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A Communication Audit of the Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

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**A COMMUNICATION AUDIT OF
THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON**

by

Larry W. Dorsch

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Part 1: Effective Communication in the Modern Era as Critical to the Mission of the Church

Communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the principal existential task of the Church. "Communicating" and "the Gospel" both are terms loaded with philosophical underpinnings and practical implications that constantly challenge the church to examine its established patterns of ministry and behavior, as well as its priorities and budgets.

The strides in communication practice and technology of the twentieth century have shaken the church's *modus operandi* in ways that are unparalleled in the previous nineteen centuries of Christian faith. While to be sure the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century sparked major shifts and realignments in the Church and in its ministries, the scope of cultural changes spawned and the sheer number of new tools now available as a result of this twentieth century communication technology revolution confront the Church and its leaders with dramatically new questions:

How and where does the Church preach when hearers can access at home over 100 channels of television?

How does one teach in a world of video cassette recorders, home camcorders and self-taught computer programs?

What is the meaning of community when live, multi-site video conferencing is

not only possible but commonplace?

How does the Gospel message gain a hearing amidst the billions of bytes of information continually being faxed and flashed fiber optically around the world?

How does the Church now describe, let alone do, liturgy, sacraments, evangelization and missionary activity in such a media world?

In the midst of CNN's 24 hour news, MTV's music videos and radio's all-talk formats, what is the place of meditation, contemplation and silence?

As noted by James McDonnell, Director of Projects of the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture in London:

These questions are especially pertinent for those of us who rejoice in the name Christian. Called upon to be in but not of the world, we are constantly faced with the fact that our world is experiencing a time of unprecedented social, cultural and technological upheaval. Moreover, we have been enjoined to communicate with the world, to evangelize, to witness and to proclaim the message of God's redemptive work in Christ. Where on earth do we begin? (McDonnell 14)

As with business and education, the church in the years prior to this communication revolution largely depended on face-to-face communication and the printed word to accomplish its mission. The preaching of sermons to the presently assembled congregation, the teaching of classes to specific groups and individual pastoral care opportunities were the usual means to communicate directly with both members and prospective members. The church heavily invested time, money and creative energies in publishing books, catechisms, journals, newspapers and weekly bulletins to communicate more broadly with both its own membership and with the

world at large.

In the present era the electronic media have in a sense conquered the limitations of time and space (see *Communio et Progressio* 7). Video cassettes make a pre-recorded message available wherever there is a VCR and whenever someone wants to play it. Satellite communication instantaneously bridges oceans and national boundaries. Television enables a speaker (or preacher) to be millions of places at once and removes the necessity of the viewer/hearer ever having to leave home to go to church or school. Computers, CD-ROMs, modems, networks and electronic mail put vast amounts and sources of information literally at fingertips.

If the Church is to fulfill its task of communicating the Gospel in this age, to remain credible to the people of the age and to take advantage of the new possibilities that new technologies present, it must develop strategies and methods of integrating these technologies into its on-going ministry and structure. McDonnell stated the challenge clearly:

Technology is a catalyst when the availability of communication technology prompts the Church to consider how this technology can be placed at the service of Christian communication. The driving force behind church involvement is a feeling that technical advance is challenging the Church to adapt its communicative style and methods to a new set of opportunities (18).

Given the enormous cost of acquiring or accessing some of this communication technology on a church-wide scale, and given the challenge of developing new strategies for integration of this technology's use and of realigning longstanding budget and staffing priorities to accommodate it, Church leaders naturally seek data to facilitate decision making and priority setting.

The remainder of this chapter consists of three parts. First, it outlines how official church documents mandate change in current use of technologies and the integration of these media into the church's pastoral work. Second, it reviews current practices of organizational communication evaluation that can be useful for a systematic, scientific examination of intra-church communication as well as the communication between the church and the world. Third, it proposes to use the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston as a specific segment of the church in which communication research would be of practical support.

Part 2: Communication Policy in Recent Catholic Tradition

As a worldwide community with a structure of central authority, the Catholic Church values the collected body of writings and teachings of its leadership on the variety of issues that it faces. Over the past thirty years, a series of documents has been written which outlines the church's understanding of and approach to communication in this technological era. These documents form an important theological and philosophical basis for the development of a practical communication plan in a local diocese or unit of the church.

The first of these documents is brief, but influential. "*Inter Mirifica*" (its first two words in the Latin original) or "The Decree on the Means of Social Communication" was among the first two documents endorsed by the reform-minded Second Vatican Council (1962-63). Though it was initially criticized as shallow and inconsistent with later, more revolutionary documents that were issued by the Council

(see Stanley I. Stuber's "Response" in Abbott, 332-335), *"Inter Mirifica"* offered several perspectives that set a tone for later work. Its opening paragraph is illustrative:

Man's genius has with God's help produced marvelous technical inventions from creation, especially in our times. The Church, our mother, is particularly interested in those which directly touch man's spirit and which have opened up new avenues of easy communication of all kinds of news, or ideas and orientations. Chief among them are those means of communication which of their nature can reach and influence not merely single individuals but the very masses and even the whole of human society (*"Inter Mirifica"* 283).

The Council recognized that what it then called "the means of communication" were "marvelous" inventions that could be used to great advantage by the human community. It also acknowledged that mass media enable communication on a whole new order and scale. Though it did not elaborate, a certain urgency with regard to the use of mass media is apparent: "All the members of the Church should make a concerted effort to ensure that the means of social communication are put at the service of the multiple forms of the apostolate without delay and as energetically as possible, where and when they are needed" (288).

In a roundabout prophetic way, *"Inter Mirifica"* also predicted the obstacles that would hinder the church's adaptation to the telecommunication reality in coming decades: "It would be shameful if by their inactivity Catholics allowed the word of God to be silenced or obstructed by the technical difficulties which these media present and by their admittedly enormous cost" (290). In fact, the technical complexities and cost factors (including an unwillingness to hire professionals with appropriate technical expertise) continue to hamstring the church's integration of

telecommunication technologies into its on-going life and ministry. For example, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston built and equipped a television production studio in 1981, but has been unable or unwilling to commit funding for adequate production and technical staff.

At the instruction of *"Inter Mirifica"*, the Pontifical Commission for the Means of Social Communication subsequently developed a more comprehensive treatment of the church's approach to communication: *"Communio et Progressio"* ("The Pastoral Instruction for the Application of the Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the Means of Social Communication"). Rather than focusing exclusively or even predominately on communication in the Church itself, *"Communio et Progressio"* offered a Christian view of the role communication plays in contemporary human life.

It asserted that all social communication and all the media it employs are to be directed toward the unity and progress of the human community and that measurement by this principle forms the basis of a specifically Christian evaluation: "The total output of the media in any area should be judged by the contribution it makes to the common good" (5). The document also recognized that new communication technologies "serve to build new relationships and to fashion a new language which permits men to know themselves better and to understand one another more easily"(3).

After establishing the overwhelming potential of the modern means of social communication and after detailing how the media most properly work toward their goal, the Pontifical Commission turned attention to the Catholic community

specifically. Part three of "*Communio et Progressio*" examined the contributions of Catholics to social communication and of the communication media to the Church. It summed up this later discussion as follows:

The means of social communication help Catholics in three ways. They help the Church reveal herself to the modern world. They foster dialogue within the church. They make clear to the Church contemporary opinions and attitudes. For the Church has been ordered by God to give men the message of salvation in a language they can understand and to involve herself in the concerns of man (38).

Modern media give the church opportunities to do its God-given work in exciting and dramatic new ways. Education, including religious education, can be extended and reinforced by contemporary and attractive presentations. The availability of news and commentary expands opportunities for understanding of the world and the implications of religious convictions. The Christian community itself can be bound together more closely for various church activities including worship even when some members are at great distances or ill. Possibilities for evangelization and spreading the message of the Gospel are expanded exponentially. Accordingly, "*Communio et Progressio*" concludes:

Indeed, it would be difficult to suggest that Christ's command was being obeyed unless all the opportunities offered by the modern media to extend to vast numbers of people the announcement of his Good News were being used (38-39).

Interestingly, even in 1971 the Commission was concerned that the Church's use of the media would be of a quality at least equal to that to which people in our time have become accustomed. It noted the need for an "entertaining style and skillful presentation" because audiences are "intolerant of what is obviously inferior"

to what they normally experience. The need to adapt the message to the medium was also noted: "Of course, the mode of presentation has to suit the special nature of the medium being used. The media are not the same as the church pulpit" (39).

Because the practice of communication has changed so dramatically, "*Communio et Progressio*" concluded with a strong call for scientific research so that the functioning of the new media in human society will be better understood in all their psychological and cultural ramifications. The same was said of the Church's own use of these media:

[I]t appears necessary to discover through scientific research the true effectiveness of the Church in the field of social communication. It will then be possible to deploy her resources so that they suit the importance of the tasks she faces throughout the world (53).

This concluding recommendation could well serve as a rationale and goal for this current project.

Fifteen years after the publication of "*Communio et Progressio*" the American Catholic Bishops issued their own national statement on the utilization of the media by the Church: "In the Sight of All - Communication: A Vision All Can Share". While this document treated the specifically American issues in communication, it might also be argued that it was necessitated by the relatively meager use of the media by the American Catholic community and most American Catholic dioceses. Two issues raised by "In the Sight of All" are particularly salient for the present study.

First, in analyzing communication issues for the Church in the United States the bishops distinguished between a proper approach to communication for the church

and that which is found in the surrounding media environment:

As a community of believers the church must foster a true dialogue. The dominant mass communication industries promote one-way communication; we must change that attitude. The church cannot accept only one-way communication systems as models for its own communication. Communicators must listen as well as speak: human dignity demands respect for people's right to communicate (10).

New interactive media made available since 1986 may be changing this characteristic of the dominant mass communication industries, but the principle of interactivity remains a guiding ideal in church communication style and programming. To achieve it the bishops also noted the need for communication research: "We must learn the needs, concerns, symbols, and language of the people as well as the media in which they are literate"(11).

As mentioned above, the utilization of mass media by the American church has been meager and, in some instances, even non-existent. "In the Sight of All" confronted the underlying cause of this failure:

The decision to communicate has already been made. The task now is to support that decision and to evaluate it according to these criteria: the public manifestation of the presence of Christ, openness to the dialogue of faith in society, and the witness to the shared vision of American Catholic communication. These goals have a substantial cost in trained personnel and in financial resources; but on a per capita basis of people reached, however, it is considerably less than the cost of traditional channels of church information, such as personal contact, preaching or education. We cannot allow the impression of cost to discourage us from our pastoral duty (19).

Despite the obvious societal changes and nearly twenty-five years of extolling the "unparalleled pastoral opportunities"(5) that mass communication media have presented to the church, the bishops recognized that "the impression of cost" is still

preventing the church from fully using these opportunities.

The latest international document from the Pontifical Commission for the Means of Social Communication is called "Pastoral Instruction *Aetatis Novae* on Social Communication on the Twentieth Anniversary of *Communio et Progressio*". This document continued the teaching of earlier documents but with an emphasis on the revolutionary impact of media developments and on the need for the church to develop "practical policies and workable programs" of communication (5):

As more than just a technological revolution, today's revolution in social communication involves a fundamental reshaping of the elements by which people comprehend the world about them, and verify and express what they comprehend. The constant availability of images and ideas, and their rapid transmission even from continent to continent, have profound consequences, both positive and negative, for the psychological, moral and social development of persons, the structure and functioning of societies, intercultural communication, and the perception and transmission of values, world views, ideologies and religious beliefs. . . . All this has striking pastoral implications. The media can be used to proclaim the Gospel or to reduce it to silence in human hearts. As media become ever more entwined with people's daily lives, they influence how people understand the meaning of life itself (7).

The second chapter of "*Aetatis Novae*" outlined the role of media in service to persons and cultures, in service to furthering the dialogue among peoples and cultures, in service to the development of more just and equitable communication in the human community and, specifically, in service to the work of the church community. "The use of media is now essential", it noted, for evangelization and catechesis (16). However, it is too narrow merely to consider how the media can be utilized for the tasks of spreading the Gospel. The church must also seek to integrate its message into the new cultural context created by the media revolution and to help shape the values of that culture. This process, "*Aetatis Novae*" proposed, will come

about by "the church's active, sympathetic presence within the world of communication" (16) and by the church's "critical evaluation of mass media and their impact upon culture"(17).

Using stronger language than was apparent in earlier documents, this newest document gave pastoral priority both to the defense of human cultural values and expressions and, when necessary, to the promotion of values different than those of the dominant media. The church must also seek pastorally to form the consciences of media professionals and of its own leadership. Bluntly, the role of media in the church's pastoral work is asserted:

Catholic media work is not simply one more program alongside all the rest of the church's activities: social communication have a role to play in every aspect of the Church's mission. Thus, not only should there be a pastoral plan for communication, but communication should be an integral part of every pastoral plan, for it has something to contribute to virtually every other apostolate, ministry and program (21).

Continuing this strong tone, "*Aetatis Novae*" reflected an urgent need for concrete action by church leadership to develop the pastoral communication ministry that has long been advocated by the Pontifical Commission in its earlier documents:

This need may be even greater now than previously, precisely because, to some degree at least, the great contemporary 'Areopagus' of mass media has more or less been neglected by the Church up to this time. As the Holy Father remarks: 'Generally, preference has been given to other means of preaching the gospel and of Christian education, while the mass media are left to the initiative of individuals or small groups and enter into pastoral planning only in a secondary way'. *This situation needs correcting* (23, emphasis added.).

Toward this end, "*Aetatis Novae*" recommended that each country and diocese develop an integrated pastoral plan for social communication which is

adapted to the needs and media environment of its own area. In an appendix to the document, this plan was outlined in four components. First, a vision or mission statement would express communication goals for the various ministries in which the church is involved. This statement would be the springboard for development of specific objectives. Second, an inventory of the media environment within which the specific diocese operates would recognize the media markets and audiences as well as the professional, technical, financial and educational resources that are available. Third, the diocese or national group would develop a communication structure that utilizes the variety of media resources, e.g., print, video, radio, etc., deemed appropriate to support the work of the church in that area. The document called particular attention to evangelization, catechesis and media education as prime target areas. Fourth, the plan should also have opportunities to educate current church professionals as well as all age groups of church members in basic media literacy and usage.

A research phase was seen as a prerequisite for the development of such a pastoral communication plan:

The elements of the research phase are needs assessment, information gathering, and an exploration of alternative models of a pastoral plan. It includes an analysis of the internal communication environment, including the strengths and weaknesses of the Church's current structures and programs for communication as well as the opportunities and challenges these face.

Three types of research will assist in gathering the required information: a needs assessment, a communication audit, and a resource inventory (28).

The proposed pastoral communication plan would provide a practicable vision

and, especially, a concrete agenda for expanding the church's communication ministries into the new media environment. (For an example of a diocesan pastoral communication plan see Archdiocese of Louisville.) A pastoral plan is designed to establish a specific strategy for how a diocese would restructure its communication priorities and budgets, its personnel and its choices of media to address more fully the church's communication ministry in light of the technological revolution. "*Aetatis Novae*" clearly saw such strategic planning as the way to implement the grand vision of earlier documents.

Part 3: Current Practice of Organizational Communication Evaluation

The Church is obviously not the only organization that has seen a need to evaluate its communication practices and policies. Business, government and education have all recognized this need. In their exhaustive review of thirty years of such research, Greenbaum, Hellweg and Falcione (275) noted that the subject of organizational communication evaluation (OCE) first appeared in social science literature beginning in the early 1950s. Other nominators used to describe this general area of study include "communication system appraisal" (Greenbaum, 752) and "communication audit," though this term is sometimes used in specific reference to the instruments and process developed by the International Communication Association (Goldhaber, Porter and Yates).

Greenbaum, Hellweg and Falcione suggest the following definition:

We consider OCE to be applied research involving the examination of the organizational systems in a manner similar to medical diagnosis, as a tool to

uncover potential communication problems and formulate recommendations for remediation (276).

They noted in the literature four reasons that support the use of some form of OCE. First, OCE helps management develop "benchmarks" regarding the status of the organization's communication systems at given points in time. Second, OCE provides information necessary to make improvements in the communication systems. Third, OCE allows management to have feedback for better planning and control decisions. Fourth, and finally, OCE points to problem areas and gaps in the communication system (277-280).

Walter St. John, president of Management Communication Institute, outlined these same goals in a more succinct fashion:

The goals of the assessment should establish whether or not the right word is getting to the right people, at the right time, by the right method, through the right channels (99).

Raymond Falcione also noted the importance of OCE information at times of organizational change (3). Information flow-diffusion processes should be of particular concern to the communication consultant advising an organization that is instituting the changes. Members or employees need adequate information to play their roles or do their jobs. Some form of communication evaluation gives a status report on the effectiveness of getting adequate and appropriate information to those throughout the organization who need it.

In the general field of organizational communication evaluation, the research technique known generically as the communication audit offers a means of analysis

which Dozier and Hellweg term "an important first step away from 'seat of the pants' practices to a more scientific approach"(1). The communication audit may be structured to consider either internal or external communication or both. It is generally composed of a set of research procedures which lead to conclusions about the status of an organization's communication.

Because OCE is applied research, its goals are directed toward the practical needs of organizations. In recommending an audit process, business communication consultant Joseph A. Kopec pointed to this practicality:

It [an audit] is a complete analysis of an organization's communication -- internal and/or external -- designed to "take a picture" of communication needs, policies, practices and capabilities, and to uncover necessary data to allow top management to make informed, economical decisions about future objectives of the organization's communication (24).

He noted also that successful organizational climates occur when there is a planned communication strategy that has been developed as a result of regular OCE.

