

MASS MEDIA AND THE COMMUNICATION STYLE OF JESUS

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Abstract

The dynamism and versatility of Jesus Christ communication style cannot be quantified in terms of moral, humor, rebirth and spiritual growth. It is indeed a great virtue of emulation. The media need to borrow leaf from the impactful messages of Jesus and ensures that the credibility of their reportage is unsceptical by their audience. The study is sourced from secondary and The attitude change Theory is utilized in the study theoretical perspectives. The study found that Jesus style of communication effectively changed His adherents behavior and attitudes towards moral development. It also serves as a springboard for the media to modify their reports style by tailoring them towards the rectification of the societal decadence. The study concludes that until the Nigerian media act in the way of Jesus communication style their skewed credibility will far from being revamped. However, the paper recommends total imitation of Jesus humility, agogoaries, rhetorics and complete submission

Methodology

The study utilizes secondary sources such as libraries, Newspapers, Magazines, internet , archives and other desk study.

Theoretical Framework

The Attitude Change Theory was propounded in 1960 by Daniel Katz, Irving Sarnoff and Charles McClintock. Katz and his associates functional approach suggest that a persuasive should be tailored to correspond to the motivational base for which an attitude is held. The theorists suggest that human beings are both rational and irrational depending on the situation, the motivations operating at the time and so forth. They argued that the tendency for people to operate with different ways of thinking has important implications for understanding attitude change. They opine that both attitude formation and change must be understood in terms of the functions that attitude serve for personality. As these functions differ so will the conditions and techniques of attitude change. They contend that unless people know the psychological need which is held by the holding of an attitude, we are in a poor position to predict when and how it will change.

Literature Review

Jesus used a variety of methods for communication. This study will identify twelve reaching techniques and tools that Jesus used to communicate truth.

Homily: A homily is an informal exposition of scripture. This is a common style of teaching in most ministries. Where did Jesus use homilies?

Mathew 5:1; Mathew 13:36, Mark 4:34; Luke 4:16; Luke 5:1-3; Luke 6:19-20; Luke 10:23; Luke 24:25,27 and John 13:14.

Stories: Jesus used several types of stories to convey truth to the crowds;

- Proverbs – A proverb is a story implied in a colourful saying. Mathew 6:24; Mathew 15:14.
- Parables – A parable is a story drawn from an imaginary realm (Mathew 13:3-8; Luke 15:3-7).
- Illustration – An illustration is a story about lives of people. (Luke 10:30-37; Luke 15:11-32).
- Allegories – An allegory is a story interwoven with its interpretation. (John 15:11; John 6:22 – 59).

The Scripture – Jesus used scriptures often to punctuate points in His communication. For instance Jesus communicated through the following scriptures:

Mathew 5:21/ Deuteronomy 5:17

Mathew 15:4/Deuteronomy 5:16

Mathew 11:10/Malachi 3:1

Mathew 13:14/ Isaiah 6:9

Mathew 15:8/Isaiah 29:13

Mathew 19:18/Deuteronomy 5:16f

Mathew 26:31/ Zechariah 13:7

Occasions: Jesus did not make appointments to communicate his message. He used incidental occurrences and events arranged for other purposes. As in the following versus of the Bible:

- Incidental occurrences (John 4:31f; Mark 12:41 – 44).
- Events for other purposes: (John 11:1-46 and John 13:1-16)

Assignments: Jesus was not communicating knowledge to be stored up in the mind. He wanted His followers to act on what he taught. For this reason, Jesus gave challenging assignments to those who followed Him. Examples can be seen in Mathew 10:5f; Luke 10.1f; Mark 6:41; Mark 8:6; Acts 1:4.

Demonstrations: Demonstrations are object lessons incorporating actions. This could be identified in John 2:13-22; John 13:12; Luke 5:4-11; Luke 21:4-6; Mark 9:2 and II Peter 1:166.

Questions: There are over 100 questions asked by Jesus in the Gospels. Questions often provoke thinking in a way that statements do not. The purposes of the questions Jesus asked could be seen in Mark 2:25-26; Mathew 23:17; Mathew 22:45-46; Mathew 16:13; Mark 3:4; Mark 8:29 and Mark 10:3.

