Christ the Communicator and Educator

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Abstract

This article investigates how Christ communicated with others, which resulted in His disciples establishing the early Christian church as a religious movement which eventually established a separate religion from Judaism, although greatly based upon it. Christ employed various forms of communication in teaching and preaching about the Kingdom of God. While on the opposite end the social setting, the religious leaders of Christ's day employed various forms of communication to oppose the teachings of Christ and deny that He was the Son of God. Though the religious leaders were of the belief that they had ultimately won by having Christ crucified, it must have been disappointing for them to see Christianity starting as a movement and becoming an organisation with no bounds. The theoretical framework for this study is on Shannon Weaver Model of Communication and Cooperative Learning Theory. The Shannon Weaver Model of Communication because Christ is often seen as the sender and His audience the receiver and they in turn sent him feedback; the Cooperative Learning theory because although Christ taught large audiences, He also taught small groups of people. One specific small group was His twelve disciples which he mentored over a period of three and a half years. Although Christ taught many individuals, it was these twelve that were recognised as His Apostles. Jesus assessed His audiences and communicated with each group or individual so as to make the greatest impact on them. He spoke only truths and imparted His messages in a vibrant and dynamic fashion and considered relevance. This study method employed was desktop research using inter alia, a wide range of electronic and other relevant sources such as academic journals. The conclusion is that Jesus Christ's possessed excellent communication and teaching strategies when dealing with His intended audiences.

Keywords: communication, communication techniques, Jewish religious leader, Christianity.

Introduction and background

Though the Jews were anticipating the coming of the Messiah, they were not sure if Christ was the Messiah since they anticipated a political redeemer from the yoke of Roman oppression. At first they believed that John the Baptist was the Messiah (John 1:19-25) and this was predominantly due to the fact that John was baptising people. During the time of Jesus there were different religious leaders and sects and despite their differences, they unified when they opposed Christ. Christ on the other hand, continued in His Divine mission as the incarnate Logos, and used various forms of communication to educate His audience about the Kingdom of God and how one needed to work to achieve it. The aim of this limited study was to establish the teaching strategies and communication techniques employed by Christ as well as uncover the various forms of communication Christ used in what was clearly a very successful and hugely impactful ministry despite its short duration.

Statement of the Problem

The Jews expected a messiah that would bring deliverance to them, someone similar to the deliverance their forefathers experienced when Moses took them out of bondage in Egypt and

from the stronghold of Pharaoh and his tyrannical rule. They expected Christ to free them from the stranglehold of the Roman Emperor and his vassal Governor in Judaea, Herod. Luke (24:20-21) states "[20] the chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; [21]but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place."

The author believes that from the above text they were expecting a military leader to set them free. Reed (2016, n.d.) states "the vast majority of the Jews did not share the Sadducees' acceptance of Roman rule. They believed the Messiah would come, sword in hand, and drive the gentiles out of the Promised Land." They missed the ultimate purpose and reason for Christ's coming, which was to restore everyone to God by being Him being the ultimate sacrifice leading to the remission of sins of humanity- a 'new paschal lamb'.

This study incorporates three disciplines namely: theology, communication science and education. Communication science departments within the country do not have religious communication as an area of study and the author sought to propagate the importance of religious communication as an area of study as this is clearly considered a low priority in some institutions.

Literature review
Introduction and background

In this study, the author looked at the forms of communication used by Christ as a communicator and the teaching strategies He used as an educator. When one looks into the life of Christ from the discipline of communication, one is able to identify the various forms of communication He employed. In looking at Christ from an educational mindset, one will have the ability to identify the various forms of teaching strategies He employed. By linking the two disciplines it shows how Christ used communications skills to be an effective teacher, which attracted all age groups and people who came from different levels of education and social strata who wanted to learn from Him. The various religious leaders of Christ's day are also highlighted.

The religious leaders during the time of Christ

During the time of Christ there were many different religious groups which had various kinds of impact on the Jewish people. Certain popular religious groups are listed below for edification.

Pharisees

The Pharisees were the most well-known religious leaders during the time of Christ. They observed and studied the oral law and Jewish rituals (Ludlow, 1975, n.p.). they purported to be fastidious exponents of Mosaic Law.