As a professional business communication auditor, Myron Emanuel likewise viewed OCE as leading to specific action plans which detail needed communication structures, the sorts of media required to achieve organizational goals and the changes needed in interaction with various audiences. He listed several occasions when audits would be most helpful to an organization:

---when there is an awareness that the organization's programs are ineffective or lack credibility but there is no clarity about causes of or solutions for these programs.

---when a new communication policy needs to be evaluated.

---when the communication function of the organization needs to be restructured.

---when communication guidelines, structures or budgets need to be restructured.

---when organizations merge or are acquired.

---when there is labor unrest or an economic crisis.

---when personnel or personnel practices change (53).

Again, the action oriented function of OCE was emphasized by Emanuel:

The goal of an audit is to determine which of the organizational philosophies and goals need communication supports. It should identify the audience or audiences for these messages and determine their information needs and wants, then establish an organization and pipeline to make sure these messages and information can move freely, efficiently and swiftly in both directions (53)

Emanuel's suggested audit procedure was a series of executive interviews with management as well as some kind of survey of employees or members. The various communication vehicles the organization uses and the communication structures it has developed are analyzed in light of the expectations of management and employees/members. The end result of this research process is to provide "the data and authority" (57) to recommend policies and guidelines for creating or changing communication structures. Again, the goal is a specific strategic plan for organizational communication.

Emanuel described the basic audit procedure as follows:

In its essence, a communication audit is a comprehensive and thorough study of communication philosophy, concepts, structure, flow and practice within an organization -- small or large, profit or non-profit, private or public. A communication audit should be able to uncover information blockages, organizational hindrances to effective communication and lost opportunities. It can expose misunderstandings, help gauge media effectiveness and provide an evaluation of ongoing programs (50).

Emanuel further asserted that the audit should generate data that can be used to develop concrete plans of action. These plans would include information about audiences and their needs, about communication organization structure, about the kinds of media that would be appropriate, about the effectiveness of current communication practices and about possible sources of blockage and/or support.

The decade of the 1970s was an especially prolific one for the development of OCE procedures and instruments. Greenbaum emphasized the methodological and conceptual importance of considering organizational communication from a systems perspective. He noted that organizational communication is a system in which the organization's purpose, operational procedures and its structure interact and influence each other. Organizational goals lead to communication network objectives which in turn produce communication policies. These policies generate communication activities that produce goal-related behaviors. The system comes full circle when these behaviors exert impact on the organizations's existing goals. Any analysis of organizational communication must examine the system as a whole and then its specific components (745).

While Greenbaum sketched a theoretical work plan for OCE, it was Wiio and associates in Finland and Goldhaber and associates in the United States who set out to generate standardized instruments and procedures for the evaluation of organizational communication (Greenbaum, Hellwig and Falcione).

Osmo Wiio developed two audit systems, the LTT and the OCD systems. The former was a relatively simple, easily administered, single instrument tool that largely

examined organizational climate. The OCD or Organizational Communication Development procedure built on the LTT but was designed to help diagnose problems in the communication system and to suggest improvements. Wiio noted: "OCD is a practical approach. It is intended to serve as a set of tools which an organization can -- in most cases -- use quickly and cheaply to indicate some possibilities to improve its organizational communication" (20).

Greenbaum, Hellwig and Falcione noted that the audit system developed under the auspices of the International Communication Association had broader theoretical goals inspired by dissatisfaction with audit methodologies up to the time (308). Goldhaber and Krivonos (3-4), Goldhaber, Porter and Yates (43), and Falcione (8) described the ICA audit as one that used more than one instrument of measurement, that standardized procedures and instruments, that gathered data about many organizations so that comparisons become possible, and that measured actual behaviors (not merely attitudes and perceptions) over a period of time.

Five measurement tools were used in ICA audits and can be administered independently or in any combination. A standardized survey questionnaire formed the heart of the audit; it required respondents to indicate their perception of the current status of their communication system as well as their desired or ideal status (Goldhaber, Porter and Yates, 2). Data of a more qualitative nature was also gathered via interviews with a variety of members of the organization. These interviews sought information that could corroborate or expand on that gathered by other audit tools. Network analysis, descriptions of critical communication incidents

and communication diaries were the other three instruments.

Goldhaber and Krivonos (43-44) detailed seven "products" from the ICA audit. Among these were a "set of general recommendations, derived from the results of the audit, indicating which attitudes, behaviors, practices and skills should be continued, added, changed or eliminated" (46). While they asserted the improved methodological and theoretical basis of the ICA and the value of standardized instruments, procedures and data base, even the authors themselves noted the "practical limits" (52) of their audit system. These included considerable time commitment by the organization and the perceived cost effectiveness.

The audit described by Eadie and associates reveals the complexity of the ICA process as well as the sort of information garnered.

The picture which emerged from this data was one of two groups operating within the same organization. These two groups had differing perspectives on how the organization ought to function, and differing communication patterns reflected these perspectival distinctions (9).

The organization learned, for example, that employees felt they were receiving too much information about the organization's problems and not enough that could positively influence their job performance. Similarly, information coming down the organization was usually written while the employees indicated a preference for oral communication, especially since some employees lacked adequate reading skills. Middle managers were perceived to be obstacles to communication between lower and upper levels of the organization. It was clear, they reported, that a common vision of the organization's purpose was not shared by the management and employees. The authors concluded that their study of a mental health center suggests that the ICA

model can be applied to non-industrial organizations.

Criticism of the ICA audit system by Sincoff and Hoyer, while acknowledging certain strengths, focused on its exaggerated claims as the principal needs-analysis approach for organizations. Their concern was summarized thus:

At best it can accurately identify some communicational strengths and weaknesses which can be used for improving practices and policies of communication in the organization; at worst it may promise more than it can produce, kindle false hopes, and actually breed mistrust and create barriers to effective communication in the organization (59).

Greenbaum, Hellwig and Falcione noted criticism of ICA's use of instruments that were developed for organizations with tightly managed corporate structures, and concluded that applicability of the procedure to educational or voluntary organizations is suspect (304). Respect for the unique character of the audited organization and its leadership structures is critical to developing effective and helpful evaluative tools.

Sue Dewine and her associates responded to the range of criticisms of the ICA audit and proposed a variety of changes in both its instruments and procedures (4-6). Of the criticisms they noted, the ones of particular significance to present purposes include the lack of procedures to follow up the audit and evaluate its effectiveness, the complaint that the audit is too long and too complicated with resultant concerns about cost effectiveness, and finally that the procedures for interpreting the data in a way that provides meaningful data for management are weak.

Dewine proceeded to develop the Ohio University Data Bank which conducted a series of audits so as to evaluate them and propose appropriate changes. Despite all the weaknesses of the ICA process, they reported the following summary statement:

First, the audit does appear to have the ability to identify or highlight communication problems and potential solutions within an organization. Aside from an awareness of obvious problems, the audit appeared, for a majority of the administrators, to provide viable alternatives, confirm the directions or courses management had already charted, initiate creative thinking or, in some instances, inspire administrators to do nothing at all. Second, data demonstrate that managers maintain their own form of organizational reality. The administrators will select and accept issue analyses and recommendations from an audit based on their own perceptions of organizational reality and what is most appropriate for their organizations, regardless of the nature of the recommendations. The recommendations may function as a force to propel communication behaviors to a higher level of consciousness for the purposes of observation, assessment and modification. (10-11).

To deal with the criticism regarding the lack of procedures for developing recommendations, a client-centered approach is suggested. According to DeWine and associates these questions should be asked:

Has the audit team seriously considered whether or not the recommendations can be implemented in the organization? (Workable) Has there been sufficient consideration whether or not the recommendations can be implemented in the organization? (Desirability) Will the recommendations actually fit into the reality of the organization as it exists? (Practical) (12).

The process suggested is termed "POMRIE" which stands for the six parts of any recommendations to the client: problem, objective, method, reality, implementation and evaluation. The authors claimed that this procedure of reporting would make an audit more readily useful to management.

The survey instrument of the ICA audit is also substantially revised, shortened and renamed the "Survey of Organizational Communication" to more clearly indicate what it purports to assess. Dewine and associates concluded, having suggested their changes in the audit procedures:

Does the audit provide a wealth of information for improving an organization? Perhaps. What it does provide is an organization's generalized and collective

view of its communication climate which may or may not be parallel with the views of top management (18).

A further response to criticisms of the ICA and the development of the audit concept, came with the distinction between an "internal communication audit" and a "public relations audit" as reflected in Dozier and Hellwig and in Grunig. The former suggested that a public relations audit is a tool of formative evaluation while the internal communication audit is a diagnostic tool for pinpointing problems within the organization (5-6). Dozier and Hellweg noted, however, that a public relations audit can be conducted within an organization with employees or members standing as one of the publics with whom the organization must communicate.

[A] public relations audit is concerned primarily with the attitudes, knowledge levels, and behavior of priority publics as they regard the organization or issues important to the organization. . . . An internal communication audit is concerned with the attributes of the communication systems itself within the organization. Thus, an internal communication audit describes the interpersonal communication network within an organization, attitudes of members toward the adequacy and quality of information and presumed outcomes such as job satisfaction (13).

A public relations audit is also said to be somewhat resistant to standardization inasmuch as it must be quite adaptive to the specific situation of the organization.

While asserting the basic validity of this position, the line of demarcation between the two types of audits may be drawn too tightly, as is demonstrated by James Grunig. In providing appropriate information for a state department of education, Grunig faced an organization that needed to go beyond the question of employees' perceptions of and satisfaction with communication within the organization.

In this case, the [audit] system was designed to facilitate communication within the State Department of Education (internal communication), within the state educational system (intra-internal communication), and among members of the educational system and external publics (external communication) (4).

The audit had to provide information about all three levels of communication as well as determine whether communication training would be necessary to improve communication among the employees and with the public. Rather than slavishly following the ICA model, which was clearly inappropriate for his purposes, Grunig developed his own survey instrument with a wider range of questions.

In their criticisms of the ICA audit, Daniels and Striker were similarly concerned about the narrow definition of organizational communication that underlies it. They noted that the survey questions of the ICA audit are so heavily focused on the information needs of individuals that they give little insight into the social dimensions of organizational communication. They also contend that the ICA audit process is not adaptable to a variety of organizational types. Thus, they recommended:

In our opinion, OCE objectives are best served when researchers avoid canned or prepackaged methods such as the International Communication Association Communication Audit. Instead, researchers should devise a good conceptual framework for OCE that is relevant to the situation and organization involved in the project. At best, any canned package will require at least some modification in light of this framework. At worst, you will have to design your own instruments from scratch (260).

In his Communication Audit Handbook, Seymour Hamilton also advocated a less rigid format than the ICA process. He wrote that the CEO of an organization in selecting an auditor should seek a good match between the circumstances of the organization and the audit strategy of the prospective auditor. As to the audit

procedures:

There is no one single package of methodologies that can be applied in a communication audit to all organizations. It all depends on size, maturity, circumstances and budget. There is, however, a basic process that is dictated by concerns for quality of information and hence reliability of recommendations and the effectiveness of their implementation (8).

Hamilton detailed six potential components of an auditing procedure: focus groups, surveys, network analysis, interviews, technology assessment and content analysis.

Based on the particulars of the specific organization to be audited, a combination of some or all of these may be selected.

Triangulation, or simultaneous use of different corroborating techniques (instruments), is the principle that controls all the approaches outlined in this handbook. No one methodology. . . . is sufficient in itself. A single technique, even rigorously administered, will produce biased results simply because of the inherent strengths and weaknesses in that methodology. By using triangulation, three simultaneously applied approaches tackle problems and opportunities from different perspectives, identifying issues by independent, corroborating evidence. . . . The report generated at the close of a triangulated audit is also likely to appeal to more people within the organization, hence generating a more widespread willingness to participate in its implementation (9).

Hamilton's triangulation of methodologies was consistent with the intent of the original ICA audit process (Goldhaber and Krivnos) as well as with the experience of others who have implemented the procedure (Eadie et al.).

A combination of methods to obtain both qualitative and quantitative information about an organization's communication was also asserted by specialists who primarily used qualitative methods like the focus group (Stewart and Shamdasani; Bellenger, Bernhardt and Goldstucker; and Morgan). Morgan noted that while survey research has been most successful in establishing itself as the preferred method of

social science research: "In the absence of adequate triangulation, however, such self-sufficiency may become inbreeding" (36). Perspectives and insights that are gained from survey questions can be amplified or more clearly interpreted in light of information garnered from focus groups or interviews. Similarly, these latter techniques can also provide pretesting data necessary for evaluating survey instruments (34).

Hamilton made the additional distinction between the data generated by focus groups and that from individual interviews. In focus groups participants are likely to stimulate each other in generating ideas and insights. They are also likely to use the public, somewhat impersonal language typical in group contexts. In one-on-one interviews there is a greater chance that people will speak more personally about their positive or negative feelings toward the organization, their own roles and the communication structures (70).

Sr. Dawn Tomaszewski used such a combination of group interviews (or focus groups), executive interviews and a specially devised survey instrument to analyze communication within a Catholic women's religious community. The audit procedure provided an evaluation of current strengths and weaknesses in the communication structure and practices of the community as well as recommendation for future refinements (64-73).

Roy G. Foltz noted the importance of insuring that the OCE process is designed in such a way that it nets the sort of practical data that will be useful to the organization in achieving its own stated purposes:

The key to gaining support for organizational objectives, policies and programs is to serve the organization's internal audience: to know what information they want and the media they prefer (6).

This review of the literature suggested that because types of organizations are so diverse in their purposes, size, structure, goals and methods of operation, procedures for evaluating organizational communication must be adapted to the uniqueness of each. A combination of evaluation tools specifically designed to best suit the organization under scrutiny is necessary to yield both the quantitative and qualitative data critical to complete evaluation.

Part 4: Using OCE Procedures to Assist the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in Developing a Communication Plan

As a regional unit of the worldwide Catholic Church, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston needed to develop the pastoral plan of communication mandated by the various official documents of the Church cited above. As "*Aetatis Novae*" noted:

The Church's strategies in the field of social communication must be based on the results of sound media research which have been subjected to informed analysis and evaluation. It is important that communication research include topics and issues of particular relevance to the mission of the Church in the particular nation and region involved (32).

Preliminary to the development of a research plan leading toward a diocesan pastoral plan for communication, then, was an examination of the current communication environment and resources that are in use and/or available.

For the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston a major factor in such a plan was geographic: the territory of the Diocese included the entire state of West Virginia,

approximately 24,000 square miles. The two panhandles of the state stretch driving time from north to south or east to west to nearly seven hours. The diocesan headquarters and communication center are located in the northern panhandle; approximately 30% of the Catholic population also lives in this panhandle. The eastern panhandle is the highest growth area.

Of the state's 1.8 million people, nearly 106,000 are Catholics (6%). These Catholics live in 40,000 households. There are 126 parishes or local churches and an additional 41 smaller "mission" churches ("Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Directory 1991-92", 6). Over 70% of the Catholic population lives in the northern tier of the state. It is estimated that 55% of West Virginia's population has no church affiliation (Glenmary, 4 & 8).

The major component of diocesan communication efforts has been The Catholic Spirit. This weekly newspaper of sixteen to twenty pages has a current circulation of 4,700 or 10% of the Catholic households; it is subsidized from diocesan resources by approximately \$100,000 per year. In the last year and a half substantial efforts were made to improve both the editorial quality and the circulation of the paper. These efforts included hiring a professional editor, seeking parish support for subscriptions and the purchase of additional computer and production equipment. Circulation increased by about 1,000 in this period.

The Diocese also built and equipped a television production facility in 1981. This facility includes a large, well lighted studio and two recently purchased studio cameras; a control room equipped with video switcher, new audio mixer, new S-VHS

editing equipment and ten year old 3/4" U-matic editing equipment. There is also a satellite downlink and Catholic Television Network of America (CTNA) decoder, though the Diocese is not now a subscriber of CTNA programming. Other equipment includes an audio tape duplicator, a new S-VHS camcorder, a 3/4" video field recorder and portable lighting kit and a variety of VHS video cassette recorders and players. There is no telephone conferencing equipment.

Currently, regular television communication by the diocese is limited to the bi-weekly taping of Sunday worship which is broadcast early on Sunday morning for the benefit of the sick and shut in. A volunteer crew and a free lance technical director produce this worship service in the diocesan communication center. TCI Cable of Wheeling airs the tape on local access channel on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am and WTRF, Channel 7 in Wheeling, broadcasts it free of charge at 6:30 am. This Sunday worship can be received by the northern third of the Diocese. Some form of this TV Mass has been available in the Wheeling area for approximately 15 years.

The Diocese has also produced and broadcast on a one time basis a half hour, talk format special at Christmas time. This special was broadcast both in Wheeling and in the Huntington-Charleston areas. With the production assistance of WTRF, major diocesan events were broadcast on four occasions: the funeral of Bishop Joseph Hodges, the installation of Bishop Francis Schulte, the ordination and then the installation of Bishop Bernard Schmitt.

The Diocese sponsors a half-hour, nationally produced weekly radio program in Morgantown on WAJR. It is a country music format program with values-oriented

interludes; it is produced by Paulist Productions of Washington, DC.

In the past two years there have been several short 'talking-head' training videos produced by the Communication Office for limited or one-time use by teachers or diocesan employees. One ten-minute slide program on the history and background of the diocese was produced and then transferred to video tape. This tape has been used for orienting new personnel and as part of a series of diocesan regional planning meetings. This video piece has been popularly requested for use in parishes and schools throughout the Diocese.

On several occasions public service announcements produced by national church related organizations have been distributed to both radio and television stations throughout the state. There were no records kept of air time given these announcements.