Problems: When problems occur there is a space for teaching. It is often a significant opportunity because there is motivation to solve the problem. Problems and lessons can be deduced from Mark 7:1-23; Mark 9:33-37.

Conversations: Jesus listened carefully to the things people were saying and connected his teaching to their words. Notice the topic of conversation in these verses and lessons Jesus wants to integrate. Luke 21:5ff; Mark 8:16ff.

Examples: Another benefit of observation is seeing examples through which to teach. This style of Jesus communication can be seen in Luke 17:18; Mark 9:36-37; Mark 10:13-16.

Exhortation: Jesus' teaching included challenges, rebukes, and commands. Sometimes a part of learning is correcting a wrong belief or behavior. John 4:35; Luke 14:13; John 13:34-35.

Tests: Tests are opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, ability or character. Jesus tested his followers in Mark 8:29; John 6:67; Mark 4:35ff.

Jesus also communicated to the people through:

- Sermons
- Parables
- Miracles
- Illustrations

Painstaking effort would be made to discuss the aforementioned in detail. (<http://www.navigators.org/us/ministries/.../jesus%20use%20of%20teaching.>)

Communication Style of Jesus Through Miracles.

The transformation of water into wine John 2:1-11).

Tenny (1975) opined that John observed that this was the first of Jesus' miracles performed after He had returned to Galilee from the occasion of the Baptism and acknowledge by John the Baptist. He seemed reluctant to accede to his mother's suggestion and indicated that his action from that time onward would be regulated by his "hour" (2:4). He implied that the was living by divine schedule that fixed the timing of His activities and that he could not do something merely to fulfill a request. The fact that he performed the miracle indicated that it accorded with the purpose of God in sending him into the world. Its nature revealed Him as the creator and disclosed his power over the chemical processes of nature. By One word of command He accomplished the transformation that a vine requires several months to produce. The miracle was witnessed by a sufficient number of people to establish its reality.

The healing of nobleman's son (4:46-54).

The second miracle also took place in Cana. Upon Jesus' return from His trip to Jerusalem and Samaria, recorded in John 2:13 – 4:42, He began a ministry in Galilee.

There he was approached by a nobleman, possibly a Courtier of Herod Antipas, who petitioned Him to intervene on behalf of his son, who by seriously ill about twenty miles distant in Capernaum. Again Jesus demurred saying "unless you people see signs and wonders you will not believe" (John 4:48). He virtually accused the nobleman of being an idle curiosity – seeker.

The genuine concern of the latter prompted Jesus' reply "Go your way and tell your son lives" (4:50). Responding in faith the nobleman retraced his steps in Capernaum to learn en route that his son had been healed. Jesus had transcended the noble man's highest expectation; for although He did not visit the sick child he gave ample proof that distance was no obstacle to his power.

The healing of the man at Bethesda (5:1-10).

The third miracle in John's narrative occurred in Jerusalem. Jesus must have performed miracles in Jerusalem on His former visit since Nicodemus referred to "these signs that you do" (John 3:2). The language implies that Jesus had maintained a ministry of healing that was well published. In this instance however, Jesus took the initiative and approached a man who had been waiting at the pool of Bethesda for thirty eight years. Jesus questioned him gently in order to ascertain whether he really deserved healing. It was the test of the man's will; and at Jesus' he stood and walked.

The sign however, had other undertones as well. Because the healing occurred on the Sabbath Jesus was instantly accused of breaking the Law of Moses. Jesus took the occasion to assert His authority, not only over the power of disease, but over the commercial law.

The feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-15). This miracle mentioned in four Gospels, was the watershed of Jesus' Career. It marked the height of his popularity and, as far as the evidence of the gospel goes brought Him the largest audience to which he ever spoke.

Matthew states that those who partook of the food Jesus provided included five thousand men, to say nothing of women and children (Matthew 14:21). To assume he had responsibility for feeding ten thousand people would not strain one's imagination too greatly. Using a small boy's lunch which one of the boys located, Jesus multiplied the simple fare of unleavened barley cakes and pickled fish until everyone in the vast crowd was satisfied.

The walking on the water (John 6:16-21).