One such Pharisee who came to Christ was Nicodemus (John 3:1), but he was the black sheep of the pharisaic group. Other popular Pharisees mentioned in the New Testament are Gamaliel (Acts 5:34) and the Apostle Paul (Acts 23:6). Bible.org. (2017, n.p.) states "the word 'Pharisee' literally means 'Separatist,' the name given to them by their opponents because of their 'holier than thou' haughty attitude". Ludlow (1975, n.p.) states "the Pharisees became scholars of the law, fostering synagogue attendance as a place of study, worship, and prayer".

Kohler (quoted by Tenny 1978:110) states the seven types of Pharisees who were extremists who are listed as follows:

- The "shoulder" Pharisee, who paraded his good deeds before men like a badge on the shoulder.
- The "wait-a-little" Pharisee, who would ask someone to wait for him while he performed a good deed.

- The "blind" Pharisee, who bruised himself by walking into a wall because he shut his eyes to avoid seeing a woman.
- The "pestle" Pharisee, who walked with hanging head rather than observe alluring temptations.
- The "ever-reckoning" Pharisee, who was always counting his good deeds to see if they offset his failures.
- The "God-fearing" Pharisee, who, like Job, was truly righteous.
- The "God-loving" Pharisee, like Abraham.

No governing authority could disregard them because they had a hold on the common people. They often looked down on the common people because they were unable to fulfil the complex requirements in regards to the strict Judaic law. However, not all Pharisees were bad individuals (Bible.org, 2017). When Jesus addressed them, he highlighted how they project outward holiness yet inwardly there is a spiritual void. The Pharisees accused Christ of blasphemy. Matthew (12:2) states "when the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, 'Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath'." Ultimately they wanted to destroyed Christ (Matthew 12:14) and His disciples.

Scribes

The studying and expounding of the law was the responsibility of the Scribes. The Jewish Scribes were individuals that were well versed when it came to the Law of Moses (Ludlow, 1975). The scribes held religious offices while the Pharisees were a religious party (Bible.org, 2017). Though most Scribes were Pharisees, some were affiliated with the Sadducees, while the rest were affiliated to other religious groups. Ludlow (1975, n.p.) states "Jewish Scribes were well versed in the laws of Moses, making them the spiritual and temporal legal counsellors of the period." Not all scribes were part of the Pharisaic organisation, though most were. The scribes were Christ's strongest opponents during His ministry. John (5:10) states "and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, 'It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat'." They always kept a close eye on what Christ did and spoke. In present day terms, the author regards them as the secret services of a country.

Sadducees

Tradition states that the Sadducees derived their name from the son of Zadok, who during the days of David and Solomon was a high priest (Tenny 1978). They were a political party which were in favour of being under Roman Rule (Bible.org, n.p.). The Sadducees were influential in the Sanhedrin and the temple (Ludlow, 1975,n.p.). They were a conservative party which held on to the older doctrines (Ludlow, 1975, n.p.). They were unlike the Pharisees and scribes. The Sadducees were priests that were part of the Jewish aristocratic class. Not all priests were Sadducees but all Sadducees were priests. They rejected the traditions of Pharisees. However, they accepted only the written law. The Sadducees were strongly denounced by both Jesus and John the Baptist (Ludlow, 1975, n.p.).

Bible.org (2017, n.p.) states "they denied bodily resurrection (Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 4:1-2; 23:8), the existence of the angels (Acts 23:8), and the sovereignty of God over human affairs, and believed that man is the master of his own destiny." Due to the theological differences between the Sadducees and Pharisees, their relationship was not cordial. Which is rather said for religious leaders who professed to be firm followers of the Law. They did not have a cordial relationship with the Pharisees because of their theological differences. According to Matthew 22:23, some Sadducees questioned Christ on the issue of human resurrection. In 70 A.D. the Sadducees ceased to exist as a viable religious and political force among the Jewish people due to the destruction of the temple (Ludlow, 1975). Tenny (1978:111) states "unlike the Pharisees, they did not survive the destruction of Jerusalem."

Herodians

Herodians did not fall in either of the above groups. They were neither a political or religious sect. As a group of Jews, they supported the Herodians' dynasty. They colluded with the Pharisees when they asked if one should be paying to Caesar the imperial tax (Matthew 22:15-22). They are only mentioned in the New Testament three times (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; and Mark 3:6) (Bible.org, 2017, n.p.).