When the Diocese wishes to use commercial television it must deal with West Virginia's six different television media markets, with the eastern panhandle also included in the Washington, DC, market and the northern panhandle also in Pittsburgh, PA. The six West Virginia television markets, their national size ranking and the number of households served are as follows:

Charleston-Huntington,	#50,	511,900 households
Wheeling-Stubenville,	#143,	152,800 households
Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill,	#145,	145,500 households
Clarksburg-Weston,	#154,	126,300 households
Hagerstown (Martinsburg),	#194,	43,300 households
Parkersburg-Marietta,	#197,	39,100 households

(The Broadcasting Yearbook, C129-203)

Within these markets, there are ten commercial television stations, two

independents (one of which is a Christian format station), and three public broadcasting stations. There are sixty-eight AM and eighty-eight FM radio stations in the state; thirty-four daily papers, fourteen Sunday papers and sixty-nine weeklies. Unlike some Catholic dioceses in the United States which have one television station that covers its entire area, plus a few radio stations and newspapers, the media environment for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is fragmented.

Video teleconferencing reception capability is available at the Wheeling Communication studio as well as at the Bishop Hodges Pastoral Center in Huttonsville, one of four diocese-owned pastoral centers. Past usage of video teleconferences has been limited to conferences of national origination and were either unscrambled signals or conferences singly purchased from Catholic Television Network in Washington, DC. Teleconferencing sites have been arranged on an ad hoc basis at four of the state's Catholic hospitals and at Wheeling Jesuit College. Other hospitals and secular educational institutions have also been used as sites for these conferences. None of the diocese's 38 elementary and secondary schools are currently equipped with downlink capabilities. Only one local parish is known to have a downlink. Though the four pastoral centers owned and operated by the Diocese are used extensively for education and for a variety of meetings, teleconferencing has not been part of the on-going programming.

The Communication Center of the Diocese also includes an audio-visual lending library with one central location and four regional distribution centers.

The current staff of the Communication Office includes the communication

director (a priest of the Diocese) and a secretary, an audio-visual manager, the newspaper editor, two newspaper editorial and two production staffers. From 1980 through 1985 the Diocese also employed a television-radio producer. All of the staff work out of the Communication Building in Wheeling.

Another component of internal communication in the diocese is a centralized mail system. This system was established in March, 1991, and brings together all mailings from central offices to local parishes, schools and institutions. Mail goes out in a single, indexed packet each Friday. The mail room is not under the supervision of the Communication Office though the central mail procedures are coordinated by that Office.

No research has been done in recent years to determine the effectiveness or coverage of diocesan communication. No market studies have sought readership data regarding The Catholic Spirit. No data exist regarding the communication needs of the Catholic population. Frequent wonder is expressed both within and without the Diocese regarding the underutilization of the television studio. There is a clear need for data that would enable diocesan leaders to establish a comprehensive pastoral communication plan.

A reorganization of the diocesan Office of Communication in 1990 pointed to the need for information about the effectiveness of current communication efforts and about the communication needs of various ministries and personnel in the diocese. No strategic communication plan existed that would provide a justification for staffing or budget decisions by diocesan leadership. A general feeling circulated in the

leadership that "something has to be done in communication" to more fully utilize current telecommunication potential and existing technical facilities. Of particular concern was developing strategies for using telecommunication to overcome the geographical distances that make educational and other pastoral programming difficult in a Diocese that includes the entire state of West Virginia.

In September of 1991, Bishop Bernard W. Schmitt authorized the Office of Communication to undertake a research project that would seek data useful in the development of a comprehensive communication plan for the Diocese. This project was undertaken to determine:

1. What is the value of selected sources of information as perceived by various demographic groups in the diocesan church in obtaining information about religious issues, church and Christian moral values.
2. How do a variety of demographic groups in the diocesan church perceive the current levels of information they receive on a variety of church, morality and religion related issues.
3. How do a variety of demographic groups in the diocesan church perceive the desired levels of information they would like to receive on these issues.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

In applying OCE insights to the particular needs of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the decision was made to focus on the communication media used by the laity, clergy and religious (vowed sisters, brothers and priests of various orders such as Jesuits, Sisters of St. Joseph, etc.) of the Diocese and on the subjects of religion, church and Christian morality about which they currently receive information and about which they would like to receive more information. This choice was made in distinction to a procedure which would evaluate the internal communication of the bureaucratic structure of the Diocese or one which would examine the Diocese's communication with the public or larger West Virginia community.

As suggested by the OCE research described in Chapter 1, this study was designed to combine quantitative and qualitative data. An initial draft of a survey instrument was designed which asked about respondents' use of various channels to access information about religion, church and Christian moral issues. This preliminary instrument, then, for purposes of refinement, became one part of a series of executive and management level interviews and of three focus groups.

This survey instrument consisted of four parts (see Appendix B). Section A of the survey presented sixteen possible sources of information and sought an indication of "importance to you" of each source for information regarding "the church, religion and Christian moral issues." A five-choice Likert scale was used with #1 equal to very little importance, #2 equal to little importance, #3 equal to moderate importance,

#4 equal to great importance and #5 equal to very great importance.

Sections B and C were composed of identical lists of twenty subjects regarding "church, religion and Christian moral issues." Section B asked the same five-choice Likert rating of "how much information you now receive" on each of the subjects or current levels of information. Section C asked "how much information you would like to receive" or desired levels of information.

Section D, Background Information, requested eight demographic characteristics: state of life in the Church (i.e., single or married lay person, clergy or religious); whether or not the respondent was an employee of the diocese, a parish or a church agency; whether or not they now served or had in the past served on a parish council or committee or as an officer in a parish organization; whether they became Catholic before or after the age of 18; their age range (i.e., under 21, 21-35, 36-50, 51-65, over 65); gender; their best guess at the size of their own parish community (under 100 members, 100-500, 500-1,000, or over 1,000) and the frequency of attendance at Sunday mass (i.e., weekly, more than once a month, less than once a month, rarely or not at all). This section concluded with several blank lines for "comments or suggestion you would like to share about communication in the Church, in the Diocese or in your parish."

Before the interviewing process or focus groups were started, a letter from the Bishop was sent to all staff alerting them to the audit and providing his authorization for the same. A copy of this passport letter may be found in Appendix B.

The interview section of the project sought qualitative information about

communication from the Bishop, Bernard W. Schmitt, and from the central administrative group known as the Bishop's Staff. This group was composed of the Vicar for Administrative Services and Finance, Rev. Robert Nash; the Vicar for Pastoral Services and Personnel, Rev. Charles McCallister; the Associate Vicar for Religious, Sr. Anne Regina O'Leary, S.S.J.; Chairman of the Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Rev. Robert Arkle; Chairman of the Department of Social Ministries, Mr. George Smoulder; and Director of the Office of Pastoral Planning, Rev. Eugene Ostrowski. The protocol for these interviews is in the Appendix C.

Additionally, five managers from the Department of Catholic Education and Formation were also interviewed: Ms. Judith Minear, Superintendent of Catholic Schools; Sr. Loretta Jean Schorr, C.D.P., Coordinator of Adult Formation; Ms. Anne Comeaux, Coordinator of Religious Education; Mr. Michael Hall, Coordinator of Youth Ministry; and Sr. Marian Mills, C.S.J., Coordinator of Region 4.

Three focus groups were also conducted to provide additional qualitative information about communication within the Diocese. One group was composed of the nine priests who were members of the Weirton Deanery (a regional subdivision of the Diocese) which was geographically near to the central administration center in Wheeling and which represented largely small towns and cities. A second group was composed of the six priests and three women religious who comprised the Weston Deanery, which was geographically distant from Wheeling and largely made up of rural areas and small towns. A third group was composed of eight members of the central administrative staff, five of whom were program staff, and three

support/clerical staff. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour and a half. The protocol for these are included in Appendices D and E.

Based on suggestions and additions from both the interviews and the various focus groups a final form of the survey instrument was established. A copy of this form may be found in Appendix A.

The sampling frame for the lay respondents in the quantitative survey was the central mailing list maintained by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. This list included names of Catholic households in the Diocese as submitted and regularly updated by local parishes. A random selection procedure designed by the Catholic Computer Systems Program, Richmond, VA, was used to extract 670 names from the total sampling frame of 40,876 on November 1, 1991. The total of respondents from this sample necessary for reliability at 95% confidence level was 381. It was assumed that at least 60% of those to whom surveys were mailed would respond if the request came from the Bishop of the Diocese on official stationery.

The entire population of 299 priests, pastoral ministers, parish-based religious and administrative staff was also surveyed by using the Central Mailing System of the Diocese. This system includes all parishes, missions and institutions.

The survey instrument was mailed along with a cover letter from Bishop Schmitt (sample provided in Appendix B) and a stamped and coded return envelope on January 3, 1992, to the 670 lay and 299 clergy/religious. By March 1, 1992, only 175 of the lay respondent surveys had been returned. A second mailing with a cover letter from the Office of Communication (sample also provided in Appendix D) was

done on that date to the 485 non-respondents.

After the tabulation of the data from the surveys was completed the following relationships were examined:

1. The ranked order of the means for sources of information for all respondents.
2. The differences between the means (t-tests) for sources of information for:
 - a. laity and clergy/religious
 - b. single laity and married laity
 - c. church employees and non-employees
 - d. those who have and those who have not served on parish councils or committees or as an officer of a parish organization
 - e. those who became Catholic before age 18 and after age 18
 - f. those under age 30 and over age 30
 - g. those under age 50 and over age 50
 - h. those under age 65 and over age 65
 - i. men and women
 - j. those from parishes with less than 500 and more than 500 members
 - k. those from parishes with less than 100 and more than 100 members.
 - l. laity and religious
 - m. those who attend Sunday mass weekly and those who attend less than weekly.
3. Differences between the means (t-tests) for current information levels

compared to the means for desired levels of information for all respondents.

4. Differences between the means (t-tests) for current levels of information for the same thirteen demographic comparisons as in #2 above.
5. Differences between the means for desired levels of information for the same thirteen demographic comparisons as in #2 above.
6. Differences between the means (t-tests) on satisfaction with the amount of information received for the various demographic comparisons as in #2 above. Satisfaction level was operationally defined as the difference between the means for current levels of information and the means for desired levels of information.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Part 1: Sample Composition

Despite two mailings, one on the bishop's official stationery, 305 or 45.52 percent of the 670 lay persons surveyed returned the completed survey. This number was 76 respondents short of the 381 needed for reliability at the 95 percent confidence level. Of the 299 clergy and religious group contacted via the centralized mail system, 62 percent returned a completed survey.

In the total sample of 502 respondents, 18.73 percent were single lay persons, 43.38 percent were married lay persons, 21.18 percent were clergy, 16.70 percent were religious (see Table 1a below). Those who did not respond to the appropriate

Table 1a

Characteristics of the sample: state of life

Demographic Characteristic	Specification	Percentage of total sample (n = 502)	Percentage of those responding
State of life	Single Lay Person	18.33	18.73
	Married Lay	42.43	43.38
	Clergy	20.72	21.18
	Religious	16.33	16.70
	No response	2.19	..

demographic question regarding state of life (or the other questions discussed below) were not included in the percentage calculations. (Here and throughout this thesis the term "religious" means sisters or brothers who are members of religious communities such as Franciscans or Sisters of St. Joseph. Priests, some of whom are religious and some of whom are diocesan and thus not members of a religious community, are all grouped as one under "clergy.")

In the demographic question regarding employment, 30.78 percent of the respondents were employees of the diocese, parish or church agency and 69.22 percent were not so employed as shown in Table 1b.

Table 1b

Characteristics of the Sample: Employment by Church

Demographic Characteristic	Specification	Percentage of total sample (n = 502)	Percentage of those responding
Employee of Church	Yes	30.48	30.78
	No	68.53	69.22
	No response	0.01	..

In the sample, 49.18 percent at some time had served on a parish council or committee or as an officer of a parish organization and 89.3 percent became Catholic before the age of 18. See Tables 1c.

Table 1c

**Characteristics of the Sample:
Officers of Parish Councils, Committees or Organizations
and Age of Entry into the Catholic Church**

Demographic Characteristic	Specification	Percentage of total sample (n = 502)	Percentage of those responding
Officer of Organization	Yes	48.01	49.18
	No	49.60	50.82
	No response	2.39	..
Became Catholic	Before age 18	86.45	89.30
	After age 18	10.36	10.70
	No response	3.19	..

As to age range, only 0.4 percent were below age 21, 11.02 percent between 21 and 35, 29.26 percent between 36 and 50, 29.46 percent between 51 and 65, and 29.68 percent were over the age of 65. See Table 1d.

There were more female respondents, 53.33 percent of the sample, than male. See Table 1d.

Parishes with under 100 members accounted for 9.56 percent, those between 100 and 500 members for 35.97 percent, those between 500 and 1000 members for 24.12 percent and those over 1000 members for 30.35 percent. See Table 1d.

Table 1d

Characteristics of the Sample: Age, Gender and Size of Parish

Demographic Characteristic	Specification	Percentage of total sample (n = 502)	Percentage of those responding
Age Range	under 21	0.40	0.40
	between 21-35	10.96	11.02
	between 36-50	29.08	29.26
	between 51-65	29.28	29.46
	overage 65	29.68	29.68
	no response	0.60	..
Gender	male	42.63	43.67
	female	54.98	56.33
	no response	2.39	..
Members in Parish	under 100	9.16	9.56
	between 100-500	34.46	35.97
	between 500-1000	23.11	24.12
	over 1000	29.08	30.35
	no response	4.18	..

The overwhelming majority of the respondents were weekly attendants at Sunday Mass, 86.15 percent. See Table 1e.

TABLE 1e

Characteristics of the Sample: Frequency of Attendance at Mass

Demographic characteristic	Specification	Percentage of total sample (n = 502)	Percentage of those responding
Frequency of Mass Attendance	weekly	84.26	86.15
	more than once a month	6.77	6.92
	less than once a month	2.39	2.44
	rarely or not at all	4.38	4.48
	no response	2.19	. .

Part 2: Sources of Information

Sermons were perceived as the most important source of information about the church, religion and Christian moral issues for the combined pool of all respondents (lay, religious and clergy). Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations and number of respondents for all sixteen sources of information from most important to least important. Local parish bulletins, then conversations with priests and conversations with other Catholics were next in order of preference. Religious television was perceived least important by this group; radio was second least

important. The Catholic Spirit was twelfth in relative importance.

Table 2
**Means and Standard Deviations for the Importance
of Sources of Information.**

Sources of Information	Mean*	sd	n
Sermons	3.91	1.10	483
Parish Bulletin	3.57	1.40	502
Conversations with Priests	3.51	1.10	486
Conversations with Catholics	3.39	1.00	487
Religious/Spiritual Books	3.28	1.30	471
Pulpit Announcements	3.11	1.30	471
Daily Newspaper	2.96	1.20	482
Parish Adult Education	2.87	1.30	455
Television	2.87	1.20	493
Religious Magazines	2.86	1.30	475
Newsletters from Diocese	2.85	1.10	478
<u>The Catholic Spirit</u>	2.81	1.40	502
Religious Newspapers	2.61	1.20	471
Diocesan Workshops/Seminars	2.59	1.20	468
Radio	2.32	1.20	479
Religious Television	2.26	1.20	468

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

When respondents were cross-partitioned into two groups, laity and clergy/religious, differences for the means of sources of information were subjected to t-tests and six

sources were statistically significant (See Table 3 below). Respondents perceived the parish bulletin ($t = 4.53$; $df = 466$; $p < .01$) and pulpit announcements ($t = 2.08$; $df = 461$; $p < .05$) more important to them than did the clergy and religious

Table 3

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity and Clergy/religious
on the importance of various media as a source of
information on religious issues**

media sources	laity*	clergy/rel.*	t values	df	signif.
Parish Bulletin	3.96	3.43	4.53	466	$p < .01$
<u>The Catholic Spirit</u>	2.72	3.30	-3.52	468	$p < .01$
Religious Newspapers	2.25	3.19	-2.81	471	$p < .01$
Religious Magazines	2.50	3.44	-2.66	464	$p < .01$
Religious/Spiritual Books	2.91	3.87	-2.58	460	$p < .05$
Pulpit Announcements	3.47	2.51	2.08	461	$p < .01$

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

respondents: This latter group perceived four sources of information more important to them than did the laity: The Catholic Spirit ($t = -3.52$; $df = 468$; $p < .01$), religious newspapers ($t = -2.81$; $df = 460$; $p < .01$), religious magazines ($p < .01$, $df = 464$) and religious/spiritual books ($t = -2.58$; $df = 460$; $p < .01$).

When the laity were compared only to religious, three sources of information were perceived differently. The laity perceived the parish bulletin to be a more important source of information than did the religious ($t = 4.59$; $df = 369$; $p < .01$).

While the laity also perceived greater importance to the daily newspaper and pulpit announcements, these differences were not statistically significant. The religious, on the other hand, perceived The Catholic Spirit ($t = -2.53$; $df = 365$; $p. < .05$), religious newspapers ($t = -2.13$; $df = 356$; $p. < .05$) and religious books ($t = -2.26$; $p. < .05$) to be significantly more important than did the laity. Only the statistically significant results are found in Table 4.

Table 4

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity and of Religious
on the Importance of Various Media Sources for
Information on Religious Issues**

media source	laity*	religious*	t values	df	signif.
Parish Bulletin	3.96	3.25	4.59	369	$p. < .01$
<u>The Catholic Spirit</u>	2.72	3.28	-2.53	365	$p. < .05$
Religious Newspapers	2.25	3.22	-2.13	356	$p. < .05$
Religious/Spiritual Books	2.91	4.05	-2.26	357	$p. < .05$

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

When data were cross-partitioned by age, those over the age of 50 gave a statistically more significant preference for religious television ($t = -2.11$; $df = 287$; $p. < .05$). There was not a statistically significant greater preference for the parish bulletin, The Catholic Spirit, daily newspapers or television. Table 5 presents only this statistically significant comparison. When the age-cross partitioning was raised to 65, laity over age 65 revealed a statistically significant preference for both religious television ($t = -2.24$; $df = 287$; $p. < .05$) and for The Catholic Spirit ($t = -2.12$; df

Table 5

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Respondents under age 50
and those over age 50 on the Importance of
Various Media as Sources of Information on
Religious Issues**

media sources	under 50*	over 50	t values	df	signif.
Religious Television	2.03	2.72	-2.11	287	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

= 282; p. < .05). Table 6 reports the results for these two comparisons. When the age level was lowered to 35, no sources of information were statistically significant.