Closely connected with the miracle of feeding the five thousand was that of walking on the water. In this event only the disciples were involved. The disciples were struggling to maintain headway on their homeward voyage and were making little if any progress. As they rowed with their backs to the wind, they suddenly noticed a human figure approaching them across the lake. As it gained on them they were terrified and cried out in fear, thinking that they were pursued by a ghost. When Jesus approached them, He said "it is I; do not be afraid". (John 6:20) Jesus wanted His disciples to learn that He was Master of the forces of nature and that he could avert what seemed to be inevitable peril. His presence would be the permanent guarantee of their safety.

The Healing of the blind man (John 9:1-41).

The blind man was congenitally blind which rendered his condition helpless. The real import of this sign, however, does not concern his physical condition so much as it does his inward spiritual consciousness. The healing took place in Jerusalem, where the hostility of Jesus still lingered because of His previous healing on the Sabbath – an offense which the healing of the blind man repeated.

This "sign" is thus a pattern of growing faith and illustrates Jesus' power to change human destiny as He continues the Father's work.

The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44).

This miracle occurred immediately after Jesus' death; in fact, it was one of the contributing factors to His arrest and subsequent condemnation. It involved many factors which do not appear

in the other signs: the seriousness of the occasion, for death is normally final and irreversible; the emotional interest of Jesus in a personal friend; the seemingly irrational delay; the remarkable prayer at the graveside; and its relation to the faith of Lazarus' sister, Mary and Martha, who present two different types of human reaction to the last great critical problem that confronts mankind.

COMMUNICATION STYLE OF JESUS THROUGH SERMONS.

The sermon on the mount:

We will be looking at Mathew's account of this discourse in chapter 5 through 7 of his gospel. The sermon on the mount is the best known part of Jesus' communication not only among Christians but among people in general. Sayings from the mount have become part of our everyday language such as "do unto others"... "judge not", "turn the other cheek" and so on. The sermon is also one of the least understood part of our Lord's communication and certainly the least obeyed. In this day and age when we in the church seem to be looking more and more like the society around us, there may be no better medicine than the Sermon on the Mount. It describes what human life and human community look like when they come under the gracious rule of God. (Accessed from [Http://Bible.Org/Series Page/Sermon](http://Bible.Org/Series Page/Sermon), July 24, 2013)P.1.

Jesus Communication Through Illustrations Mathew 13:2-3; Luke 8:4

Jesus used a lot of illustrations or parables when speaking to the crowds. A parable compares something familiar to something unfamiliar. It helps to understand spiritual truth by using everyday objects and relationships. Parable compare listeners to discover truth while at the same time concealing the truth from those too lazy or too stubborn to see it. For those who are honestly searching, the truth becomes clear.

Communication Style of Jesus through parables/Illustrations.

The parable of the Tares (Mathew 13:24-30)

This is the first of all the parables that touch on kingdom of heaven. Jesus communicated through parables as a symbolic representation of issues in order to provoke thoughtful consideration on the part of the audience.

The keys to understanding its full imports are the sower, the servants, the good seeds, the field, the enemy and the tares. Most people believe that the symbols used represent God, the angels, good people, our world, the devil and bad people.

▪ **The parable of the mustard seed (Mathew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18,19)**

Jesus surveyed the people of his days; he studied the methods of prophets before him; he assessed the effectiveness of their methods on the people; and he foresaw the demands of generations yet unborn. He knew that he had very important message for all. He realized that ordinary preaching and sermonizing would be of little effect. So he adopted very powerful pungent smiles and figures of speech in his communication. He said:

"the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed...which indeed is less than all seeds". (Kay, 2012) p.11.

▪ **The parable of the Leaven.**

He told another parable:

“The kingdom of Heaven is like a leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened. (Mathew 13:33; Luke 13:20,21).

Jesus communicated figuratively to the people in the above parable. The woman is adopted here for effect as you, no doubt know that women are generally charged with various responsibilities of preparing the meal for the family.

So they should be aware of the value ingredients they use to get the family well fed.

This particular woman so regarded the leaven that she not only took it as treasurable, she also hid it in three measures of meal, that is; the breakfast, the lunch and the dinner, until every meal was leavened.

What is leaven any way?

A leaven is a substance used to make dough rise before it is baked. It is the yeast used by bakers, mixed with flour before it is put into the oven for baking bread.

As the baker recognizes the importance of yeast in bread-making so this woman knew the great influence of the leaven in a measure of meal.

▪ **The parable of the hidden treasure.**

The kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up, then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field (Mathew 13:44).

