible sources emerged. Respondents wanted to be sure that what they consume on the new media is from a credible source - the Church. They understood the inherent danger the new media is fraught with where nobody controls what is posted or cross check the veracity of the content. For this reason, the respondents noted the need for the Church to use official websites or other avenues where they can use them to reach the Church and be sure of the credibility of what they consume from the new media.

Respondents reported they often on the new media. They often looked for articles, videos, messages that are spiritual in content and to use for spiritual purposes but they observed that the Church has not stepped up to fully embrace the use of the new media in evangelizing the Catholic college students. They observed that the Church is buried in tradition. Respondent 13 (Female, 20) noted that the Church might be seeing it as something wrong to bring the evangelical message to the world through the new media. Respondent 7 (Male, 23) indicated that the Church is lagging behind technology. All these suggest that the subjects often used new media that is spiritual in content and for spiritual purposes, and this account their observation that the Church has not embraced it fully to their own advantage.

The respondents were frequently using websites that are spiritual in content and for spiritual purposes that they noted the lack in materials they came across as not tailored to the people within their age group. They noted that the materials often found appealed to older people who have already found their faith unlike people of their age group who are still on the process of discerning and searching for their faith. Respondent 7 (Male, 23) observed that the materials often found do not appeal to the subjects' age group. Respondent 5 (Male, 20) noted his disappointment and frustration because for him the delivery, the shows looked like they are from the 1980s. They do not appeal to this age group and so they draw their attention and interest. The desire and need to make use of websites that are spiritual in content and for spiritual purposes are there but quite often some of the materials found do not gear toward the age demographic.

In answering RQ 4 (Do Catholic college students use new media as means of worship?), the common theme that emerged among the respondents that listening to Christian music and getting religious content from new media makes one feel closer to God addressed these research questions. In particular, Christian music, which they accessed, online was seen as a form of praise and worship. Respondent 1 (Female, 20) said "I like praise and worship and as it said that he who sings twice praises twice". The subjects used this form of Christian music as a means to praise and worship God.

In answering RQ 5 (Does new media help them feel closer to God or feel more connected to the Church?), new media provides the Catholic college students an opportunity to feel closer to God and connected to the Church through Christian music, articles and videos of that are spiritual in content. And this makes them to feel closer to God. Respondent 9 (Female, 20) noted that she enjoyed singing and for her it is another

kind of prayer. In addition to this, some of the subjects noted that they have used their Facebook to request for prayer and to pray together as a community. Through the new media the subjects have learned more about the Church. And this has led to a more appreciation of the Church by the subjects. Respondent 9 (Female, 20) remarked that “My iPod helps me a lot about my faith” Through these apps on their laptop and smart phones the subjects have access to the Church like daily readings at Mass, prayers and some formats for devotions. Through these processes the subjects were more connected to the Church.

In answering RQ 6 (What gratifications do they seek in relation to their spiritual growth or connection with the Church through the new media?), this research question was addressed by these common themes that emerged: everyday use of the new media and that listening to Christian music and getting religious content from the new media makes one feel closer to God, happy, focused and positive. The gratifications they sought in relation to their spiritual growth or connection with the Church through new media were the needs to feel closer to God, happy, focused, and positive. The subjects remarked that listening to Christian music and getting religious content from the new media made them felt closer to God, happy, focused and positive. Respondent 8 (Male, 23) noted that Christian music and receiving religious content from the new media brought him closer to God. Respondent 6 (Female, 20) indicated that Christian music helped her to relax and stay positive. While respondent 4 (Female, 20) observed that praise and worship made her to be positive. Listening to Christian music and receiving religious content from new media gratified the respondents’ needs.

Recommendations

The findings of this research go further to support the notion that religious individuals use the new media to reinforce their beliefs. Bedell (2000) noted that religious individuals use the Internet, and they think that religious content is plentiful and have great expectations for the new media. The new media is an effective means to promote evangelical messages among Catholic college students. This is more so as the new media have great positive potential for learning and development of the faith.

New media are better than traditional mass media for disseminating the evangelical message among Catholic college students as it makes evangelical available and more accessible 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to Catholic college students. This is because the respondents of this research are technologically savvy and found it as a medium of communication that appeal more to them. The different forms of the new media: Internet, Facebook, Twitter, iPad, iChat, You Tube, Podcast etc., are used every day by respondents of this research as they see them as a channel congenial to their age. These means should be used to disseminate the evangelical message among Catholic college students.