Table 6

**Comparisons of the Perceptions of Laity under age 65 and
over age 65 on the Importance of Various
Media Sources of Information on Religious Issues**

media sources	under 65*	over 65*	t values	df	signif.
<u>The Catholic Spirit</u>	2.57	3.06	-2.12	282	p. < .05
Religious Television	2.14	2.94	-2.24	287	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

For lay men and lay women, the only source of information that showed a statistically significant difference was the parish bulletin. Women preferred the bulletin more than men (t = -2.12; df = 287; p. < .05). See Table 7 for this result.

Table 7

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Men and of Women
of the Importance of Various Media Source of
Religious Information**

media source	men*	women*	t values	df	signif.
Parish Bulletin	3.77	4.07	-2.12	287	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

Weekly mass attenders, as might be expected, gave a significantly higher rating to the parish bulletin which is normally distributed at the Sunday service (p. < .01, df = 296). None of the other sources, including the also weekly sermons and pulpit announcements, revealed any significant differences (see Table 8).

Table 8

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity who Attend Mass
Weekly and those who Attend Less Often on the Importance
of Various Media Sources of Religious Information.**

media source	weekly*	< weekly*	t values	df	signif.
Parish Bulletin	4.08	3.39	4.17	296	p. < .01

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means..

There were no statistically significant differences in the importance assigned to sources of information between single laity and married laity, between those who were church employees and those who were not, between those who had served on

parish committees and organizations and those who had not; between those who had become Catholic before the age of 18 and those who had not.

The size of the respondents' parish community did not indicate any statistically significant differences on sources of information.

Part 3: Differences between current and desired levels of information

The means among the sixteen subjects for the levels of information currently received, showed that the three about which respondents were getting the most information were, in order: a Christian's responsibility to the poor and needy, the meaning and practice of prayer and personal growth in prayer. The subjects regarding which respondents perceived they were getting the least amount of current information were, in ascending order: issues in Christian business ethics, Christian marriage enrichment and the spiritual dimensions of work.

For the desired levels of information about the same sixteen subjects, the three ranked highest in importance were: personal growth in faith, the meaning and practice of prayer and understanding the bible. The lowest three were the same as for current levels but in a slightly different order: lowest was issues in Christian business ethics, then spiritual dimensions of work job, followed by Christian marriage enrichment. The complete list and rank of all sixteen subjects for both current and for desired levels will be found in Table 9.

When differences (t tests) between the correlated means for current levels of

TABLE 9
Means, rank order and number of respondents
for current levels & desired levels of information on sixteen subjects
of religion, church and Christian moral issues

Subject of information	Current Levels of Information*		Desired Levels of Information*		N
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
Christian's Responsibility to the Poor/Needy	3.21	1	3.54	6	474
Meaning and Practice of Prayer	3.16	2	3.70	2	467
Personal Growth in Faith	3.13	3	3.79	1	467
Opportunities for Christian Charity/Service	3.11	4	3.42	11	474
Understanding Catholic Beliefs and Practices	3.03	5	3.61	5	469
Issues Facing the Parish or Local Church	2.95	6	3.64	4	459
Issues of Personal Moral Behavior	2.95	6	3.50	7	471
Understanding the Bible	2.94	8	3.65	3	469
Moral Issues in Economic/Social Affairs	2.89	9	3.45	9	472
Christian Family Life Issues	2.75	10	3.50	7	461
Christian Moral Issues in Political Affairs	2.69	11	3.23	15	463
Issues Facing the American Church	2.68	12	3.39	12	466
Issues Facing Internat./ Worldwide Church	2.66	13	3.24	14	466
Issues Facing the Statewide/Diocesan Church	2.60	14	3.44	10	467
Religious Formation of Children/ Adoles.	2.53	15	3.14	17	458
Spreading the Faith to Non-church Members	2.48	16	3.16	16	465
Outreach to Inactive Church Members	2.43	17	3.25	13	466
Spiritual Dimensions of My Work or Job	2.33	18	2.95	19	444
Christian Marriage Enrichment	2.21	19	3.01	18	447
Issues in Christian Business Ethics	2.02	20	2.78	20	448

*1=very little; 2=little; 3=moderate; 4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of means.

Table 10
Comparison of the Perceptions of the Amount of Information
Currently Received and the Amount of Information Desired
among Those Responding to Both.

subject of information	current	desired	correl- ated t value	signif.	df
Issues Facing Diocesan Church	2.60	3.44	-15.36	p< .01	466
Outreach to Inactive Members	2.43	3.25	-13.60	p< .01	465
Issues in Christian Business Ethic	2.20	2.78	-13.57	p< .01	447
Christian Marriage Enrichment	2.21	3.01	-12.80	p< .01	446
Christian Family Life Issues	2.75	3.50	-13.01	p< .01	460
Issues Facing the Amer. Church	2.68	3.39	-12.84	p< .01	465
Understanding the Bible	2.94	3.65	-11.83	p< .01	468
Spreading Faith to Non-members	2.48	3.16	-11.84	p< .01	464
Personal Growth in Faith	3.13	3.79	-12.23	p< .01	466
Issues Facing the Parish Church	2.95	3.64	-12.75	p< .01	458
Issues Facing Worldwide Church	2.66	3.24	-10.83	p< .01	465
Understanding Catholic Beliefs	3.30	3.61	-9.53	p< .01	468
Issues in Economic/Social Affairs	2.89	3.45	-9.88	p< .01	471
Religious Formation of Children	2.53	3.14	-10.19	p< .01	457
Issues of Personal Moral Behavior	2.95	3.50	-9.42	p< .01	470
Spiritual Dimensions of Work	2.33	2.95	-11.12	p< .01	443
Moral Issues in Political Affairs	2.69	3.23	-9.53	p< .01	462
Practice of Prayer	3.16	3.70	-9.56	p< .01	466
Responsibility to the Poor	3.21	3.54	-6.11	p< .01	473
Opportunities for Charity	3.11	3.42	-5.29	p< .01	473

*1= very little; 2=little; 3=moderate; 4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of means.

information and means for desired levels of information were examined for the total

pool of respondents (clergy, religious and lay), results indicated a statistically significant desire for more information in all subject areas. See Table 10 for all sixteen values. There were noteworthy disparities between the amount of information which subjects perceived that they currently received and the amount which they reportedly desired.

Part 4: Differences for current levels of information for various demographic groups

Clergy and religious respondents perceived that they currently received significantly more information than laity on five subjects: issues facing the American church ($t = -7.10$; $df = 471$; $p < .01$), understanding Catholic beliefs practices ($t = -3.04$; $df = 472$; $p < .01$), understanding the bible ($t = -3.67$; $df = 469$; $p < .01$), issues in Christian business ethics ($t = -2.86$; $df = 458$; $p < .01$) and spiritual dimensions of my work or job ($t = -2.36$; $df = 457$; $p < .05$; see Table 11). All

Table 11

Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity and Clergy/Religious of the Amount of Information Currently Received on Selected Religious Issues

Subject of information	laity*	clergy/ relig.*	t Value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the American Church	2.58	3.32	-7.10	471	$p < .01$
Understanding Catholic Beliefs	3.07	3.52	-3.04	472	$p < .01$
Understanding the Bible	2.88	3.55	-3.67	469	$p < .01$
Issues in Christian Business Ethics	1.96	2.56	-2.86	458	$p < .01$
Spiritual Dimensions of My Work	2.10	3.21	-2.36	457	$p < .05$

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

other differences failed to be statistically significant.

When the lay sample was cross-partitioned into church employees and non-employees, only on the subject of issues facing the American church did the employees report a significantly greater level of current information ($t = 2.19$; $df = 285$; $p < .05$). Understanding Catholic beliefs and practices, understanding the bible, issues in Christian business ethics, opportunities for Christian charity and service, religious formation of children and adolescents and the spiritual dimensions of my work or job all showed substantial but statistically insignificant differences between the two groups. The t-value for the one significant comparison is reported in Table 12.

Table 12
Comparison of the Perceptions of Church Employees and Non-Employees about the Amount of Information Currently Received on Selected Religious Issues

subject of information	employees *	non-employees*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the American Church	3.20	2.55	2.19	285	$p < .05$

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

When age was the controlling variable, Table 13 shows that lay respondents above 50 indicated a greater amount of current information only on issues facing the American church ($t = -2.64$; $df = 284$; $p < .01$). For all other subjects, their perceptions did not differ significantly from younger respondents.

When the age level was lowered to 30, no subjects of information were

Table 13

Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity under Age 50 and over Age 50 about the Amount of Information Currently Received on Selected Religious Issues

subject of information	under 50*	over 50*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the American Church	2.03	2.72	-2.64	284	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means..

significant. On the other hand, when the age was raised to 65 (see Table 14), again issues facing the American church was the only one with a statistically significant difference (t = -2.18; df = 284; p. < .05).

Table 14

Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity under Age 65 and over Age 65 about the Amount of Information Currently Received on Selected Religious Issues

subject of information	under 65*	over 65*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the Amer. Church	2.49	2.81	-2.18	284	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

Weekly mass attenders said they were currently receiving more information about four subject areas (see Table 15) than those who attended less frequently: issues

Table 15

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity who Attend Mass Weekly
and Laity Who Attend Less Often about the Amount of
Information Currently Received on Selected Religious Issues**

subject of information	weekly*	< weekly*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the Amer. Church	2.67	2.23	2.62	285	p. < .01
Understanding Catholic Beliefs	3.20	2.53	2.79	288	p. < .01
Understanding the Bible	3.02	2.30	2.48	286	p. < .05
Opportunities for Charity	3.25	2.52	2.00	289	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

facing the American church ($t = 2.62$; $df = 285$; $p. < .01$), understanding Catholic beliefs and practices ($t = 2.79$; $df = 288$; $p. < .01$), understanding the Bible ($t = 2.48$; $df = 286$; $p. < .05$) and opportunities for Christian charity and service ($t = 2.00$; $p. < .05$, $df = 289$).

For all other demographic variables, there were no statistically significant differences.

Part 5: Differences for desired levels of information for various demographic groups

When desired levels of information on the sixteen subjects were analyzed, the lay sample and the clergy/religious group reported differing preferences in four areas (see Table 16) . The clergy/religious group wanted more information than the laity in

Table 16

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity and of Clergy/Religious
about the Amount of Information Desired on
Selected Religious Issues**

Subject of information	laity*	clergy/ rel*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the American Church	3.37	4.02	-6.24	461	p. < .01
Issues in Christian Business Ethics	2.75	3.41	-3.05	451	p. < .01
Issues Facing the Diocesan Church	3.40	4.07	-2.34	464	p. < .05
Spiritual Dimensions of My Work	2.86	3.88	-2.11	448	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little; 3=moderate; 4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

all four: issues facing the American church ($t = -6.24$; $df = 461$; $p. < .01$), issues in Christian business ethics ($t = -3.05$; $df = 451$; $p. < .01$), issues facing the diocesan church ($t = -2.34$; $df = 464$; $p. < .05$), and spiritual dimensions of my work or job ($t = -2.11$; $df = 448$; $p. < .05$).

Single laity wanted significantly more information than married laity about issues facing the American church ($t = 2.25$; $df = 281$; $p. < .05$) and married lay folks wanted more information than did the single about Christian marriage enrichment ($t = -2.08$; $df = 278$; $p. < .05$). Table 17 reports these two significant single laity to married laity comparisons on desired levels of information.

Table 17

Comparison of the Perceptions of Single Laity and of Married Laity about the Amount of Information Desired on Selected Religious Issues

subject of information	single*	married*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the Amer.Church	3.61	3.28	2.25	281	p. < .05
Christian Marriage Enrichment	2.44	3.55	-2.08	278	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

Only on one subject area, issues facing the American church (see Table 18), was there a statistically significant difference between those who are employed by the church and those who are not ($t = 2.75$; $df = 280$; $p. < .01$).

Table 18

Comparison of the Perceptions of Lay Employees of the Church and Non-Employees about the Amount of Information Desired on Selected Religious Issues

subject of information	employee*	non-employee*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the Amer. Church	4.13	3.32	2.75	280	p. < .01

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

Laity younger than 50 wanted significantly more information about religious formation of children and adolescents ($t = 2.60$; $df = 278$; $p. < .01$) than did those older than 50 (see Table 19).

Table 19

Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity over Age 50 and under Age 50 and about the Amount of Information Desired on Selected Religious Issues

subject of information	under 50*	over 50*	t Value*	df	signif.
Religious Formation of Children	3.80	2.90	2.60	278	p. < .01

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

Laity younger than 65 still wanted more information about the religious formation of children and adolescents than did those over 65 ($t = 1.96$; $df = 278$; $p. < .05$; see Table 20). When the age was lowered to 35 no significant differences appeared.

Table 20

Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity over Age 65 and under Age 65 and about the Amount of Information Desired on Selected Religious Issues

Subject of information	under 65*	over 65*	t Value	df	signif.
Religious Formation of Children	3.58	2.82	1.96	278	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

Women showed a statistically significant preference for more information only about understanding Catholic beliefs and practices ($t = -2.17$; $df = 278$; $p. < .05$; see

Table 21) than did men.

Table 21

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Lay Men and Lay Women
about the Amount of Information Desired on Selected
Religious Issues**

subject of information	men*	women*	t value	df	signif.
Understanding Catholic Beliefs	3.56	4.00	-2.17	278	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

Only for issues facing the American church did weekly church attenders want more information than those who attend less often ($t = -2.17$; $df = 281$; $p. < .05$; see Table 22).

Table 22

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity Who Attend Mass Every
Week and Those Who Attend Less Often about the Amount of
Information Desired on Selected Religious Issues**

Subject of information	weekly*	< weekly*	t value	df	signif.
Issues Facing the Amer. Church	3.44	3.08	2.10	281	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.
N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

**Part 6: Differences for satisfaction with levels of information for various
demographic groups**

When satisfaction levels were calculated for respondents who answered both the current and the desired level items (that is, the difference between the current and

the desired level), two subject areas showed statistically significant differences. Laity reported a significantly greater disparity than clergy and religious about understanding Catholic beliefs and practices ($t = -2.37$; $df = 459$; $p. < .05$) and for understanding the bible ($t = -2.29$; $df = 459$; $p. < .05$; see Table 23.)

Table 23

Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity and Clergy/Religious about Satisfaction with the Amount of Information Currently Received on Selected Religious Issues

subject of information	laity*	clergy/relig.*	t value	df	signif.
Understanding Catholic Beliefs	-0.82	-0.40	-2.37	459	$p. < .05$
Understanding the Bible	-0.96	-0.46	-2.29	459	$p. < .05$

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

For the same two issues people under age 50 reported a greater dissatisfaction than did those over 50: understanding Catholic beliefs and practices ($t = -2.37$; $df = 281$; $p. < .05$) and for understanding the bible ($p. < .05$; $df = 280$; $p. < .05$). See Table 24 for these comparisons.

All other demographic comparisons showed no statistically significant differences.

Table 24

**Comparison of the Perceptions of Laity under Age 50 and Over
Age 50 about Satisfaction with the Amount of Information
Currently Received on Selected Religious Issues**

subject of information	under 50*	over 50*	t value	df	signif.
Understanding Catholic Beliefs	-1.03	-0.58	-2.02	281	p. < .05
Understanding the Bible	-1.24	-0.62	-2.29	280	p. < .05

*1=very little use; 2=little;3=moderate;4=great; 5=very great.

N/A responses eliminated in calculation of the means.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Part 1: The Sample

The discussion of this project must be prefaced with the disappointment that the sample of lay respondents did not meet the level required for statistical confidence at the 95% level. However, as the discussion below indicates, a substantial segment of the diocesan population was surveyed. Since time and money constraints prevented further attempts to secure sufficient respondents and since no other survey data is available, the results of this project should be considered as the best currently available.

Several specific characteristics of the sample should be noted. There were a small number of respondents under the age of 35, most became Catholic before the age of 18 and almost 90% attend worship weekly. Thus, the data provided little insight into what young adults or what alienated or inactive Catholics use as sources of information about religion, church and Christian moral issues and about what subjects they want to be better informed. Longtime, older, church-going Catholics predominated in the sample.

Based on figures compiled in 1991 by the Office of Pastoral Planning of the Diocese, the actual age range of Catholics in the diocese was as follows: below age 20, 25.42%; between age 20 and 40, 30.11%; between age 41 and 65, 27.23%; and above age 65, 17.25%. At least in the over 65 group, the sample of this study included more respondents than does the population of the diocese. Among the 305

lay respondents in the sample who indicated state of life, 30.16% were single and 69.84% were married. In the figures of the Office of Pastoral Planning, 50.19% were single and 49.81% were married.

There also seemed to be relatively more respondents, 50%, who have served on parish councils or committee and as officers of parish organizations --that is, lay leadership-- than would be found in the typical parish population. Most parish pastors would more likely report about 10-15% of the members in a leadership role, though such data would be difficult to find currently. The results of this study, then, should provide some insights into the sources of information and subjects that would typify leadership laity.