Essenes

During the time of Jesus there were people wanting to oppose Roman rule and some that did not want to oppose them. However, the Essenes wanted to live in isolation. Reed (2016, n.p.) states "they rejected the Herods, the temple, and even the Pharisees as corrupt. In their mind, only they were true Israel." The Essenes held the most extreme religious views. Taylor and Taylor (2016, n.p.) states "following their ascetic beliefs, they formed a monastic community where all the initiates pooled their belongings (compare the early Christians – see Acts 4:32) and lived apart from the rest of Jewish society in the Judaean Desert at Qumran, near Jericho." They formed a community near the Red Sea. Taylor and Taylor (2016, n.p.) state "the 'Dead Sea Scrolls' (discovered in 1949 and now on display at the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem) was the library of Jewish religious texts owned by this desert community. They were probably hidden in the caves at Qumran at the outbreak of the Romano-Jewish War in 66 AD." The Essenes are not mentioned in the gospels and the letters of the New Testament (Reed, 2016,n.p.). The Dead Sea scrolls are believed by many authors to be written by the Essenes (Reed, 2016,n.p.).

The five groups had many political and theological differences amongst themselves, yet they united when they opposed Jesus Christ (Bible.org).

Forms of communication used by the religious leaders of Jesus' day

All of the above-mentioned groups used verbal, nonverbal, interpersonal, or small group communication. Written communication among them would have been common as most of them were students of the Word. Acts (9:1-2) states "[1]Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest [2]and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem." He took letters which he received from the synagogues.

Christ as Communicator

Reddy (2004:92) states "the first account of Christ as communicator is when He spoke in the temple at the age of 12" (Luke 2:46-47). Those who heard Him speak were amazed at His wisdom and especially at his tender age. Those that heard Christ teach were amazed because He taught with was such authority and not like the way the Scribes of His day taught scriptures (Mark 1:22). Christ used various forms of communication when he interacted with His audience. Whenever given the opportunity to speak He spoke about the kingdom of God. His ultimate massage was of salvation, hope and God's love towards humankind (Reddy, 2004:92). The fact that Christ had people following him for days highlights his ability to communicate effectively (Reddy, 2004:92).

He was an expert when it came to interpersonal and persuasive communication. Interpersonal communication or two-person communication is when communication occurs between two people. Persuasive communication is used to influence the way one behaves and thinks. He influenced twelve disciples to leave their normal way of life and follow Him. This shows his

leadership abilities because no follower will want to follow someone that has no leadership abilities. Reddy (2004:94) states "At times women took time off from their schedules to listen to Him speak. It was not just his effective communication; the miracles that He performed drew people to him." Bennett (1998:3) states "Jesus chose terms suited to his listeners, and whose associations reinforced the lessons he was trying to teach. He used images that were appropriate to the culture, appropriate to the disciples' stage in the process of leadership development, and appropriate to the particular circumstances in which he taught them."

Christ did not use written communication, for there is no record of it. He did not write any letters or epistles. The only instance of Him writing was when He wrote on the sand (John 8:6). Written communication is when information is communicated or exchanged between the sender and receiver through written form. However, there is no record of what he wrote on the sand. He used various types of venues to use various forms of communication to educate or openly rebuke those that were listening to Him. This was when He used confrontational communication. He rebuked Peter. Mark (8:33) states "but when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns'."

The cleansing of the temple (John 2:13-22). Among the various areas are as follows: boat, hillsides, mountains, houses, temples and synagogues (Reddy, 2002:93).

On many occasions Christ used interpersonal communication with other individuals (John 3:1-21, Nicodemus; Luke 19:1-10, Zacchaeus the Tax Collector; Mark 5:25-34, woman with the issue of blood; and many more which are recorded in the Bible). Small group communication is when communication takes place among a small group of individuals who are working together (Cleary, 2014, n.p.). Small groups form when members have similar interests and small group communication occurs when there is meaningful interaction among the group. Examples of small group communication are brainstorming, cross questioning, conversation, to mention a few. Christ used small group communication (Matthew 6:9, Christ teaches His disciples how to pray; (see Matthew 24), when Christ speaks to His disciples about the destruction of the Temple; and many more occasions are mentioned in the Bible). Small group communication played an important role when Christ met with his disciples and when He taught in private homes.

Christ used mainly small group communication and interpersonal communication. He had an excellent ability to hold his audiences' attention and this form of communication is referred to as public communication. On numerous occasions he engaged in public communication (John 6, Christ had thousands that followed Him for days). Public communication takes place within a public venue. Though Christ used cooperative communication, at times he also employed seditious communication (Reddy 2002:93). This form of communication undermines the authority of a person or a group (e.g. the teaching of parables). Parables are open to double interpretation and require careful consideration and deeper understanding of philosophical truths.