The symbol used for the kingdom in this parable is “Treasure”. Treasures are objects of inestimable value. They are priceless and most desirable. They do not diminish nor wear away. The import of this communication is that things of exceeding value usually come to be found among the lowly, the humble. A treasure in a field just like Jesus Christ himself was born of a carpenter in a manger and not to a king in the palace.

▪ **The Parable of the Pearl.**

“Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of a fine Pearl, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Mathew 13:45&46).

According to the tone of this parable we are all “merchants” in search of fine “pearl”. May be you still remember the story of Adam and Eve. The sojourn in the Garden of delight, their great endowment and inheritance, and the painful disobedience to the Lord, which led to their expulsion from the life of ease and happiness.

Like our forebears we are all merchants looking for the lost inheritance that was owned by God’s decree which was snatched from us by disobedience. The “fine pearl” in the Garden of Eden which was given to Adam and Eve in the beginning as of right. After that great disobedience, it can only be regained by grace after deliberate search.

▪ **The parable of the Draw Net.**

“Again the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down

and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away” (Mathew 13:47&48).

By illustration of the parable of the draw net, the kingdom “is like unto a net. . .” people who live close to water or whose calling is fishing or allied profession, will readily understand the significance of the “net”.

As a matter of fact, Jesus was probably communicating to a section of the people who were definitely fishermen and women, and who would appreciate more by an analogy that is akin to their daily activities.

You will recall that Jesus Christ had used the same method in the parables of Tares and Mustard seed to communicate to farmers; parable of the Leaven to communicate with bakers, cooks and women and the parables of the hidden treasure and the fine pearl to communicate with merchants, traders and the business world.

Jesus, one of the greatest communicators of men, was only using methods and teaching aids that would help his hearers to comprehend his message of salvation and redemption. We are still going to come across other figures and symbols he used to depict the kingdom as we go along. By the time we go through all the parables, we shall find that the message was meant for all people: the poor and the rich, the lowly and the highly placed, workers and employers, the young and the old.

In this parable, Jesus is adopting the net, the sea, fish and vessel to explain to people all over the world who might be living on, by and with waters. We know that the net is an instrument by which fishes are caught. Infact, not fish alone but all things that come within its spread are encompassed in its mesh.

▪ **The parable of the unmerciful servant. (Mathew 18:23-34).**

Of all the parables on and about the kingdom of Heaven, this is one of the obvious most straight forward and easiest to understand. In this parable, the motive of the master, Jesus Christ did not want anything to be hidden, or to be subject of misleading interpretation. What he wanted to communicate was so important, the subject make was so pertinent and the audience’s lives were so directly touched by it that he could not leave anything in doubt. The subject of his sermon and this parable is Mercy. We all need mercy, both as givers and receivers of it. The need for it has nothing to do with position in life. The poor, the rich, the lowly and the highly placed; the subject and the rulers; the patient and the doctor; everybody needs mercy.

▪ **The parable of the labourers in the vineyard. (Mathew 20:1-16).**

In this parable Jesus communicates to his audience on a plethora of fundamental issues. Some of which are:

1. Employer and employee relationship;
2. Matching effort with reward;
3. Differentiating intention from pretension; and
4. Pairing discretion and Justice.

▪ **Parable of the Talents (Mathew 25:14 – 30).**

Towards the end of His ministry, Jesus made his parables full and self explanatory. By now, we know what and who the master and the servant stands for and the relationship of one to another.

The interpretation of the talents too is not hidden. It obviously represents our natural endowments gifts from the creator. The master’s sojourn in distant country for a long

time before his coming merely implies that we shall be left alone, given complete freedom, to do whatever we please with our God given talents. But one day when we least expect, the time of reckoning will descend upon us. Then we shall have to account for all that we did with our talents during the time the master was away and when we were left severally free to do what we desired.

▪ **Why he called himself the bread of life (John 6:35).**

People eat bread to satisfy physical hunger and to sustain physical life. We can satisfy spiritual hunger and sustain spiritual life only by a right relationship with Jesus Christ. No wonder he called himself the bread of life. But bread must be eaten to sustain life and Christ must be invited into our daily walk to sustain spiritual life.