It is feasible to use Uses and Gratifications theory to explain Catholic college students' use of the new media in their faith-related learning process. Uses and Gratifications theory provides the descriptive application to the new media. It describes needs that facilitate Catholic college students' use of the new media in learning about their faith. These needs include: the need to feel closer to God, happy, focused and positive. The theory focuses on Catholic college students' motives and their self-

perceived needs to be gratified by the use of the new media. Rubin (2002) noted that Uses and Gratification theory is based on the notion that media cannot influence a person unless that individual has some use for that media or its messages. This presents a paradigm that suggests an 'active' participant that makes motivated choices. This approach focuses on Catholic college students' active participation by assessing their needs for using the new media. Therefore, Uses and Gratification theory indicates that Catholic college students consciously chose the medium that could satisfy their needs, and they are able to recognize their reasons for making media choice.

The study concludes that the employment of new media in the disseminating of evangelical message among Catholic college students is an effective means. This research further illuminates the relationship between the new media and the needs of the receiving agent. This goes to support the notion that the receiving agent brings his or her needs to the new media and not vice versa. The receiving agent is an active agent and not a passive agent.

This research fills the knowledge gap that has existed because of the limited research in this area of study. It brings to the fore the huge potential impact of the new media on Catholic college students as it concerns their faith. Through this means a new vista in the evangelizing of Catholic college students is opened. Implementing the findings of this research can do this. This generation seeks the instant gratification that the new media bring about. They want immediate answers to their questions. Many of the respondents noted that they want the Catholic Church to enmesh herself in the new media movement. They gave instances with some of the new generation denominations where they live, such as "Life Church" and "Church on the Move". These denominations

employ the use of the new media and technology in their ministries. They upload every version of their service, worship, and the sermon of their pastors to their websites. This made some of the respondents argue that it enables one not only to hear the sermon at their services but to go home and hear it again so as to have deeper reflection on it. But this is not always the case with the Catholic Church. Where it is done, it is often times an individual effort rather than a required norm for everybody.

In this regard, the new media is the suggested way forward for the Church in her work of evangelizing the Catholic college students. In the course of this research, respondents were in accord with the idea that the new media is the best way to reach out to college students. Many of them noted that with the new media when the Church uses it will make the faith more portable and handy every time. When after the priest's Sunday homily and video clips are uploaded on the website of the parish or the diocese, (as the case may be), it gives the students a second chance of getting to hear what was said in the Church. That way it makes the message sink deeper in the hearts of the college students. In line with this, many of them noted that such a movement will make the faith alive to their age and generation. It equally shows the development and growth of the faith by being accessible to them.

One of the things respondents really spoke about was the need for the Church to follow them daily. This could be done either through Podcast or email. Through the use of email, podcast, even Facebook and Twitter the Church will keep these college students in constant communication with them. This will go a long way to tell these college students that they are appreciated and valued by the Church, and this will definitely encourage them and help them to keep to their faith. Obviously, this involves enormous

work, but it can be done on a parish level where each pastor will have to keep in communication with his parishioners who are in college, and have them linked up with the various Newman Centers of the universities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this research concludes that new media is an effective means to promote evangelical message among Catholic college students. The respondents of this research are technologically savvy. And they have grown up with the new media as a medium of communication. They are at home in the new media hemisphere because they know how to navigate their way through. Any attempt to send any message across to the respondents of this age group without coding it in this channel risks the chance of not getting their attention. More so, the availability and accessibility of the new media in today's world makes it easy on the part of the sender to put across the message to the recipients. The advantages that accrue from the new media are enormous because it reaches millions in a second. This tool should be employed to the advantage of the evangelical message in disseminating it among Catholic college students.

Limitations

The limitations of this research work stem from the fact that the respondents were drawn from one university using convenient sampling. These participants had prior knowledge of the researcher, which could have had affect on the findings. The sample interviewed cannot represent the total population of Catholic college students, but rather speak only for them.

Future Research

Future research can now take up a specific medium like the Podcast and see how effective it can be in the evangelization of the Catholic college students. In doing this, the researcher through qualitative method of research can utilize focus group interviews.

Hesse-Biber et al (2011) noted that focus group interviews "...can be used to shape future research, such as qualitative In-depth interviews or quantitative surveys" (p. 163). This is because the reason for the future research is to help measure the success of Podcast in evangelizing Catholic college students. Hesse-Biber et al. (2011) observed that focus groups are "...used when a program of some kind needs to be evaluated to help measure its success, strengths, and weaknesses and also help qualitatively explain the nature of what is and is not working" (p. 164). Through this process the researcher can know the best medium to be used in evangelizing Catholic college students.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire Protocol

- 1) What media do you use?
- 2) What social media do you use?
- 3) How often do you visit [those sites]? [Will ask about the specific sites the interviewee mentions.]
- 4) Why do you use social networking sites?
- 5) Do you use social media to gather information? If so, what kinds of things?
- 6) Do you write a blog? [What topics do you write about?]
- 7) How would you describe receiving religious messages through the media in general?
- 8) Do you use media to receive religious content? [If needed, provide examples such as music, movies, or articles.]
- 9) Do you listen to Christian music? From what media?
- 10) Do you listen to Christian talk shows? From what media?
- 11) Do you watch Christian programs on television? [What programs and why?]
- 12) Do you use the Internet to find information in association with your faith?
- 13) Do you follow any religious blogs?
- 14) Do you use social media to discuss your faith with others?
- 15) If so, what social media? How often?