Christ as an Educator

John (3:1-2) states "[1]now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. [2]He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him'." From the above texts we can conclude that those who heard Christ teach held him in high regard. In the texts, Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council and a Pharisee who addresses Christ as Rabbi – which means teacher.

Christ was an excellent teacher because He was able to hold an audience's attention. He had large crowds of people who followed Him for days. Matthew (4:25) states "large crowds followed Him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan."

There was a directness, a freshness, and an authority in the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ that made Him more effective than His contemporaries (Matthew 7:28-29). As a teacher Christ used various methods of teaching to communicate to his audience with the objective of getting the audience to turn away from sin. To Christ the crowds were potential disciples (Eklund 2017, n.p.). The crowds also symbolize potential disciples. Reddy (2004:94) states "the teachings of Jesus had a moral and spiritual purpose, which was linked to His purpose on earth." Reddy (2004:93) also states "He had the ability to make truth simple and cogent."

Bennett (1998:3) states "Jesus chose terms suited to his listeners, and whose associations reinforced the lessons he was trying to teach. He used images that were appropriate to the culture, appropriate to the disciples' stage in the process of leadership development, and appropriate to the particular circumstances in which he taught them." From people's everyday life, Christ used it to speak on spiritual truths.

Christ used different teaching strategies so that He could propagate His values and beliefs. Below the authors mention the various teaching strategies which Christ used during His ministry.

Parables

A popular teaching method employed by Christ was that of the use of parables. According to Reddy (2004:92) the best-known method Jesus used was that of parables. Jesus told innumerable parables (Mark 4:34) and drew spiritual truth from everyday life situations. Not only did these stories make Jesus' preaching more unforgettable, they also related to people in much more reflective manner. Reddy (2004:92) mentions a few, "His parables of the good and bad fruit trees (Matthew 7:16-20), the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), and the unfaithful steward (Luke 16:1-8)." The parables served several goals as a medium of teaching, which Christ saw as influential impact on His listeners. Parables were easily understood by the ordinary individuals because it was related to their everyday life situations. Reddy (2004:92) states "the parables that Jesus taught were neither short nor long and could be easily remembered by those who heard them." Reddy (2004:93) further states: "Jesus's parables remain in the memory while others become a thing of the past." "Parables teach analogical reasoning, which is closely related to metaphoric reasoning" as stated by Reddy (2004:92).

Matthew (13:10-11) states "[10] the disciples came to him and asked, 'Why do you speak to the people in parables?' [11] He replied, 'Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them'."

Object lessons and Visual illustrations

The use of object lessons was another teaching strategy which Jesus used to bring forth His message which could at times also be regarded as visual illustration. Jesus often used object lessons to connect with His audience. For example He washed the feet of His disciples to teach the notion of servant leadership (John 13:3–17). He also called a little child to Him to discuss the idea of childlike faith (Matthew 18:1–4).

Reddy (2004:92) states: "He took a little child to illustrate humility (Matthew 18:1-6)." "All the parables were implied object lessons, though the material of which Jesus spoke was not always present when He made the comparisons" Tenny (1978:221). Merely stating truth is not as

powerful when used as compared to visually communicating truth (Hilgemann 2013). Here it is all about communicating your message visually to your given audience.

Epigrams

Use of epigrams was another teaching strategy which Jesus used to bring forth His message. Reddy (2004:93) states: "an epigram is a terse, pungent statement that would remain in the mind of the hearer." Examples of an epigram are the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) or the statement "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39).

Argumentation

Argumentation is another teaching strategy used by Christ. He argued from the basis of scriptural rather than from abstract premises or assumption (Reddy 2004:93). Jesus had debates with the Sadducees and Pharisees (Matthew 21:15-14). Every person in society is a lifelong learner, therefore learning should be a continuous process. During His engagement in debates with the Sadducees and Pharisees, Christ's logic was irresistible (Reddy 2002:93).

Metaphors

Metaphors were alternative teaching strategy used by Christ. Watson and Hill (1989:108) defines a metaphor as "a figure of speech or a visual device, which works by transporting qualities from one plane of reality to another: 'the camel is the ship of the desert'; 'life for Mary was a bed of roses'." Without metaphor there would be no scope for development of either visual or verbal language; it would remain clinical and colourless. Newmyer (2001:71) states "Jesus used many metaphors and allegories, and some of the metaphors were allegories. Perhaps the most used by Jesus were the metaphors Tree and Seed, and at times He used the simple reference "tree", other times He defined what type of tree He was talking about."