Part 2: Sources of information

Despite the technological and communication revolutions, tried and true sermons were far and away still the most important source of information on religion, church and Christian moral issues for all demographic groups in the sample. Even the rare worship attenders, on the one hand, and the clergy preachers themselves, on the other, counted sermons as their most important source. Such overwhelming data suggested that sermons continue to be a significant opportunity to communicate with the Catholic community. Time spent by clergy in preparation for preaching and educational programming to enhance or improve preaching would seem appropriate for maintaining and exploiting such an important channel of information flow in the church, at least among those members of the church represented in this sample.

The deanery level focus groups conducted in conjunction with this survey indicated that sermons carried significant affect for some of those who are practitioners of preaching. The older members of one of the focus groups reflected a significantly negative attitude toward their audience. For example:

"People are close-minded; no matter what you say they don't move. . . . They want to do it in the fastest, quickest and easiest way; I'm just dumbfounded."

"It can be very frustrating because you think you challenge them and it goes right over their heads because they don't want to be challenged in that area. . . . Go ahead and preach it; it's not going to do any good."

Younger members of the deanery reflected a more positive attitude toward preaching and its reception. Their comments included the following:

"People are hungry for the Word of God; don't say they're not. I haven't seen anyone sleeping. . . . We can't have a defeatist attitude."

"Could it be that people's interest is based on how well we are preaching? How are we held accountable for our preaching?"

Perhaps this difference between how more recently ordained preachers regarded the task of preaching and how their older colleagues regarded it reflected differences in how the two groups were trained. The older group did not benefit from the changed approaches to scripture study and exegetical preaching that began in Catholic seminaries and theological schools in the early sixties. It may also have reflected a need to provide older clergy with continuing education and sabbatical programs that would allow them to retool their preaching skills or perhaps even to rest from the preaching task. The lack of substantive feedback opportunities from hearers may foster less regard for their preaching ministry than is true of the hearers' actual attitudes toward the sermons they hear.

One participant in the other deanery focus group remarked: "For most people communicating the Gospel is the Sunday homily, to be realistic." The results of this study clearly pointed in this direction.

Related to this survey's finding regarding the place of preaching was the fact that the other largely Sunday morning communication activities all ranked in the upper level of sources most relied upon by this sample: bulletins (2), conversations with priests (3), conversations with other Catholics (4) and pulpit announcements (6). This seemed to indicate a tremendous amount of influence on communication associated with the whole experience of Sunday morning worship, fellowship and communication instruments. While conversations with clergy and other Catholics certainly take place at times other than Sunday, that day's gathering of the community would be the time of greatest interaction for the bulk of Catholics.

With regard to the Sunday bulletin, it was not surprising that the laity found it a more influential source of information than did the clergy since the clergy are largely the editors of the same. Religious did not rate the bulletin as highly as did laity. Again not surprisingly, those who attended worship weekly found the bulletin more important than did those who did not attend worship as often and thus did not have access to it.

In a puzzling finding, women gave greater value to the Sunday bulletin than did men. Apparently the women found bulletin contents more relevant or important. This perhaps reflected the popular belief that in most local congregations the women far outnumber men in attendance at worship and in active involvement in parish

activities and events. A 1987 study by Gallup and Castelli reported that 61% of Catholic women attend worship in a given week while only 44% of the men did (28). Women also demonstrated a greater tendency to read the bible and to engage in other religious practices than did their male counterparts (33). Whether women read the bulletin more because they attend more and participate more and whether the contents of the bulletin appeal to the interests and concerns of women more than those of men might prove an interesting investigation. Similarly, since the bulletin appeared to be a less important channel of communication with men, what channels would be more effective in reaching this half of the church's membership?

In both of the focus groups there was considerable discussion of who reads the Sunday bulletin and how much they read. One pastor remarked: "I have found that when I want to communicate with people, they don't read what I have sent them or they don't respond." This pastor seemed to recognize that sometimes the readers may choose not to respond to what they have read. Another observed that children and single people don't read the bulletin "because there's nothing in there for them." The results of the present study did not investigate sources of information for children and would contradict the observation about single people. There was no difference in the importance of the bulletin for single laity and for married laity.

The importance given to the bulletin by most of the lay demographic groups (except those who do not attend worship weekly) indicated a continuing need to be attentive to the quality and content of this church communication channel. Given its greater use than any other printed information source, the bulletin would appear to be

one place where printed materials could be circulated most effectively. Desktop publishing capabilities and ready access to mass copying equipment has expanded significantly quality and content options. Some consideration might be given to diocesan distribution of 'bulletin ready' materials that then could be included in local parish bulletins. Investigation would be necessary to determine the limits of the bulletin, however, since other printed communication sources were not as highly regarded. This may point to a preference for the succinct, pithy and announcement nature of the bulletin as opposed to the longer, more detailed and general nature of the other printed sources such as *The Catholic Spirit*.

Conversations with priests and with other Catholics were rated highly by all the demographic groups, even the clergy rated conversations with other clergy and Catholics highly. In the executive interviews, most of the respondents noted the high value they place on personal communication, though they also recognized that given the constraints of time, size and geography such one-on-one contact is difficult. The bishop for example noted the importance of his own personal appearances as often as possible at various gatherings, especially parish based confirmation celebrations.

One of the pastors in a focus group remarked: "One-on-one, personal contact -- just listening, people getting to know me -- these are the ways I communicate the Gospel more than any other way." This investigation bore out the importance he placed on such conversations but would point out the greater importance that the laity also placed on his sermons and the bulletin.

Most of the program coordinators who were interviewed spoke of the

importance of personal contact out in the diocese and of the difficulty because of distances in maintaining such contact. Suggestions in this regard included participation in deanery meetings where many people could be contacted at one time, having group meetings on neutral or "my own turf" so that the dynamic of being a guest are realized for participants, and greater use of telecommunication as long as direct, personal contact is not lost altogether.

A top level manager spoke of the need for diocesan leaders to be personally visible to a large number of people in the diocese.

People who are doing the work out in the diocese feel distant and remote from those they feel are in positions of responsibility or control. This is especially critical in areas that are geographically remote [from Wheeling]. There's got to be a form of communication or form of programming that can help us be more physically present.

Exploration of live video and audio conferencing may well address this need for personal contact while at the same time being realistic and humane about geographic distances and travel time.

While most of those interviewed recognized the importance of the telephone for communication in their work, several reported a distaste for the phone, their own "phone phobia," and a use of the phone primarily as a problem solver and not as an ordinary means of communication. One noted a preference for personal visits or phone contact given "the extreme abhorrence of using the phrase 'come to Wheeling.'" Significantly only one of the top level executives noted with praise the use of telephone conferencing:

One thing that has been a real blessing to us and which I wish we could do more with is our phone system. We only have board meetings a couple of

times a year. With so much that is going on we have to have a strong executive committee. We choose members so that most are in the Wheeling area and two are in other parts of the state. Then for meetings we gather in my office and using our present phone system call the other two at the same time and them put both on the speaker phone in my office. This allows us to meet more often, on an as needed basis. The liability is that we can't do it with three people away from Wheeling [because of limitations in the present phone system]. People would much rather talk on the phone at their own home or office than drive three hours to a meeting in Wheeling or Charleston. Think of the time and money we save.

Given the geographic distances in the state such teleconferencing, either phone based audio-conferencing or various video format teleconferencing would seem a means of providing the most personal communication available short of travelling to far flung sites.

Some antipathy to this direction was to be expected, to wit one in executive management:

I have not seen many instances where teleconferencing is appealing to most people. When people see video they are in a receptive mode rather than a sharing mode. Ideal teleconferencing is interactive, but I don't think most folks are up to that.

And yet, there seemed to be a felt need for greater contact between executive level management and the larger diocesan community. Said one top manager:

People who are doing the work out in the diocese feel distant and remote from those who are responsible or in control, and that's critical for areas that are geographically remote. There's got to be a form of communication or form of programming that can help us be more physically present.

Among the printed sources of information about church, religion and Christian moral issues, the daily newspaper ranked higher in importance than religious newspapers, religious books, and religious magazines as well as ahead of diocesan originated sources like *The Catholic Spirit* and newsletters from various diocesan

offices. These data probably reflected the fact that a relatively small number of Catholic households subscribe to religious publications like *The Catholic Spirit*, approximately 10% of the 40,000 households in the Diocese in early 1992. The ranking of the daily newspaper also suggested, however, that the diocese should invest time and energy in press relations and contacts. Getting the stories of the diocese and information about religious and Christian moral issues into the secular print media was shown to be an effective access to respondents in this study.

As might be expected, laity were less likely to see religious print materials as important than were the clergy and religious. Since clergy and religious have dedicated their livelihoods to service in the church or close association with church structures, institutions and politics, it was not surprising to find that they relied more heavily on these materials.

Given the amount of personnel and money that the diocese invests in the production of *The Catholic Spirit*, the twelfth place ranking out of sixteen among all respondents in this survey should give rise to consideration of the effectiveness of this investment. Again clergy and religious ranked the diocesan newspaper higher than any group of laity with the exception of laity over age 65. Even between employees and non-employees of church, between those laity who have served on parish councils or as officers of organizations (lay leaders and nearly half of the sample) and those who have not, and between weekly mass attenders and those who attend less frequently, there were no differences in the importance assigned to *The Catholic Spirit*. Thus, even among lay leaders a relatively low importance for the diocesan

newspaper was reported. These data posed interpretation difficulties given the low circulation levels.

In the focus groups, staff interviews and executive interviews there was a consensus that the quality of *The Catholic Spirit* has improved dramatically in the last two years. There was also a consensus that circulation must be improved before it will be a more effective channel of information in the diocese. One management level executive noted:

[W]e are clearly in process of having a paper that can demonstrate that it is now more effective than it ever has been and that it is going to continue to be that way. It used to be that we said if we went into telecommunications we might have to close down the Spirit "but who cares, it's not much anyway." Now I'd hate to see that choice. The Spirit now has its own muscles.

Recognizing that the readership is small, one executive said: "I don't know of any other way I can communicate as regularly or as effectively with the people [as I can with *The Catholic Spirit*]." The data of this study suggested that the laity of the diocese clearly do not hold the paper to be as valuable as the management executives do.

In one of the deanery focus groups one participant, again a leadership person and not a lay person, noted the role that *The Catholic Spirit* might play in the diocesan community:

Somebody was talking about how our Catholic community often feels isolated. I too find that people here feel cut off. It's a great experience for them to get in touch with the larger church. The people need to have a sense that they belong to a wider church -- the newspaper (*The Catholic Spirit*) is a good way to do that. News about the diocese [is needed], but also materials that reflect the experience of the Church around the world. They belong to something bigger than this little town.

Another person in the same focus group interjected a comment that, while somewhat clerically chauvinistic, may need to be considered if readership among laity is to be increased:

For most of the people I know, *The Catholic Spirit* is over their heads. They want to know more what to do with my kid, parenting. They want something that is on their level. They respond to the very simple things. Many are on the religious education level of only the 6th grade.

Newsletters from diocesan offices and agencies were ranked only slightly ahead of *The Catholic Spirit* in importance in this sample. There were no significant differences in how any demographic group viewed these. Even clergy, religious, church employees and parish lay leadership did not differ from other laity in the way they rated newsletters. This fact should cause reconsideration of the value of these publications within the scheme of diocesan communication.

Executive interviews noted and focus groups confirmed the popularly held antipathy in the diocese toward publications that originate from central administration offices. A top manager was especially damning in criticisms of such newsletters:

A lot of [leadership] people in the parishes are overwhelmed by the amount of communication that comes from the [central administration of the] diocese; people are feeling deluged. Much that is going out is repetitious, especially all the newsletters which repeat what are in other newsletters or in *The Catholic Spirit*. Some are putting stuff in just to have a filler. My feeling is that if you have something to say, be as clear as you can on it and don't overload it with stuff just to fill it up. Sending a newsletter this month just because you have it scheduled is not very effective. Motivation is that they've always done it. I'm sure they think it is needed or effective but just because they think so doesn't make it so.

The poor rating given in this study to diocesan newsletters supported this observation. So too did two comments from the rural focus group:

We get too much material from the Diocese: do this program, do that program. If you took it all seriously you'd be a basket case. Look at the package of mail that is sent each week: a self-study process about a process (we're up to an agenda now, I think!), stewardship, collection for retirement. If you did everything that was sent from Wheeling, you'd get nothing else done.

I have the feeling that the people in Wheeling have no practical experience of running a parish. If they had they'd be more selective in what they send out and how they presented it. Then you could utilize it - change it around so you can use it.

Even in the central staff focus group, those responsible for publishing and sending the diocesan newsletters, there was recognition of an information overload problem: "They have to be overwhelmed with what they get from us. Though centralized mail helps, what they get from the Diocese drowns them." But this focus group also strongly reflected frustration at the response generated by the various newsletters and mailings:

The most frustrating thing for me is when you get excited about something, send out thousands of announcements of the great things that are going to happen and then the response is not there. You're afraid to have an expectation about something you're planning and you play down your feelings about how the program will go because you don't want to be disappointed when you don't get the response it deserves. And then you hear people say we need this or that program and when you have it they don't respond. Apathy, I guess.

One program coordinator discussing attempts to communicate with parish level ministers and volunteers said in an interview:

This is real frustrating for me now. It seems like we're forever printing programs and newsletters and spending hundreds of dollars on mailings and postage and invariably people still don't know what is going on. There's a real frustration in getting the message out to those whom it will affect. . . .

Distribution of information is not happening. It seems to stop gate someplace along the line. If mailings are sent out, the information is not getting disseminated to the people who should see it. . . .

There's no real sense of readership for the newsletter we send out. What's this telling me? Is it not getting to the right people? Is it the style of the newsletter, the way it is presented or framed? Or are people just not interested in the stuff we're sending out?

While this and other coordinators recognized the feeling that too many newsletters are being sent out, they also noted the communication bind they are in:

We need to consolidate information vehicles. We need a broader audience for *The Catholic Spirit*, more than [the current] 10% coverage, before cutting back on all the newsletters can be done. If I know that between 50 and 80% of the people in the diocese get *The Spirit* then I would be willing to drop my newsletter, but until that happens I need the more specific mailing list for my area's newsletter.

The quantitative data of the present study suggested that parish bulletins, pulpit announcements and even daily secular newspapers may be more effective outlets for information than the present newsletters. Perhaps short camera ready announcements that were occasionally included in the existing central mail system to parishes for inclusion in bulletins would prove a more happily sent and acceptably received communication method.

Also on a diocesan level, workshops and seminars were rated very low in importance across all demographic groups. This low ranking may have reflected the relatively small number of people who have participated in such programs. And yet, this in itself would be a telling comment about their effectiveness as a diocesan communication channel. Parish based adult education programs fared better in this study as a source of information. This could be interpreted as preference for education programs that are closer to home. Perhaps diocesan organized but teleconferenced workshops and seminars delivered to local parishes or even home

sites would be a more efficient and effective means of communication. One program coordinator said: "When we have a good workshop we are lucky to get 30-60 people in two or three different locations. How many could we reach with a short video? Would we save money with these videos?"

One of the participants in the rural focus group likewise spoke about the constraints geography place on participation in adult education programs:

We have 513 square miles in Braxton County and we have people who live as much as fifty miles away from each other. It's a problem. Many people work, including the mothers. Some go from Gassaway to Charleston every day for work. They're not going to drive into the parish for another program.

Presentation material on videos that could be used in the home would surely make adult education opportunities more available to Catholics in such communities.

Production and distribution of such video material may be an important contribution that central staff could make to such rural parishes.

Turning to the electronic sources of communication considered in the survey, none ranked higher than ninth, television, and the other two, radio and religious television, were last in importance as sources of information about religion, church and Christian moral issues. The only demographic group that was distinctive was that over age fifty; this group claimed greater reliance on religious television than those under age fifty. This finding of older people viewing more religious television than younger people was consistent with the findings of the Annenburg Study of the nature of religious television (Gerbner, 3). That study also showed that Catholics make up less than ten percent of the audience of religious broadcasting (Fore, 1984, 711). There were no differences for any of the comparisons for secular television or

radio.

Based on these data, communicating religious information via secular television was rated more highly than communicating via *The Catholic Spirit*, other religious newspapers or by religious television. Again it can be assumed that greater use of secular television by this sample than their use of the other media would explain some of this rating, but it did indicate the more heavily used channel of communication even for religious information. A heavy investment in religious broadcasting would not be indicated by these data. Attention to what information appears on secular television, for example, local news coverage, and investment in public service announcements and even occasionally, as funding and resources permitted, actual programming on commercial television would be more clearly favored. Even though television ranked lower than daily newspapers as a source of information about religion for this sample, the heavier use of television than newspaper in the general population, according to Broadcasting magazine's "By the Numbers" for May 1992, would also support an investment in commercial television as an information channel for the diocese.

Another angle on the use of television or of video as a religious communication means was suggested by a participant in the rural focus group:

Quality religious television programs: if you really want to impact families then you need to use television. Also the VCR. Our families like the video lending library that we've started at the parish.

Unfortunately, the present study did not consider home video as an information source. As the use of church based video libraries becomes more common and these

libraries are more fully stocked, they could become important religious information sources.

Somewhat surprisingly the above comment was the only reference to electronic media in the three focus groups. This perhaps indicated that electronic media are not yet seen as tools available or usable by the church. It may also have reflected the greater reliance on print sources by the largely clergy and religious participants in the focus groups than would be true in a lay focus group. Certainly data referred to earlier indicated that the latter group ranks print sources lower than do the clergy and religious.

The executive management group did exhibit a substantial concern to use electronic media more fully, though there was no clarity on the direction such use should take. Many of the comments were related to the use of video programs rather than broadcast television. As one manager reported:

I have an innate sense that we should use TV and tapes more. I've always mouthed that as significant given our geography and people's use of TV. Part of our effort needs to be on educating people on how to use it more effectively. The visual images catch people's attention in ways that you could never do with mere words.