Appendix B
IRB Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Monday, December 05, 2011
IRB Application No: AS11130
Proposal Title: The Effective Use of the New Media to Disseminate the Evangelical Message Among College Students
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt
Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 12/4/2012
Principal Investigator(s):
Emmanuel Ugard Nduka Scott Kay Hooper Lewis
201 N. Knoblock 206A Paul Miller
Stillwater, OK 74075 Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research, and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McFerman in 719 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700; beth.mcferman@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,


Sheila Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Letter for announcement

Dear Fellow OSU students,

My name is Emmanuel-Eugard Nduka, a graduate student of the Oklahoma State University. I am researching on the Effective use of the new media to disseminate the evangelical message among college students. For this reason, I am looking for students (Catholics) who will be willing to participate in the interview I intend to conduct as the methodology of my research states, in order to gain useful information that will be of help to my research.

Please if you are interested see me after Mass or contact me either through my phone – 405 880-1994 or e-mail: nwanduka30@yahoo.com

Thank you for accepting to participate

Emmanuel-Eugard Nduka

Oklahoma State Univ IRB
Approved 12/5/11
Expires 12/4/12
IRB # OS-11-130

CONSENT FORM
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

PROJECT TITLE: The Effective Use of the New Media to Disseminate the Evangelical Message among Catholic college students

INVESTIGATORS: Emmanuel Ugard Nduka, B. Phil. (Rome), B. Th. (Rome);
B. S. Oklahoma State University

PURPOSE: This study will examine the use of new media to disseminate the evangelical message among Catholic college students by the Catholic Church

PROCEDURES: You will be interviewed on the use of the new media to spread the evangelical message. The interview will be audio recorded and last approximately one hour.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION: There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION: To help the Catholic Church better understand the use of the new media in evangelizing college students

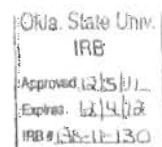
CONFIDENTIALITY: The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

CONTACTS: You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: Emmanuel Ugard Nduka, Paul Miller Hall, Dept. of Mass Communication, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; (405)880-1994. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Sheila Kermlson IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078; 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS: I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:
I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:
I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.



Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date



VITA

Emmanuel-Lugard Nduka

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE NEW MEDIA IN DISSEMINATING THE EVANGELICAL MESSAGE AMONG CATHOLIC COLLGE STUDENTS.

Major Field: Media management

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Mass Communication at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2012.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at Bigard Memorial Seminary,(Pontifical Urban University) Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Theology at Bigard Memorial Seminary,(Pontifical Urban University) Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria.

Experience:

2009- 2012 Associate pastor at St. John the Evangelist and Newman center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, USA.

2006- 2008 Editor-in-chief *The Leader Newspaper* and the director of the Assumpta press, Owerri, Imo state, Nigeria.

2001- 2006 Manager Assumpta press Owerri.

1999- 2001 Assistant Administrator Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri.

Name: Emmanuel-Lugard Nduka

Date of Degree: May, 2012

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE NEW MEDIA TO DISSEMINATE
THE EVANGELICAL MESSAGE AMONG CATHOLIC COLLEGE
STUDENTS.

Pages in Study: 88

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Arts

Major Field: Media Management.

Scope and Method of Study: The scope of this research was to examine Catholic college students' use of new media in order to bring its impact on their faith. To explore this, qualitative method was utilized. And 15 Catholic college students in one of the North Western universities between the ages 20 – 25 were interviewed to generate data for this research.

Findings and Conclusions: The following findings were made: a) everyday use of new media; b) new media as a new channel the youth are familiar with; c) the Catholic Church is buried in tradition; d) importance of credible sources; e) failure to program toward the youth; and f) positive effects of Christian media content.

Based on the findings, this research concludes that the new media is an effective means to promote evangelical message among Catholic college students. The subjects of this research are technologically savvy. And they have grown up with the new media as a medium of communication. They are at home in the new media hemisphere because they know how to navigate their way through. Any attempt to send any message across to the subjects of this age group without coding it in this language risks the chance of not getting their attention. More so, the availability and accessibility of the new media in today's world makes it easy on the part of the sender to put across the message to the recipients. The advantages that accrue from the new media are enormous because it reaches millions in a second. This tool should be employed to the advantage of the evangelical message in disseminating it among Catholic college students.

Adviser Approval: Bobbie Kay Lewis