▪ **The significance of His Ascension (Mk 16:19)**

When Jesus ascended into heaven his physical presence left the disciples (Acts 1:9) Jesus sitting at God's right hand signifies the completion of His work, His authority as God and His coronation as king.

Christ is Head of the church (Colossians 1:12-14).

In the bible, the book of Colossians, Jesus Christ is communicated to us as the head of the church. He is the founder, the leader of the highest authority on earth. Jesus miraculous power is displayed (Luke 8:22-25). Jesus finished the sermon he had finished at the hill side near Galilee and returned to Capernaum. As he and his disciples crossed, the sea of Galilee, Jesus calmed a fierce storm. Then in the Gentile Gadarene region, Jesus commanded demons to come out of two men. It is important to note that all the miraculous deeds of Jesus were accomplished by verbal communication.

Communication Strategies of Jesus.

Witt (1983) asserts that Jesus is the Master Communicator. It's the truth. None of us would dispute it. But all of us might ask: "Why bother? Why spend valuable time studying the communication strategies of Jesus, which is surely one of the lesser themes of the Bible?"

To answer this question these three points will be made. First, Jesus Christ is the Great Prophet Moses predicted (Deuteronomy 18:15,18), the Son by whom God has spoken to us in these last days (Hebrews 1:2). He is the only perfect preacher and teacher this world has or will ever know. While His communication strategies are not a prominent theme of the Bible, God's Word does shed some light on them. A study of Jesus' communication strategies can help us gain a deeper appreciation of His prophetic work. Secondly, Jesus continues His prophetic work through His believers on earth. We are included in this select and elect group. Like Jesus, we are communicators of God's Word to others. We are people of whom Jesus can say: "I have given them your word." We are people to whom He can declare: "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me" (Luke 10:16). We have a personal interest in Gospel communication strategies.

The answer for the third part will be introduced with a story: A pastor was at a mental health center, leading a service for the patients. In his sermon, he was trying to raise the issue of life purpose. He stated the question: "Why are we here? Why are we here?" very emphatically and then paused to give the group time for reflection. One of the patients rose and answered the pastor's question. He said: "Pastor, I don't know why you're here. But we're here because we're not all there." I'd like to suggest that when it comes to quality communication of the most

important message of all, we're here (and we need to be here) because we're not all there. Some of us may be farther along than others, but none of us has finally arrived. All of us have things to learn from the Master about how better to communicate the precious Word entrusted to our care. How are we going to approach this subject? We could do it a number of ways. We could do an exhaustive analysis of the Gospels to identify the techniques and strategies Jesus employed in His communication ministry. We could use one of the fine books written on this subject, such as Dr. Herman H. Horne's *Teaching Techniques Of Jesus* or Clifford A. Wilson's *Jesus The Master Teacher*, to guide us in our study. Either approach would be a good investment of our time. However, for our study today, I've settled on another strategy. We will focus our attention on only eight of the key principles or methods which made Jesus the effective communicator He was. We will analyze them and apply them to our own situation.

Jesus Was a Master Student of Life

One can only legitimately give what he has first received. It is true for us and it was true for Jesus. As we begin our look at some of the factors that made Jesus the Master of communication, we do well to consider first that Jesus was a Master Student of life. Luke's account of Jesus as a boy in the temple, the only account we have of Jesus from the time of His birth until the time He assumes His public ministry at age 30, gives us some valuable insights concerning Jesus the Student of life. Luke points out Jesus' personal and obedient relationship to God the Father, His zeal to learn, His ability to inquire and think incisively about significant matters of life, His growth in wisdom (i.e. comprehensive insight into the will and work of God). As an adult, we find Jesus thoroughly prepared for His task. He knows the Father and the Father's will intimately as evidenced in His use of Scripture and in His vibrant prayer life. He has a rich, spiritual world view, complete with a knowledge of and love for people, the world and the way life works. Jesus was able to communicate so well because He, first of all, had learned so well. E. M. Bounds has said: "The man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon. Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life."

Jesus Faithfully Followed a Master Plan for His Ministry

Jesus was a Master Strategist. He had a game-plan for His life which He followed to the latter. He articulated His mission as the promised Messiah in several ways: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10b). "The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." Not only did Jesus have a game-plan for His life, He also had one for His ministry of communication. What was that master plan? John 17:6-8 and Luke 24:45-48 give us the insights we need to formulate an answer. In His High Priestly Prayer from John 17, Jesus says: "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." In the last chapter of Luke we read: "Then he (Jesus) opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." From these two references, we can define Jesus' master plan of communication in this way: Jesus' master plan of communication was to reveal Himself as the God-sent Savior in order to create believing witnesses who would share that revelation with others.