Questions and answers

Questions and answers were an additional teaching strategy Christ used as an educator. Instead of telling everyone the answer to an issue immediately Jesus made used the Socratic Method and He gradually led His audience to the right conclusions by asking them many questions. Tenny (1978:220) stated: "His questions were never trivial, but they were generally related to the deepest human problems." An example of a question and answer is mentioned in Matthew (16:25), "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"

Hyperbole

Hyperbole was used by Christ as another example in teaching. Hyperbole are exaggerations, shocking and outrageous examples which are used to get one's attention (Hilgemann, 2013, n.p.). Hyperbole should not be taken literally but understood in the context it is said by the speaker or writer. An example of a hyperbole is mentioned in the gospel of Matthew. Matthew (5:29-30) states "[29]if your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [30]And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." Do not our eyes cause us all to sin? Christ was trying to emphasise a point and communicate clearly. Jesus often used hyperbole and taught using shocking illustrations, exaggerations, and seemingly wild

statements that got the attention of the audience. These statements were not all meant to be taken literally of course, but they unquestionably got the argument across.

Allegories

Allegories is another teaching method Christ used as an educator. Drane (1986:122) explains "an allegory is a detailed account of a subject, written in such a way that it appears to be about something altogether different." An example of this teaching method is when Christ taught about the vine and the branches (John 15:1-11).

Repetition

At times Christ used repetition as part of His teaching strategy. Certain themes He taught more than once so that his audience would not forget the importance of the teaching. For example, he kept speaking about the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:20, 7:13-14, and Mark 4:30-32) and others are recorded in the New Testament. Similarly, in education, after a section from a module is taught we do revision for the students not to forget the relevant areas in the module or subject and thus reinforce the message they receive to aid their understanding.

Literature (Poetry)

Christ taught literature when he spoke poetically. Christ used catchy sayings to highlight certain points. One will find it difficult to appreciate this when reading the English translation, however in the original text the listener was able to remember what Christ spoke (Hilgemann 2013,n.p.). An example of such is found in Luke 6:31 which states "do unto others as you would have them do to you." Earls (2017,n.p.) states that "if you want to preach like Jesus, craft memorable statements."

How does the world rate Christ as an influencer?

Figure 1: The 15 most influential people of all time (4000BC to 2010AD)   Taken from Gold (2015,n.p.).

1	Aristotle	Greece	-384	Male	Philosopher	152	11.9	56.36 M	15.75 M	40.61 M	201.07 K	31.994
2	Plato	Greece	-427	Male	Philosopher	142	13.0	46.81 M	13.50 M	33.32 M	141.93 K	31.989
3	Jesus Christ	Palestine	-4	Male	Religious Figure	214	12.1	60.30 M	25.37 M	34.93 M	257.21 K	31.898
4	Socrates	Greece	-469	Male	Philosopher	137	12.3	40.31 M	11.69 M	28.62 M	135.90 K	31.652
5	Alexander the Great	Greece	-356	Male	Military Personnel	138	11.2	48.36 M	19.94 M	28.42 M	153.68 K	31.584
6	Leonardo da Vinci	Italy	1452	Male	Inventor	174	13.2	88.93 M	29.24 M	59.69 M	352.57 K	31.464
7	Confucius	China	-551	Male	Philosopher	192	13.1	22.36 M	8.06 M	14.30 M	76.36 K	31.371
8	Julius Caesar	Italy	-100	Male	Politician	128	10.8	43.09 M	18.32 M	24.77 M	157.21 K	31.116
9	Homer	Greece	-800	Male	Writer	141	12.7	20.84 M	5.97 M	14.87 M	72.95 K	31.109
10	Pythagoras	Greece	-570	Male	Philosopher	114	12.8	26.17 M	6.99 M	19.18 M	94.42 K	31.069
11	Archimedes	Italy	-287	Male	Mathematician	129	13.4	22.02 M	7.29 M	14.73 M	71.92 K	30.991
12	Moses	Egypt	-1391	Male	Religious Figure	115	12.7	21.88 M	8.32 M	13.56 M	83.77 K	30.863
13	Muhammad	Saudi Arabia	570	Male	Religious Figure	150	11.8	43.03 M	18.31 M	24.71 M	242.31 K	30.650
14	Abraham	Unknown	-1800	Male	Religious Figure	105	10.7	17.82 M	7.11 M	10.71 M	76.36 K	30.605
15	Adolf Hitler	Austria	1889	Male	Politician	169	11.1	128.37 M	52.36 M	76.01 M	433.36 K	30.578

Christ is stated as the third most influential person of all time. This is however debatable as many state Him as the most influential who ever existed. This shows the impact Christ not only had on His disciples and audience but also on the people throughout history.