Another manager compared the diocese's use of video media with that of other groups and agencies with whom his agency interacts:

Our video taping effort, though just barely getting a toe in the water is beginning to grow. Other statewide agencies and groups are telling me that this is the only way they can reach people. We simply can't expect people to travel long distances for conferences and meetings. We have to send out more tapes rather than sending more people out to meetings, etc.

Another top executive also recognized the need for the diocese to use

electronic media more fully, but his conflation of several formats pointed to uncertainty about where to begin or focus:

One of our greatest weaknesses is far, far too little use of radio and television and the other technologies, like audio conferencing. I completely understand the finances of that, and also the undesirable options going in that direction might create. But I simply cannot imagine not going in that direction. . . . Telecommunication could increase our ability to communicate and to relieve some of the travel strain

We need to use television and radio more both internally and externally. We've always had very little, virtually no, in-state programming. There's lots of local areas doing some stuff on radio, but our weakness is noticed by its absence. In a state like ours, so many things could be made available by means of TV and radio that many people would not otherwise have access to. I'm thinking broadcast too, though I'm not sure how many aeons beyond us it is. . . . [T]here are ways of gathering people around a central location and making some things possible that just couldn't be done otherwise. Perhaps it's off in the future, but my worry is that it's always going to be off in the future.

This response pointed to a certain impatience with the lack of incorporation of electronic communication as a tool that technology has made available to ministry.

In the survey, radio came dead last in the list of important sources of religious information. (According to Broadcasting's figures, in the general population for both men and women, radio is used less than television but more than newspapers.)

Though radio was clearly a minimal source of religious information, several management executives still indicated a concern that, given the diocese's rural nature, local radio may be an overlooked channel for communicating such information.

There is a great need for broadcast programs, especially on radio which is so important in rural areas. Some of the people in rural areas feel neglected. The pastoral centers are too far away for most of these folks. There's been a technological revolution and people are not yet up to speed on what this technology can do for us. We also need to let people know more clearly why something is happening.

Another manager suggested a specific format for diocesan radio outreach: "In many areas of the state talk radio might be a more available mode [than broadcast television]. It's amazing how many people listen to it. It gives them a little window on the church." While radio does not now play a significant role either in the hearers' list of important sources or in the diocese's communication plan, this is not to say that if religious information were more available on radio that it could not occupy a more important place.

Part 3: Subjects of Information

The subject about which respondents in the sample currently received the most information was the Christian's responsibility to the poor and needy. It may have been expected that more obviously religious topics like prayer or understanding the bible or, on another hand, more day-to-day topics like family life, marriage enrichment or business and work issues might have been first ranked. The actual first place subject seemed to reflect the emphasis in the Catholic community regarding social gospel issues. The Catholic Church has emphasized social gospel teaching by its leadership for over one hundred years. The American Catholic bishops in recent years have written pastoral letters to the church on social subjects such as war and peace, the economy, life in Appalachia and racism.

The finding of this study indicated that Catholics in the diocese have heard this emphasis at least in terms of responsibility to those who are poor and needy. The church has apparently been less successful in disseminating information about

systemic issues in economic, social and political affairs since these subjects were about mid-way down the ranked order.

The more obviously religious topic of the meaning and practice of prayer and personal growth in faith came second and third in ranking. Thus, even though there has been significant emphasis on socio-religious issues, information about personal religious issues continued to be heard.

The more day-to-day topics regarding marriage enrichment, spiritual dimension of work and business ethic came at the very bottom of the list of current levels of information topics. This would seem to indicate that either the church is communicating less information about these areas or that what is been communicated is not being heard as well.

When the ranked order of current levels of information was compared to the ranked order of desired levels, personal growth in faith followed by the meaning and practice of prayer and understanding of the bible were the top three topics. It was striking that three which might be called personal spirituality issues were highest ranked. Apparently, respondents especially wanted more information about topics related to the practice and development of their own interior faith life. Understanding the bible jumped from eighth in current levels of information to third in desired levels. Christian family life issues also rose from tenth to seventh place.

Responsibility to the poor dropped from first place to sixth among desired subjects of communication; it remained a topic about which people wanted more information, but not the one about which they wanted the most information.

Similarly, opportunities for Christian service also dropped significantly, from fourth in current levels of information to eleventh in desired levels. Thus, while respondents continued to desire more information on social gospel issues, these were not their highest priority subjects of information.

As to the topics about which respondents had the lowest desire for more information, the same three occupied the bottom as in current levels: issues in Christian business ethics, Christian marriage enrichment and the spiritual dimensions of work. Even when given an opportunity to express a desire for more information about these day-to-day issues about which they were currently getting the least amount of information, the respondents indicated they did indeed want more information, but less so than for topics about which they were already getting the most information. No shift in priority was indicated.

Two topics ranked low among current levels of information rose in the desired ranking: outreach to inactive church members rose from seventeenth to thirteenth; issues facing the statewide church rose from fourteenth to tenth.

When executives and staff were questioned about the currently operative priorities of the diocese, the most frequently mentioned area was education and formation, especially Catholic schools. In the survey, the religious formation of children was the topic ranked seventeenth in desired levels of information. Personal growth in faith, meaning and practice of prayer and understanding the bible -- the top three in desired level -- can be understood to be formation and education areas. Thus, the perceived priorities among leadership and management parallel the topics

chosen by the survey respondents in the area of adult education and formation. The emphasis given to Catholic schools was not supported by the response given to the childhood and adolescence education topic on the survey.

The other frequently mentioned priority in the interviews was evangelization. Neither of the topics which can be construed to be evangelization -- outreach to inactive church members and spreading the faith to non-church members -- was among the highest ranked topics of desired information. Outreach to the inactive was, as mentioned above, ranked higher in desired level than in current level. The managers gave greater priority to evangelization than was evident in the survey.

In contrast, the high desire for more information about spirituality issues indicated by the sample respondents was infrequently mentioned in the interviews. One executive did indicate that liturgy and worship, especially lay liturgical ministries, were a priorities for many of the laity. Two others listed "spirituality" among priorities in the diocese; another said that "we are trying to indicate to people that there is a God out there who loves them." Clearly, top management and program staff did not give the same degree of priority to spirituality issues that the survey respondents did.

One staff person noted this disparity, even though this observer's list of priorities also differed from that of the survey:

Some of these are the bishop's personal agenda and not goals agreed on by larger community. In the hinterland [among the people of the diocese], many parishes are worried about survival of parish life (finances, religious education, schools); some have a strong sense of developing lay leadership; some are scared of what's happening. For the ones saddled with schools, these become top priority. In others, child through adult education is focus.

Many of the program coordinators who were interviewed voiced real concern either that the diocesan priorities were determined by the bishop (or the bishop's largely clergy dominated staff) or that no process exists for setting such priorities. One staff person was more than a little cynical regarding the goal setting process: "What's the process? Squeaky wheel. I keep hoping that some sort of process will develop but now it seems like whoever pushes more gets the emphasis. It's crisis prioritizing."

One of the clergy on the bishop's staff said the following, however:

The problem is that we have never really set any priorities. Things become priorities for having been done. We need to come up with a process to establish priorities. I'm trying to get away from central administration priorities because I have a fundamental belief that if we're going to have priorities there must be more than central administration establishing them.

The substantial disparity between the priorities listed by diocesan leadership and those indicated on the survey, as well as the ambiguity about the priorities and about the process by which they are determined pointed to the need for diocesan leadership to develop a clear priority setting process that is more reflective of the desires of the larger church and of the staff charged with implementing programming.

Part 4: Differences between current levels of information and desired levels of information

The respondents of this survey were hungry for more information about all sixteen of the subjects on which they were questioned. With a high degree of confidence, every test for differences between the amount of information people currently received and the amount they wanted to receive indicated that the

respondents wanted more information.

One doubt that this survey can dispel is that people are not interested in matters about religion, church and Christian moral issues. There was an overwhelming desire for such information. This doubt was articulated in the urban focus group among the older group of clergy who demonstrated an attitude of frustration with the church audience's negativity toward what they were trying to communicate:

"People are not open to hear: how can we better motivate them. . . . They're in a groove so deep, nothing I say makes any difference."

"If you hit on their issues, it's okay; if it's not their interest, it goes over their head . . . They're Catholics with a selective mentality, they have fashioned their own Gospel."

"People are close-minded: no matter what you say they don't move. . . . They want to do it in the fastest, quickest and easiest way; I'm just dumbfounded."

Similarly, one of the interviewed program staff said: "We have a problem getting out the information to the people who need it Or maybe there's just plain apathy at the grassroots level: people just are not interested." Disinterest in the subject matter was clearly not evident in this survey.

The overwhelming results indicating that people do want more information were puzzling in light of the information glut referred to earlier. This glut was principally in reference to the materials communicated by central administrative offices. Thus the questions: do respondents feel a need for more information and at the same time feel that (a) the information communicated by diocesan offices is not interesting? (b) that it is not presented in an attractive way? (c) or that it is not in the

media they find most useful?

One alternative explanation of the expressed desire for significantly more information about every subject may be that the respondents felt that they *should* want more information on such religious and value-oriented issues. Perhaps they responded according to this feeling. Would the results have been as pronounced if questions about religion, church and Christian moral values had been only one type of question among many questions regarding the desire for more information about sports, politics and gardening?

In this so-called information age, many people are said to feel inundated and overwhelmed by the amount of information they have to process and by the number of media bombarding them with information. Do people feel a certain guilt that they are not getting to information that they feel they *should* be interested in?

Part 5: Demographic differences for current and desired levels of information and for satisfaction levels

When laity's and religious and clergy's responses were compared, religious and clergy indicated that they currently received more information than their lay counterparts about five subject areas: issues facing the American church, understanding Catholic beliefs and practices, understanding the bible, issues in Christian business ethics and the spiritual dimensions of work or job. The first three areas were not surprising in that the clerical profession would require greater familiarity about these issues (though why were meaning and practice of prayer and

personal growth in faith not also among these?). The latter two were surprising, especially issues in Christian business ethics.

Apparently because they read more religious printed material, the clergy are exposed to more information about Christian business ethics even though their own profession is not in business. The same could be said of the spiritual dimensions of work or job, although an alternative reading of these results would note that much is written about the spiritual dimensions of the clergy's job and work. Another explanation of the clergy's response regarding business ethics and spiritual dimensions of work may be related to the fact that only in very recent years have religious writers significantly addressed these issues. Perhaps the clergy have not sufficiently digested this material to use it in sermons where lay people would be likely to hear it, especially since the laity reported little religious reading themselves.

Even though the clergy and religious indicated earlier that they relied heavily on printed religious media, for all their reading, they did not indicate receiving or needing a greater amount of current information on the subjects likely to be the focus of this printed material, such as Christian moral issues regarding politics, economics and social concerns. And even though they also reported being heavy users of *The Catholic Spirit* they did not exhibit having or needing more current information about diocesan issues or worldwide issues. Similarly, though as the clergy and religious were the editors of the bulletins and pulpit announcements regarding the local parish, they did not indicate having or needing greater information about the local church or parish.

The laity indicated no greater amount of current information than clergy and religious not only about business ethics and the spirituality of work, but neither did they about marriage enrichment, Christian family life or the religious formation of children. This was despite the fact that the clergy and religious are celibates and do not live in family units. A question that these data might pose to diocesan leadership is: would greater focus on marriage, family life and work issues help laity come to greater confidence in these dimensions of their Christian lives?

Lay employees of the church or parish, as well as laity over 50 and 65, and those who attend mass every week, all indicated they currently were getting more information about issues facing the American church than were their opposites. No single source of information was favored by all of these groups though the older ones rely more heavily on religious television and the oldest also used *The Catholic Spirit* more. Perhaps these demographic groups are more attentive to items regarding the American church that appear in the secular media.

With age, information about Catholic beliefs and practices, understanding the bible, the religious formation of children and adolescents, and issues facing the diocesan church all increased but there was not a significant difference.

Weekly mass attenders also reported greater current information about Catholic beliefs and practices, understanding the bible, issues facing the American Church and opportunities for Christian service and charity. The only medium they reported using more than the less frequent attenders was the bulletin. The weekly exposure to the sermon and the constellation of other communication activities that

happen at the weekly mass apparently increased knowledge about these subjects or at least helped weekly attenders be more receptive to information about them.

Surprisingly, however, the every week mass goers did not indicate greater information about issues facing the local church even though they relied heavily on the local church's bulletin. This group did not report more information about other areas that would also seem to be part of the Sunday mass experience: personal growth in faith, meaning and practice of prayer or personal moral issues.

Several other unexplained oddities appeared in these data. Even though women rely more heavily on the parish bulletin, they showed no difference in the amount of information they received even about issues facing the local parish. The leadership laity, those who have served on a parish council or as an officer of an organization, were not better informed than those less active in parish life. Single laity and married laity reported the same levels of current information even on Christian family life, marriage enrichment and the religious formation of children and adolescents.

Turning to desired levels of information, it should be remembered that the sample as a whole indicated an overwhelming desire for more information about every subject area. Thus these demographic break outs reflect a greater or less amount of *more* information.

While it might be expected that the clergy and religious would want more information than the laity about issues facing the diocese and American church (but, interestingly, not the universal church), they wanted even more information than the

already high amount of information they currently receive about the spiritual dimensions of work and Christian business ethics. Again, in the desired levels of information, the laity did not report a higher desire than the celibate clergy for more information about marriage, family life and the religious formation of children and adolescents.

One intriguing explanation of these differences may be that the clergy and religious generally see a more direct religious dimension to work, business, family and marriage than the laity are likely to articulate. Perhaps the laity segregate these areas of their lives from the purview of religion and church. If this explanation is correct then the communication work cut out for church leaders is substantial. Diocesan communication efforts might well focus to a greater extent on explaining the Christian and religious dimensions of everyday life concerns.

In the rural focus group one of the participants seemed to be struggling around this communication issue when he said:

One of the things that surfaces for me is that we have lots of things that are needed and that we think are valuable and we have various requirements for sacramental preparation. But we're not able to respond to the people's desire for help with parenting and real family life issues because we're trying to give them information on the sacraments, etc. We're not able to respond -- because of time -- to those things that they might come out [to religious education programs] for in greater numbers.

This comment reflected that church communication, be it in religious education programs, sermons or publications, often is quite "churchy," that is, framed in traditional religious abstractions, images and vocabulary. The public awareness of and affection for the family life public service announcements of the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons) may well be indicative of receptivity to less religiously framed communication. These Mormon public service announcements reflect family and marriage centered religious values without overtly using the traditional religious images.

In this study, married laity expressed a desire for more information about marriage enrichment than did their single counterparts, but they did not for information about family life or the religious formation of children and adolescents. Even single folks displayed great interest in more information about these two topics. As people grew older, however, their interest in the religious formation of the young decreased; their interest in family life, however, did not.

These findings about the widespread desire across several demographic groups for more information about family life would support recent efforts by the Bishop and diocese around this subject. However, earlier data indicated that communication efforts to reach the laity must rely on non-print media. Sermons, bulletins and conversations with priests and other Catholics were shown to be the preferred communication media.

Issues facing the American church continued to be a topic of interest for lay church employees, weekly mass attenders and single people. Similar interest was not expressed by these or any other groups regarding issues facing either the local church or those facing the worldwide church. No apparent explanation presented itself.

Two other characteristics of these data were notable. First, lay women

expressed a desire for more information than men about Catholic beliefs and practices. As noted earlier, women attend worship more and are more active in church affairs than are men. The women apparently wanted more information to undergird their activity. Since in many Catholic parishes there are active women's organizations (and often no parallel men's groups), these may well be communication vehicles for the information the women desire. Including an adult education component about Catholic beliefs and practices on meeting agendas could address the need.

Second, neither being an officer on a parish council or organization nor belonging to any particular sized parish gave clues to information needs. There were no significant issues about which these various demographic groups wanted more information than their opposites. While all respondents expressed the desire for more information about all topics, none of the topics distinguished leaders from non-leaders. Neither did this list of topics appear to be of less interest to members of larger or smaller churches. Isolating unique communication needs of these sub-groups could not be done with the present data.

When a dissatisfaction index was created for respondents who answered both the current and the desired levels questions, only two demographic sub-groups had distinctive differences. Lay respondents showed greater dissatisfaction than clergy and religious with the disparity between the amount of information they were receiving and the amount they wanted to receive regarding understanding Catholic beliefs and practices and understanding the bible. Laity over age 50 were especially

dissatisfied.

It should be pointed out that laity over 50 are precisely the group which has experienced the most change during their life times regarding Catholic practices and Catholic understanding of the bible. The Second Vatican Council of the early 1960s brought substantial change in both these areas of Catholic life. Laity over 50 had largely completed their childhood and young adult religious formation prior to the Council. Unlike younger Catholics who never knew earlier practices or biblical approaches and unlike the clergy who have had more opportunities for continuing adult formation and reading, the older Catholics were less sure of current Catholic ways.

Older Catholics, then, need to be offered opportunities to relate previously learned and practiced ways to post-conciliar modalities remain a need of older Catholics. With increasing age and decreasing numbers, this group could easily be overlooked in current pastoral ministry which focuses so much attention on the young and their parents.

These data further indicated that clergy need to be aware that the laity in general and the older laity in particular do not feel as comfortable as the clergy with regard to Catholic beliefs and practices and understanding the bible. Communication efforts in sermons and bulletins, in pulpit announcements and in conversations were indicated as the preferred media to address these concerns. Printed explanations in religious publications would not be as well received by the laity.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The overall purpose of this research project was to seek data that could be useful to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in developing a comprehensive plan for communication in the Diocese. Specifically, information was sought from clergy and religious and from Catholic laity in a variety of demographic groups in the diocese on (1) the sources of their information about religion, church and Christian moral issues, (2) their perceptions of current levels of information on a range of subjects and (3) their desired levels of information on these same subjects. The quantitative survey was supplemented by qualitative interviews and focus groups.