3. Jesus Concentrated On Developing a Core Group of Reproducing Disciples

One of the key elements of Jesus' master plan of communication was to develop a core group of reproducing disciples. We are using the word "disciple" here, not in the general sense of "a follower of Jesus," regardless of the level of commitment; but in the special sense of "a dedicated, loving, obedient and fruitful follower of Jesus." Jesus concentrated on cultivating men who would eagerly accept His teachings, adopt His lifestyle and join in His mission.

This is not to say that Jesus had little concern for the masses. Jesus was very concerned about the multitudes and spent much time with them. However, He gave priority to the development of twelve adult men. Jesus did this because He wanted to conduct a ministry of multiplication rather than a ministry of addition.

Jesus knew that the time of His physical ministry on earth was limited. If the Gospel were to spread throughout the world, workers had to be prepared to carry on what Jesus started. Jesus took the time to prepare workers. At the end of His three years of public ministry, the Twelve were ready to continue the communication ministry. The Book of Acts rehearses for us the wonderful ministry of multiplication the Spirit enabled them to have.

Do we recognize the importance of developing reproducing disciples for Christ? Unfortunately, many churches don't put it very high on their list of priorities. Consider the way many denominations, congregations and communicators measure success. Most of the statistics given in reports tend to answer the question: "How many people did we add to the audience?" rather than "How well did we prepare people for their task?" A communicator who wants his/her ministry to have deep and lasting impact will give serious attention to the Savior's strategy of giving priority to the development of reproducing disciples.

An interesting sidelight to this topic is Jesus' concentration on developing adult men. Jesus certainly had a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of children. Mark's account of Jesus' blessing of the little children (Mark 10:13-16) illustrates this concern. But the focus of Jesus' ministry was on adults. Christian growth in the Word is a lifelong process, not a childhood program. Adults play a key role in the building of God's Kingdom. Adults are more able to perform vital ministry than children. Adults who are parents have far more influence over their children's spiritual development than a church staff member ever will have. Adults need to be spiritually prepared for Kingdom work by their pastors and teachers.

Jesus Adapted His Communication to People's Nature and Situation

Jesus specialized in custom-made communication. He carefully and sensitively crafted His communication to accommodate the nature and life situation of the people with whom He talked. Jesus knew people. John tells us: "Jesus...knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man." Jesus knew the nature of people, their inside. He also knew their life situation, their outside, the external factors and forces which shaped them. He used this knowledge of people to communicate effectively with them.

Jesus Communicated in an Attractive, Interesting Manner

Jesus was an appealing communicator. Mark tells us: "The large crowd listened to him with delight" (Mark 12:37b). The Gospels give us several instances of large crowds who followed Jesus into remote areas in order to hear Him. We read of Zaccheus climbing a tree and a paralyzed man going through a roof because of the throngs of people attracted to the Master.

What was the key to His appeal? Surely, much of His popularity depended on the content of His messages. Jesus spoke about the things in life that really mattered - about God and how to know Him, about eternal life, about absolute truth, about human wholeness (peace), about spiritual freedom, etc. But I believe we can safely say that Jesus' manner of communicating had something to do with His appeal. Jesus was an interesting communicator. He was expert in presenting Gospel truth in an attractive way. His gripping stories (parables), such as The Good Samaritan or The Prodigal Son; His incisive questions, such as "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26a) or "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" (Luke 12:25); His use of visual aids, such as lilies, sheep and wine bottles; and His use of humor as in the example of the man with the beam in his eye wanting to remove the splinter from the eye of another were part of Jesus' refreshing communication style.

Jesus Communicated in an Authoritative, Powerful Manner

Jesus was a powerful communicator. Matthew records: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28-29). John affirms Jesus' power in proclaiming when he tells of the Jewish leaders' unsuccessful arrest attempt: "Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, 'Why didn't you bring him in?' 'No one ever spoke the way this man does.' the guards declared" (John 7:45-46).