Theoretical framework of the research

The theoretical framework for this study is on Shannon Weaver Model of Communication and Cooperative Learning Theory; the Shannon Weaver Model of Communication because it highlights the various aspects of the communication process. Christ is being regarded as the sender and his audience being the receiver who then sent Him feedback.

There are various concepts mentioned in the Shannon Weaver Model of Communication which this study will highlight. They are as follows: sender, encoder, channel, receiver, noise.

Mishra (2017, n.p.) states the concepts to be as follows:

- Sender (Information source) – Sender is the person who forms the message, chooses the channel and sends the message.
- Encoder (Transmitter) – Encoder is the sender who uses a machine, which converts a message into signals or binary data. It might also directly refer to the machine.
- Channel – Channel is the medium used to send message.
- Decoder (Receiver) – Decoder is the machine used to convert signals or binary data into message or the receiver who translates the message from signals.
- Receiver (Destination) – Receiver is the person who gets the message or the place where the message can be reached. The receiver provides feedback according to the message.
- Noise – Noise is the physical disturbances like environment, people, etc. which prevents the message from reaching the receiver as it was sent.

Figure 2. Shannon Weaver model of communication
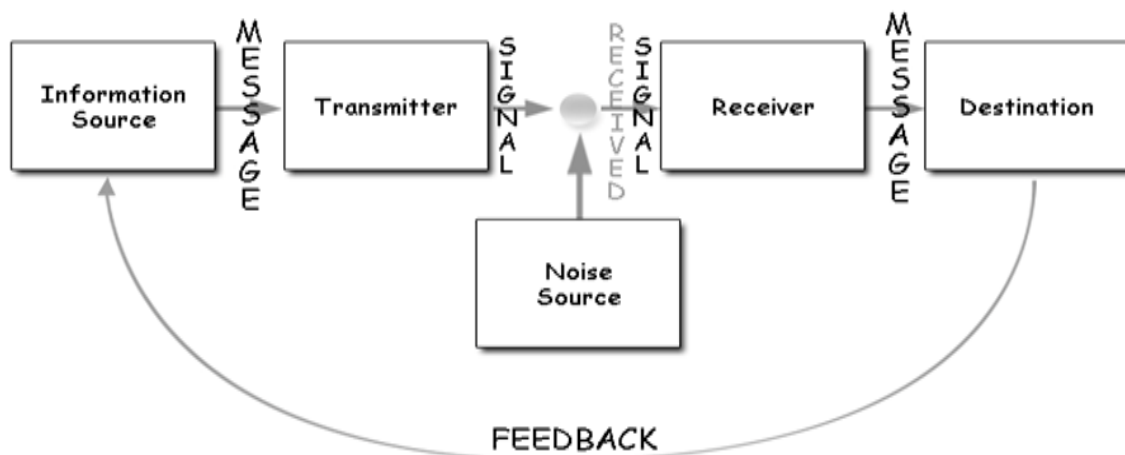
Taken from Mishra (2017, n.p.)

The above model, when adapted relates to how Christ communicated with His disciples and large crowds which followed Him during His earthly ministry. On most occasions Christ is regarded as the sender of the message. The encoder on most occasions is Christ. He makes His messages accessible to others and understandable to his audience, even though at times he would use metaphors and parables. Oral communication is the channel used by Christ to transmit His messages to His audiences. His audience after hearing His message will decode

the message according to their own understanding. The audience which Christ is speaking to is regarded as the receiver of the message. Noise will be any disturbance or interferences which take place during the communication process. One of the major barriers that hindered the message from being understood by all who heard was due to the fact at times He used parables which the crowd didn't understand. "This Parable spoke Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which He spoke unto them" (John 10:6). Day (n.d.,n.p.) states: "many Christians believe that Jesus taught in parables to make His message clear, but that is not biblical. Even His disciples were in the dark and did not understand. Repeatedly, they asked Jesus to explain the parables to them."