What can the Diocese learn as a result of this project?

1. There is an overwhelming hunger among clergy and religious and among laity for more information about religion, church and Christian moral issues. People of the diocese are not at all uninterested in such information. While survey data indicated that a few demographic groups wanted more information about specific issues than about others, all wanted more information. Negativity exhibited by some of the older clergy in the deanery and by some staff in the focus group toward the receptivity to communication by laity and clergy is clearly not warranted by the results of this study.

2. The Sunday sermon is still far and away the most important source of information for all groups. Enhancing and supporting this communication medium is clearly indicated as an essential part of any diocesan communication plan.

3. The constellation of communication activities related to weekly worship were important communication vehicles for the clergy and the laity represented in this sample, that is, older, regular worshippers. These activities included in addition to the sermon, bulletins, pulpit announcements and conversations with priests and other Catholics. Appropriate communication vehicles to reach inactive Catholics or younger Catholics were not established by this study.

4. The laity used religious print media, including *The Catholic Spirit* and diocesan newsletters, much less than the clergy and religious. The diocesan newspaper was valued most by clergy and religious and by older Catholic laity. Other laity preferred the communication sources related to Sunday worship and even secular print and television media more than religious publications.

5. Because of this reliance by the laity on secular media for information, the diocesan communication plan must consider the use of these media. This means development of good media relations and efforts to seek coverage of issues and events by secular newspapers and television.

6. Geographic distances and resultant travel time significantly reduces the amount of personal communication that is possible in the diocese. Better use of telephone audioconferencing and of videoconferencing could help bridge, but not try to replace, this personal communication gap. For communication with laity, videoconferencing based at local sites in or near parishes would be more desirable than diocesan seminars or workshops which were not highly rated as information sources. Unfamiliarity with this medium would necessitate training and break-in

time.

7. Diocesan priorities as articulated in executive and program staff interviews were somewhat divergent from what the survey indicated regarding priority concerns among the clergy and laity. Managers and staff voiced education and formation as over arching priorities; laity and clergy agreed regarding adult education and formation but did not give the religious formation of children and adolescents high priority. Managers and staff saw evangelization as a high priority, but it was not among the high information needs of the laity. Conversely, respondents in the survey voiced high information needs around understanding the bible and Catholic beliefs and practices, about personal growth in faith and the meaning and practice of prayer. One issue that clergy, single laity and older laity agreed with younger married laity as being a high priority was family life. The bishop's and executive level's focus on this topic concurred with the findings of this study.

8. Electronic sources of information, television and especially radio and religious television, were not shown to be currently important sources of religious information, though commercial television was considered a more valuable source than any printed religious material except the parish bulletin.

9. Christian responsibility to the poor and needy and opportunities for Christian charity and service were topics about which the respondents to survey indicated they currently were receiving high levels of information and about which they desired more, but not the most, information. Christian moral issues in political, economic and social affairs were not as high currently or in desired levels. Thus,

communication about Catholic teaching on personal social justice seemed to have been more effective than that about systemic social justice.

10. Clergy in the survey voiced a stronger desire than laity for more information about business ethics and the spiritual dimensions of work, and about issues facing both the diocesan and American church. A question was raised as to whether laity saw the same religious dimensions to business and work that the clergy apparently did.

Four weaknesses in this study stood out. First, the lack of a sufficient number of lay survey respondents compromised the statistical reliability of the data. Second, more staff members from the diocesan Department of Social Ministries should have been included in the staff interviews and focus group. A whole section of diocesan employees was under-represented as a result. Third, a demographic question about the survey respondents' location in the diocese may have shed some light on geographic differences. And fourth, video tape libraries provided by local parishes or the diocese are becoming a source of information for some people. This medium was not explored in this study.

Though they were not part of the quantitative survey, two communication issues stood out in the executive interviews and in the staff interviews and focus groups as being in need of serious attention by diocesan management. The lack of regular job performance reviews for managers and staff leave much uncertainty about the quality and effectiveness of work. There is no way to regularly check performance against goals and priorities and then, when necessary, to make

appropriate changes in one or the other. This lacuna not only prevents managers and staff from correcting negative situations, it also prevents them from celebrating successes and experiencing a sense of accomplishment.

A direct result of the above may be a second communication issue that was apparent among staff: discontent with the follow through of management, on both diocesan level and parish levels, on plans and decisions. A cynicism bordering on anger was exhibited regarding how managers deal or do not deal with problems that surface. Further study of this matter is urgently needed.

The communication and technological revolutions of the twentieth century have at one and the same time made the church's task of communicating the Gospel more complicated and more possible. New tools have expanded the media in which and by which the gospel can be proclaimed. As Catholic church documents repeatedly reflected, they sin who do not put these tools at the service of spreading the Gospel.

This range of available media choices makes it more important than ever that the church study and understand the various audiences to whom it preaches and that it constantly seek to match media to audiences. Effective communication of the gospel means learning to exploit the characteristics and possibilities of each medium without compromising the substance of the gospel message. A variety of communication research tools have made it possible for the church to find some direction through the exciting yet complicated maze that is the contemporary world.

APPENDIX A:
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY FOR THE DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

*Your help is requested in this communications survey of West Virginia Catholics. Please answer all the questions in each of the four parts of the survey. The questions are easily answered and should require between 10 and 15 minutes to finish. Your responses are confidential and you need not sign your name. Please return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope by **FEBRUARY 15, 1992**. Thank you for your cooperation.*

A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Please indicate the importance to you of each of the following sources of information in providing you with information regarding the church, religion and Christian moral issues. On a scale of 1 to 5, number 1 means that source of information is of "very little" importance to you; number 5 means that source of information is of "very great" importance to you.

	very little	little	moderate	great	very great
1. Your parish bulletin	1	2	3	4	5
2. <u>The Catholic Spirit</u> , our diocesan weekly newspaper . . .	1	2	3	4	5
3. The daily newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
4. Television	1	2	3	4	5
5. Religious Television	1	2	3	4	5
6. Radio	1	2	3	4	5
7. Newsletters from diocesan offices or agencies	1	2	3	4	5
8. Religious newspapers (other than <u>The Catholic Spirit</u>) .	1	2	3	4	5
9. Religious magazines	1	2	3	4	5
10. Religious and spiritual books	1	2	3	4	5
11. Conversations with priests or other church staff	1	2	3	4	5
12. Conversations with other Catholics	1	2	3	4	5
13. Parish adult education programs	1	2	3	4	5
14. Diocesan workshops/seminars	1	2	3	4	5
15. Pulpit announcements after mass	1	2	3	4	5
16. Sunday sermons or homilies	1	2	3	4	5

B. CURRENT LEVELS OF INFORMATION:

For each of the following subjects, please circle the number that best reflects how much information you now receive on that subject. On a scale of 1 to 5, number 1 indicates you now receive "very little" information on that subject; number 5 indicates you now receive a "very great" amount of information on that subject.

	very little	little	moderate	great	very great
17. The religious formation of children and adolescents' . . .	1	2	3	4	5
18. Spiritual dimensions of my work or job	1	2	3	4	5
19. Issues in Christian business ethics	1	2	3	4	5
20. Christian marriage enrichment	1	2	3	4	5
21. Understanding of Catholic beliefs and practices	1	2	3	4	5
22. Christian moral issues in political affairs (for example war/peace, government spending)	1	2	3	4	5
23. Personal growth in faith	1	2	3	4	5
24. Christian family life issues	1	2	3	4	5
25. Issues facing the international or worldwide church . . .	1	2	3	4	5
26. Issues facing the American church	1	2	3	4	5
27. Issues facing the state-wide or diocesan church	1	2	3	4	5
28. Issues facing the parish or local church	1	2	3	4	5
29. Issues of personal moral behavior (for example, on generosity, sexuality, honesty) . . .	1	2	3	4	5
30. Spreading the faith to non-church members	1	2	3	4	5
31. Christian's responsibility to the poor and needy	1	2	3	4	5
32. Outreach to inactive Church members	1	2	3	4	5
33. Understanding of the Bible	1	2	3	4	5
34. The meaning and practice of prayer	1	2	3	4	5
35. Christian moral issues in economic & social affairs (for example, racism, poverty, education)	1	2	3	4	5
36. Opportunities for Christian charity and service	1	2	3	4	5

C. DESIRED LEVELS OF INFORMATION:

For each of the following subjects, please circle the number that best reflects how much information you would like to receive on that subject. On a scale of 1 to 5, number 1 indicates you would like to receive "very little" information on that subject; number 5 indicates you would like to receive a "very great" amount of information on that subject.

	very little	little	moderate	great	very great
37. The religious formation of children and adolescents . . .	1	2	3	4	5
38. Spiritual dimensions of my work or job	1	2	3	4	5
39. Issues in Christian business ethics	1	2	3	4	5
40. Christian marriage enrichment	1	2	3	4	5
41. Understanding of Catholic beliefs and practices	1	2	3	4	5
42. Christian moral issues in political affairs (for example war/peace, government spending)	1	2	3	4	5
43. Personal growth in faith	1	2	3	4	5
44. Christian family life issues	1	2	3	4	5
45. Issues facing the international or worldwide church . . .	1	2	3	4	5
46. Issues facing the American church	1	2	3	4	5
47. Issues facing the statewide or diocesan church	1	2	3	4	5
48. Issues facing the parish or local church	1	2	3	4	5
49. Issues of personal moral behavior (for example, on generosity, sexuality, honesty)	1	2	3	4	5
50. Spreading the faith to non-church members	1	2	3	4	5
51. Christian's responsibility to the poor and needy	1	2	3	4	5
52. Outreach to inactive Church members	1	2	3	4	5
53. Understanding of the Bible	1	2	3	4	5
54. The meaning and practice of prayer	1	2	3	4	5
55. Christian moral issues in economic social affairs (for example, racism, poverty, education)	1	2	3	4	5
56. Opportunities for Christian charity and service	1	2	3	4	5

D. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The following information will help us in the tabulation and analysis of the information collected in this survey. Please answer each question.

57. What is your state of life in the Church?

single lay person married lay person clergy religious

58. Are you an employee of the diocese, a parish or church agency?

yes no

59. Do you now or have you ever served on a parish council or committee or as an officer of a parish organization?

yes no

60. When did you become a Catholic? before age 18 after age 18

61. In which range is your age?

under 21 21-35 36-50 51-65 over 65

62. What is your gender? male female

63. How many members are there in your parish (your best guess)?

under 100 100-500 500-1000 over 1000

64. How often do you attend Sunday mass or worship?

weekly

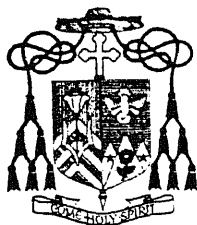
more than once a month

less than once a month

rarely or not at all

65. Are there any comments or suggestions you would like to share about communications in the Church, the Diocese or your parish?

APPENDIX B:
PASSPORT LETTERS



DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

1300 Byron Street
Post Office Box 230
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 3, 1992

Dear Brother or Sister:

I write to request your assistance with a project that will help the Catholic Church in West Virginia plan our future. The Communication Office of the Diocese, under the direction of Father Larry W. Dorsch, is conducting a survey among Catholics regarding communication of religious, church and moral issues. The results of this survey will help us plan more effective and helpful communication with you and with other people of our state.

Your family's name was selected at random from among the 41,000 Catholic households of the Diocese. I would ask you or a Catholic member of your household please to take about ten minutes of time to complete this survey and to return it in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. It is very important to the effectiveness of this study that we receive your response by February 15, 1992.

Your participation in this project is one way we are attempting to consider seriously your needs and desires as we plan future activities and goals for the Catholic community in West Virginia. Please add your voice to this process by completing the enclosed survey.

Thank you for your cooperation. Be assured of my prayer for you and for your loved ones.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bernard W. Schmitt".

Most Rev. Bernard W. Schmitt
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston



COMMUNICATIONS

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
PO Box 230
1300 Byron Street
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003
(304) 233-0880

February 17, 1992

Dear Brother or Sister:

At the beginning of January, Bishop Bernard W. Schmitt wrote to you requesting your assistance with a research project regarding communications. As of February 15 we have not received your completed survey. In case you misplaced your survey we have enclosed a second copy along with a stamped, addressed envelope.

We ask you please take about 10 minutes to complete this survey as soon as possible. We need your response - no matter how active or inactive you are as a Church member - to make this project complete. Please return the survey by March 1.

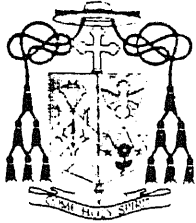
Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Rev. Larry W. Dorsch
Director of Communications

LWD/km

Enclosures



DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

1300 Byron Street
Post Office Box 230
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003

MEMO

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

To: All Personnel
From: Bishop Bernard W. Schmitt
Date: November 1, 1991
Subject: A Communication Audit

+ BWS

Since proclaiming the Gospel is the mission we have been given as the Church, effective communication is something we all work toward, worry about and pray for. As people whose professional work also depends on the quality of our communications, we are continually looking for ways to evaluate and improve our communication techniques, styles and approaches.

Professionals in the study of communications have developed a process for systematically evaluating communications within organizations known as a "Communications Audit". An audit seeks input from throughout an organization to develop an assessment of current communication practices and policies. It also offers data useful in planning or improving communications efforts.

Father Larry Dorsch, our Diocesan Director of Communications, will be conducting a communications audit for the Diocese over the next several months. He will be interviewing a variety of us in central administration, including both program and support staff. He will conduct one focus group with a sample of central personnel and two with deaneries. Finally he will survey clergy, religious, staff and a random sample of our 41,000 households. After statistical analysis, a report with recommendations will be prepared by May of 1992. (Father Dorsch will also use this audit to complete his thesis for a Master's Degree in Communication at Marshall University.)

I ask all personnel to cooperate as much as possible with Father Dorsch and the audit process so that we will generate accurate and helpful information. This audit gives us a real opportunity to improve our communication with each other, with our pastoral leaders and people, and with all who wait to hear the Gospel message.

Thank you for your work and dedication.

APPENDIX C:
PROTOCOL FOR EXECUTIVE AND STAFF INTERVIEWS

COMMUNICATION AUDIT
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

- 1. Please describe your position within the Diocese. What are your responsibilities and major activities? How do you know whether or not you are doing a good job?**
- 2. Describe your understanding of the Diocese's current objectives and priorities. How are these objectives and priorities decided?**
- 3. Describe your understanding of the role of diocesan central administration and chancery staff.**
- 4. What are the channels or means of communication that you use to communicate with (a) the pastors and lay leadership of the Diocese and (b) the people of the Diocese (note communication in both directions)? How effective do you consider these channels of communications to be?**
- 5. What are some of the major communication strengths of the Diocese? Describe a particularly successful communications activity or situation.**
- 6. What are some of the major communication weaknesses of the Diocese? Describe a particularly frustrating communication activity or situation.**

7. What would you like to see done in the diocese to improve communications? Why hasn't it been done?

8. How could two-way communication be improved between (a) diocesan offices and pastors/pastoral leaders (b) diocesan offices and the people of the Diocese?

9. How could others in the Diocese do a better job of getting important information to you?

10. Has this interview raised any questions or comments you would like to share with me?

11. Looking at the list of twenty issues on the proposed survey questionnaire, which do you think we now do a good job of communicating about and which a poor job?

12. Can you suggest any additional items or changes for the survey?

APPENDIX D:
PROTOCOL FOR DEANERY FOCUS GROUPS

COMMUNICATION AUDIT

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

PROTOCOL FOR DEANERY FOCUS GROUPS

1. Communicating the Gospel is our principal task as church. What are some of your concerns as we do this work?
2. What are the channels of communication that you rely on in your work and how effective to you consider these to be?
3. What would you like to see done in the diocese to improve communication? (Please think in terms of communicating with the world, with our own Catholic people, among our leadership, and communication to and from diocesan offices.)
4. What are your reactions to the proposed communication audit survey?

APPENDIX E:
LETTER TO STAFF FOCUS GROUP



COMMUNICATIONS

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
P.O. Box 230
1300 Byron Street
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003
(304) 233-0880

MEMO

TO: Karen Ross
Mary Raske
Sr. Mary Byron
Carla Bell
Mary Dorsey Callahan
Toni Oliver
John Hoffman
Judy Hays
Sr. Margaret Anne Nolan

FROM: Fr. Larry Dorsch *LD*

SUBJECT: Communication Audit Focus Group

Thanks to all of you for so readily agreeing to participate in the central staff focus group for the communication audit I am conducting. After talking with each of you about available dates, the following seems to fit all our schedules: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 3PM, in the COMMUNICATIONS STUDIO. This gathering will last an hour and fifteen minutes.

A focus group is a means of obtaining in-depth information about specific topics through the interaction of dialogue. The procedure is meant to especially surface feelings, attitudes and perceptions. I would ask you to consider the following questions in your preparation for our discussion:

1. Thinking about your own work, what has been one particularly successful and one particularly unsuccessful communications situation?
2. What channels of communication are available to us in our work and how effective are they?
3. What would you like to see done in the Diocese to improve communications? (Please think broadly about the Diocese and not just your own work.) Why hasn't this been done?

At the end of our discussion I would also like your reactions and suggestions regarding the survey instrument that will be used for the next phase of the project.

Thanks again for your willingness to help.

APPENDIX F:
COMMENTS FROM QUESTION #65 ON SURVEY

COMMUNICATION SURVEY COMMENTS
EDITED

Question #65: Are There Any comments or suggestions you would like to share about communications in the Church, the Diocese or your parish?

1. COMMENTS RELATED TO COMMUNICATION IN GENERAL:

*I would like to see less "light weight" and more seriously theological reflection. Less "milk" and more meat if not marrow.

*You must convince the many media that information concerning the Church in the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese is important and addresses itself to all the people of West Virginia because the concerns of the church are the basic concerns of the people.