What made Jesus' teaching so powerful? A big reason was the fact that Jesus was declaring the authoritative, powerful Word of God. There were other reasons. One was Jesus' preparedness. He knew His message thoroughly. He was always in control of the communication, even when that communication was a quick response to an issue which surfaced spontaneously. A second supplementary reason was Jesus' unshakable belief in His message. He was fully convinced that God's "word is truth" (John 17:17b) and that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35b). He held firmly to that Word at all times - when opposed, when challenged, when disbelieved, when enduring the pains of hell.

Jesus Prepared People to Live out their Faith in Life

Jesus' communication was life-related. One of His great concerns was that people have a functional faith, a faith that worked by love, a faith which found expression in life. Jesus was not content to influence just the hearts of men. He desired to influence their mouths and hands and feet as well. Jesus gave very practical, life-related instruction. He not only taught His disciples what faith was, He put them on a boat, sent a storm and gave them a chance to exercise it. He not only developed compassion for lost people, He gave His followers experience in winning the lost as He sent out groups of 70 and 12.

Jesus Stimulated People to Personally Assimilate His Communication

Jesus was a stimulating communicator. He communicated to transform people's lives, not merely to transfer information to their heads. Jesus worked to get people actively participating in the learning process. He challenged them to think through the implications of His teachings and personally come to grips with the vital truths He shared. After waking and calming the storm, Jesus asked the panic-stricken disciples: "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25)

In an effort to clarify His disciples' understanding of Him, Jesus asked: "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" (Luke 9:20) While addressing would-be followers, the Master challenged them to consider the cost: "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple...In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27,33). To the ruler whose riches got between him and God, Jesus commanded: "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Luke 18:22).

Mass Media And The Teaching Of Jesus

The teaching of Jesus is saddled with credibility, objectivity and moral rectitude. He teaches spiritual rebirth and moral development without sentiment and bias. His teachings give confidence and rekindles people's hope. Nigerian mass media have a lot to learn from these unalloyed qualities of Jesus. Recently, the media are cast under serious criticism and condemnation for what is termed to be reckless and incredible reportage." Brown envelope Syndrome" is the order of the day. Journalists are no more carry out their gate-keeping and Agenda-Setting functions. The fourth estate role is becoming the thing of the past. No wonder that the lukewarm attitude of the media regarding thorough national consolidation has amputated the societal zeal for development.

The outcry of terrorism is all over the globe punchy. The media that seems to be the significant players in counter terrorism strategy have always been condemned for making the job of the terrorists too easy because of the emotions that arouse from their reportage. Biernatzki (2002) agreed with the view quoting Kratoski (2001:468) as stated " *If one of the elements of terrorism is the wish to obtain publicity for a cause and create propaganda, the media have overreacted in responding to this desire.*" A number of accusations are mounted on the media practitioners whose primary responsibility is to ensure objectivity in information dissemination. Ngoa (2012) asserts that the objectivity " *is compromise because of the power play in Nigeria Media ownership, Objectivity is not only becomes antiquated but when and where the media strives to perform quite often, it does so with some undertones that connotes the master voice*" Conclusively, the media, however, need to borrow leaf from the amiable teachings of Jesus by being objective, credible and non-partisan. This would go a long way in putting the journalism profession on the right path.

Conclusion And Recommendation

The teaching and communication style of Jesus is undoubtedly a reference point and an art of emulation considering the huge impacts the messages have on the humanity. He used different forms of technique to pass His messages across to His adherents as indicated in the study. This in no small measure go a long way in making His ministry a success and indelible on the present and future generation. The Nigerian Media are expected to exhibit same in the discharge of their news dissemination responsibilities. Particularly, the agenda-setting and fourth estate functions should, henceforth be geared towards the laudable principles and communication styles of Jesus

in order to stabilize the polity especially in the present democratization. The study found that truth and objectivity are far-fetched in the activities of the media, moreover, faith which happened to be the springboard for Jesus ministry is found wanting in the media publics otherwise losing confidence in the media by the day. The paper, therefore, recommends that the media should uphold the ideal of equity, transparency, and sincerity in the discharge of their duties. Nigerians should have faith in the activities of the media and support them to successfully paddle the canoe of democracy to a safety harbor. Jesus ministry is today's a reference point because His adherents have strong faith in Him and His Ministry.

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