It is clear they were unable to decode the message because they were unable to comprehend His teachings at the time. This is regarded as a barrier. As preachers of the gospel we need the receivers to be able to decode our messages. The above shows that Shannon and Weaver theory can be applied to Christ as a communicator.

The second theory is the cooperative learning theory. The cooperative learning theory because it focuses on teaching of small groups which are created from larger class or audience. Christ taught large audiences, and He also taught small groups of people. One specific small group were His 12 disciples which he mentored over three and a half years. This theory will be adapted into Christ teaching strategy.

This theory projects use of small groups so that the learners are able to maximise their own as well as each other's learning (Johnson, Johnson & Smith 2013:3). This theory is broken up into formal cooperative learning, informal cooperative learning and Cooperative Base Groups. As an educator Christ used this theory within His teaching ministry. Though Christ at time taught large audiences of people, He focused on selecting just 12 individuals who were regarded as His disciples. At times Christ taught large audiences. John 6:2 states "large crowds followed Him because they saw the signs He had performed on the sick." Matthew 8:1 states "when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him." Matthew (4:25) states crowds followed Christ. The crowds followed Christ because of the miracles He performed.

As part of the practical training Christ sent out 72 of His disciples, two by two to every town where he was still about to do ministry (Luke 10:1-24). He gave them warnings and also told them not to take anything with them. These disciples were amazed that evil spirits obeyed the name of Christ (Luke 10:16). They accomplished the task which was set out to them by Christ. By coming back and giving a pleasing report to the Lord showed that their task was successful, because they answered Christ based on their own self-assessment of the task they were a part off. Informal cooperative learning was when the disciples had their own discussions. On one occasion a discussion became an argument.

Luke (9:46) states "an argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest." Cooperative base groups are different forms of formal and informal cooperative learning. This is where these groups last longer than the stipulated time they were part of the course. With the disciples of Christ, scripture shows that after His death (Matthew 27:32-56), Resurrection (Luke 24), and Ascension (Acts 1: 6-11) they were still together on the day of Pentecost, except for Judas who had died. From "disciples" they were referred to as "apostles".

Significance of the study

This study will add to the literature on the forms of communication employed by Christ as a communicator and how He used the various teaching strategies to impact his followers. With this knowledge, other writers could build ideas to add to future research.

Research Methodology and design

This method employed was desktop research, focusing on literature from books and the internet, where the emphasis was be purely on literature associated with the forms or communication employed by Christ and the Jewish religious leaders of His day. The study looked at Christ as an educator. Gray (2014:160) states qualitative research is "the role of the researcher is to gain a deep, intense and 'holistic' overview of the context under study, often involving interacting within the everyday lives of individual, groups, communities and organizations."

Conclusion

This article looked at who the religious leaders were during the time of Christ, and how they opposed Him, and yet He was able to succeed in His mission. This was partly due to Christ's role as a communicator and an educator. As a communicator, Christ used public communication, small group communication, interpersonal communication, verbal communication, nonverbal communication (Matthew 23). Earls (2017, n.p.) states "if you want to be a better preacher, look no further than Jesus." Above are examples of the teaching strategies which He used as a master teacher. Communication forms have improved drastically since the first century; they try and maximise the use of all forms of communication from verbal communication to the use of the internet to maintain and propagate the values and beliefs of Christ and the Apostles as mentioned in the New Testament. In conclusion, the author would like to quote the words of Gangel and Hendricks (1988:25) which state "there is nothing stereotypical about the patterns of Christ's teaching. It's difficult to find Jesus ever doing the same thing in the same way."

Jesus Christ was a leading communicator of Truth to a extensive diversity of listeners. He undoubtedly communicated in a way that combined the finest rudiments of "teaching, inspiring, persuading, entertaining, correcting, rebuking, illustrating, questioning, encouraging, exhorting and listening" (Fritz, 2000). Jesus was well aware that by directing His message to amenable people, His truth would increase through believers becoming role models after His image. Jesus assessed His audiences and communicated with each group or individual so as to make the greatest impact on them. He spoke only truths and imparted His messages in a vibrant and dynamic fashion and considered relevance. Jesus communicated with authority "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Jesus asked important questions on issues in society and listened to people. Above all Jesus built relationships with His audiences and He facilitated a two-way flow of information.

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