*Reflections and homilies during the celebration of the Word could be improved with more "meat" in them.

*The "central" mailing system on a Diocesan level has resulted in mail from the Diocese to other than pastoral level staff being reduced, to even stopping altogether. I recommend more mailings on a personal basis to other ordained clergy.

**The Spirit* has improved greatly; central mailing seems confusing at times.

*If it is possible I would like to see the Bishop visit parishes other than at Confirmation time - It would be very supportive to clergy, religious and laity.

*I am new to the diocese and at this point am simply appreciative of the evidence of an effort to disseminate the message of the Gospel in a variety of ways.

*Please keep up the good communications & Catholic marketing - also the collaboration of the weekly mailing - "we" are appreciative.

2. COMMENTS ABOUT DIOCESAN AND PARISH COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT:

*The atmosphere of suppression in the Church on certain issues is unacceptable and indefensible. It fosters cowardice in all levels of leadership.

*Direct communication (Bishop to People) is expensive but it avoids the rectory "filter."

*I feel that communication has greatly improved the past 20 years among parish members, among groups and between groups and leadership. However, personal communication between leadership and the grassroots has greatly deteriorated during same period. I see the difficulty of it, yet I miss it.

*In all the Dioceses I've worked in previously, this Diocese makes the greatest effort to communicate that I've experienced thus far.

*Unfortunately, communication on the parish level seems at a very low ebb!

*How about communication on collaboration among laity, religious and clergy in the structure of parish life.

*Have attended this church 8-1/2 years. Have always felt like a visitor. Before this church, I was a teacher CCD. I suppose when a church is so large, no one ever knows who you are, even the priests.

*In our day communication can't be very successful unless there is the possibility of serious discussion. Probably not more than 5% of Catholics are willing to do this. So we can't expect very effective communication.

*I have a hard time understanding the attitude of non-receptive or stone hearted Catholics.

*A lack of communication among parish organizations. A lack of communication between pastors and parishioners in important matters. Diocesan communications are always shared with parish members.

*Feel that people are not friendly or too occupied within themselves to have the faith that was there years ago.

*In the past 5 years, our parish (Our Lady of Grace in Romney) has had 4 pastors. There is a great deal of bitterness that I see and hear from people, its a small church. Father is taking the worst of it, in my opinion and it isn't his fault. Can you help us restore some peace in our Church?

*Some of our parishes lack "people" contact, but I notice that varies from priest to priest.

*What information gets out to the parishioners depends on the pastor. So you can bust butt up in Wheeling but the pipeline is often time clogged by pastor's actions.

*Our parish is big and COLD. People in and out each week without any sense of community. We have been members of this particular parish for nearly 10 years. It is

not a church family.

*Communication is a two-way street. The "Church"- at all levels - needs to listen to the Church - the People of God - as well as teach, inform, etc.

*Communication is 2-way - there needs to be a lot more listening by those in "leadership" positions and dealing with reality. For the Bishops to have the number of Holy Days as the biggest news item from their November meeting was a joke. How is the Church dealing with the clergy decline? Let's have some boldness!

*I attend Sunday liturgy at various churches around the diocese and find that communication in the form of homilies is often very poor; homilies in some churches are unplanned, disorganized, rambling and much too long. I believe that this shows a great lack of respect for the intelligence and the faith of the congregations.

*Sermons appealing and related to contemporary issues facing today's Catholic families in realistic not theoretical terms. Practical, simple, to the point. (A well stated issue can be well covered and conveyed in 5 minutes.)

*Suggest a "clergy bulletin" rather than the Centralized mailing packet. Such a bulletin should be sent to ALL priests.

*Personally, when I've asked for help I was told by two different priests that they were "too busy." This was on two different occasions. One priest did set up an appointment but didn't show. When I contacted him, he said that he was "too busy", "bad timing"

*I would like to see diocesan information and communication shared with our parishioners by the pastor. For example: our parishioners never hear about letters from the bishop or special events. They would be interested but don't know what they are missing.

*Our parish is trying very hard to hang in there since we don't have daily Mass and just one on Sunday at 11:30. A very bad time, not many people able to help on money problems.

*There have been several issues in our parish which have left a lot of people questioning our church and its administration. Priests included.

*Try to get the members active in church activity and to be sociable. They come to church and hurry out as fast as they can - always in a hurry to go.

*I asked to participate with others in a church organization and was refused. I feel as though I was let down.

*There would be better communication if diocesan priests were rotated more frequently, not left for 8-10 years with same old tired message!

3. COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES:

*For young Catholic it is very hard to get information on what the issues are and how the church faces them and where we stand. It would be nice to get information about opportunities for young Catholic adults. College students need information about the meaning and practice of prayer, practically everything listed on the other side of this paper, but really there is no info to college students. It would be nice to get that information.

**The Catholic Spirit* is not relevant and viable at our parish. I only recently received an issue that will allow me to subscribe. In our parish much of the communication takes place informally by those in most frequent contact particularly through the school. Thus leaving newcomers and single individuals out of the picture.

*More about the youth coming back to the church. How do we go about it? Make homilies more interesting to the youth.

*Please keep up the family unit messages, the importance of the family. Also the stress on God's love instead of punishment has been a great change for the good of the church.

*In my opinion, one can never receive too much information on all phases of their faith. There's always plenty to review and more updated information to be given to all.

*I feel that the materials are there for me. I'm just remiss in searching them out.

*I think the Church needs to communicate more about our need to care for one another. For example, it is not enough that the Church says "don't have an abortion." Our members have to be willing to provide for those children born and make sure they have a good life.

*Suggestions on how to make non-Catholics feel more welcome in your parish.

*I would like something done to make mass more appealing to my children (14 & 11). They consider going to mass a chore and verbalize their interest in a Protestant church they have attended once or twice with their friends.

*Having recently gone through a divorce, I find nothing in place in my parish to assist and support me and my children in the subsequent depression and confusion.

*The church needs to give more Bible study for adults. They need to start children younger than 5 to be in church class. They need to do more with the kids and young adults like activities. More marriage encounter spiritual classes for married people.

*I would like to receive some materials on our faith and something on how I can encourage my children to attend mass and how they learn more of our faith.

*Do not overlook the importance of Catholic Schools in communicating with adults in parishes, for many this may be the only point of contact with the body of Christ. Also, it would be wonderful to have an adult "Sunday School" program!

*Yes, I wish the church would reach out to the young adults in the community who are single, working and Catholic. They are away from the church and their faith!

*Get out of politics and establish a moral fiber in our schools; reinstate Catholic education with the establishment and teaching of basic right and wrong - Let's don't make everything gray

*The young unmarried members of our community are a much overlooked group. Somehow we need a better outreach towards them or we will lose them.

*From my own perspective, as a pastoral minister, I receive an overabundance of information, but I think that lay people cannot receive too much info (church, religion, etc.) since they are bombarded by secular communications (TV, radio, videos, etc.).

*The Communications office has done a marvelous job, given the fact that there is competition in the mass media. The diocesan communications office has been providing quality material.

*As a young adult active in the Church, the "modern church" and how we are to deal with "modern issues" is of great importance to me now and for the future. It's good to see literature on these advancements.

*When a person is sick, no one comes to the home. I lost my husband June 27, 1991 (death). No one came from the church to the house (to see if I was ok or not?) I have not been feeling very well so I have not been to church but I'll go back when I can. I am over 90 years old now.

*Circulate information about what "is working" in parishes in the diocese enabling the proclamation of the gospel to various institutions esp. youth and the unchurched or alienated Catholics

*I feel that the church needs to concentrate on the needy in our own community and

take care of our own people first before reaching out to those in other countries (missions). Teaching what the Lord expects of people instead of just making a point is needed in Sunday sermon.

*I don't drive a car but would like to help by talking to some one by phone and just reaching out to a shut-in.

*More of a need for priests to speak out against abortion. It's as though many of them are afraid of offending their parishioners.

4. COMMENTS ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:

*More efficient use of media-particularly in connecting Bishop to his people - audio conferencing, audio cassettes, etc.

*In general, the Church in the USA must develop new ways to take advantage of the communications explosion.

* The parish waits and loses faith. The video tape from the Bishop on The Holy Family - an innovative and good method of communication.

*I would like to see the Diocese serve not only as an opinion-former but as a builder of a sense of a diocesan community.

*We are being saturated with information, so I have come to hate the mail and the telephone.

*Parish communication is critical in a small rural parish. Communication must be given verbally by the priest. No printed info is available. Bulletins are inadequate.

*1 Get *The Catholic Spirit* out earlier - sometimes I don't get mine until the week after the Sunday they address. 2. Local workshops are more effective than large regional or diocesan ones. Schedule on Saturdays to accommodate working people. 3. Consolidate all those various newsletters from offices into one common one. 4. The changes in *The Catholic Spirit* to include church and moral issues is very appreciated.

*Make video or audio tapes more readily available from functions held in other parts of WV.

*In parish best communication is word of mouth; from diocese there is too much paper communication not suited to small, low income church.

*Enjoyed the Bishop's audio sermon in January. I don't feel the sermons in my own parish are personal enough or deeply felt.

*We are geographically isolated in the Eastern Panhandle and may be out of touch with Diocese. Networking/Communication is much better between us and Baltimore Diocese because of personal contact & lack of 4-5 hour commute.

*We need a TV outreach program on a regular basis in our diocese.

*I would like to see us make better use of "regular" Television and the daily newspaper.

*The Catholic Spirit is improving. Use more radio and TV to instruct and evangelize in WV.

*Would be good if WV had a religion channel and diocese offered good TV programs, interviews, education.

*Any positive communication is important. It seems that the larger number of media used - the more possibility of reaching people exists.

5. COMMENTS ABOUT THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT:

*I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you and all concerned on the great improvement in *The Catholic Spirit* this past year. Since it is much more family oriented, I believe that it more and more meets the needs of the Domestic Church. I appreciate your increased coverage of social justice issues. I was very happy to see the articles on Ministry to Persons with AIDS. I am grateful for the coverage of environmental issues and appreciate the interviews with Diocesan Personnel and resource people from outside the Diocese who are here for workshops.

**The Catholic Spirit* is greatly improved. Keep up the good work.

*I have served in 2 large dioceses in the last 17 years and *The Catholic Spirit* is the best diocesan paper I have seen so far. Congratulations. It is newsy, informative, and relevant and I look forward to reading it.

*I think the Church does its best to pass on information concerning Christian issues via its priests and newsletters to the parishioners.

*Handouts or info from diocese on seminars, religious education workshops, Bishop letters, gatherings at Pastoral Centers, etc.: could these not be posted in *Catholic Spirit* so we wouldn't get so many pieces of mail from the Diocese?

**Catholic Spirit* has improved 1000%! I'd like to see opinions and information on money management and investments from a Christian ethical perspective. I'd also like to see *The Spirit* include some topical discussion questions for families' and parish groups' reflections.

*I applaud the growth in content and format of our *Catholic Spirit*.

*1. Southern West Virginia needs a newspaper or an occasional page in the *Spirit*. 2. Parishes need communication staff persons who have time to prepare "stories" instead of news-releases. Things that we feel are important are not printed too often.

*It is getting better, although folks don't listen as well!

*More local coverage, home town style, cover more "small town" events, too much national news which we hear in other publications.

*Both *The Catholic Spirit* and our parish bulletins are excellent in communicating matters of importance (both spiritual and worldly) to their readers. They are very valuable sources of information.

*I hope that *The Catholic Spirit* continues to get better.

**Catholic Spirit* is much improved over the last year, more of a real newspaper.

**The Catholic Spirit* is a wonderful tool for information for the larger Churches in northern area, but sometimes we smaller parishes feel left out and forgotten.

*Many good comments on the use of local newspapers by the Diocese concerning the release of the Pastoral on Family Life. I believe we could use the local town newspapers with great results for the Diocese and the national and universal church news. We are alerting the parishioners to TV advancements from the communications office. We find this very helpful information. We are also attempting to increase the circulation of *The Catholic Spirit*. Our aim is to have one new subscriber per week so that the local church will have contact with the Bishop and diocesan news and events.

**The Catholic Spirit* is vastly improved. Thanks!

*Too often and too much on kids and personal piety. Need more on building adult parish as a corporate community and adult formation beyond basics and "personal" ethics.

*Communications in our Church, Diocese and my parish are greatly improved through pastor and the *Spirit*.

*The Catholic Spirit is fast becoming the best it's ever been for practical action ideas. Keep it coming!

**The Catholic Spirit* is becoming a refreshing source of information. I received many comments about the special issue sent to all households!

*More news in the *Spirit* concerning the church and catholics in the US. Must buy the Sunday Visitor to learn about what is being done by Catholics in other cities, states, etc. *The Spirit* is not attractive.

**The Catholic Spirit* has to learn to reflect the actual diocese, not the perceived diocese, in which everyone is involved in Catholic Schools and Wheeling is the center of the universe.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, Walter M., Ed. The Documents of Vatican II. Guild Press: New York, 1966.

Albrecht, Terrance L. "The Role of Communication in Perceptions of Organizational Climate." Communications Yearbook 3. Ed. Dan Nimmo. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1979. 343-357.

A study of the ways the nature of communication systems in organizations are important in shaping perceptions of the climate in that organization. Used 'force aggregation theory' which assumes that organizational climate perceptions are related to the amount of information different members have regarding salient objects in that organization. Data from a study of a specific manufacturing organization supported hypotheses that perceptions of the organizational climate tended to differ systematically by the subjects' position in the communication flow. Those with the greatest frequency and variety of communication contacts regarded organizational climate more positively than those with less frequency and variety of same. Key communicators also demonstrated less ambiguity about the climate, perceived greater interdependence among components of the organization and were more satisfied with messages received than were non-key communicators.

Archdiocese of Louisville Communication Office. "Proclaiming Good News: Communication in the Archdiocese of Louisville." Unpublished Paper. Draft of October 6, 1991.

Bellenger, Danny N., Kenneth L. Bernhardt and Jac L. Goldstucker. Qualitative Research in Marketing. American Marketing Association: Chicago, IL, 1976.

The marketing uses of focus groups as a way of providing qualitative data for use in designing quantitative marketing research is the intent of this chapter. There is rather shallow section of how to design and set up a focus group interview and a more substantial one on the role of the moderator. A final section reviews uses and misuses.

Church Planning Data: Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Atlanta: Glenmary Research Center. 1980.

Daniels, Tom D. and Barry K. Spiker. Perspectives on Organizational Communication. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, 1987.

Textbook type review of various organizational communication evaluation procedures, largely focused on a description and critique of ICA process. Outlines objectives of same and the rationale behind the eight areas surveyed in ICA. Summarizes five limitations of communication audits: (1) measure perceptions and not necessarily behaviors; (2) results of scales are too general and difficult to interpret; (3) time consuming and expensive; (4) defines organizational communication too narrowly from individuals' perspectives and not the social dynamics in organizations; (5) auditors require specialized skills. Concluded that organizational communication evaluation objectives can better be met not by using prepackaged method such a ICA but by devising own conceptual framework appropriate to situation and organization being evaluated.

Dewine, Sue and others. Validation of Organizational Communication Audit Instruments. ERIC, 1985. ED 266 494.

Review of the criticisms of the ICA Audit including the modified version and process of the Ohio State Regional Data Bank. While noting the immense influence of the ICA Audit, the authors also note the lack of centralized control of data collection, lack of organizational comparability, absence of follow-up procedures, problems with the instruments and lack of a procedure for developing client recommendations. They proceed to suggest a problem, objective, method, reality, implementation and evaluation method of preparing recommendations for the client. The survey instrument is shortened, given new instructions, and fractionation scales applied to the analysis.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Directory 1991-92. Wheeling, WV, 1991.

Dozier, David M. and Susan A. Hellweg. State of the Art: A Comparative Analysis of Internal Communication and Public Relations Audits. ERIC, 1985. ED 261 429.

Public relations audits are distinguished from communication audits by being concerned with the attitudes, knowledge and dispositions of various internal and external publics to an organization. The PR audit thus is used more as a formative tool rather than as a corrective tool. "The ICA audit assesses information flow, message content and communication attitudes and perceptions" (page 9). Article ends with notes on how to use two types of audits together and the relative benefits to the practitioner.

Dunham, Randall B. and Frank J. Smith. Organizational Surveys: An Internal Assessment of Organizational Health. Glenville, IL: Scott, Foreman and Co., 1979.

An overview of whys and hows of organizational surveys of satisfaction but not of communication. Section on "How to Do Surveys" gives good descriptions of survey strengths and weaknesses, of importance of validity, reliability and standard administration of procedures. Less technical descriptions, more practical and general guidelines and rationales.

Eadie, William F., Robert S. Goyer, Errol Liebowitz, Barry K. Spiker and James Gossett. A Communication Audit of a State Mental Health Institution. ERIC, 1980. ED 188270.

Report of the outcome of the eighteenth audit of the ICA data bank, that of a mental health institution. Procedures included initial interviews, a paper and pencil measure that included a survey and report of critical incidents, and then follow up interviews. The qualitative data were said to provide an overall communication picture and allow comparison with other organizations in the data bank; non-qualitative data provided greater depth and detail. Dissemination of information in the institution was uneven and employees indicated that they preferred oral communication while management most often used written. Reading ability problems were a problem for some employees. Information flow problems were discovered. Two distinct groups were said to be operating in the organization and each had differing goals and patterns of communication that were dissatisfying to the other.

Emanuel, Myron. "Auditing Communication Practices." Inside Organizational Communications. Ed. Carol Reuss and Donn Silvis. New York: Longman, 1981. 49-61.

Rationale for and outline of audit process reviewed by professional business communication auditor. Gives steps in process of audit with goal of each. Especially good comments about how research like the communication audit gives not only specific data but also authority to establish communication policies, budget and staffing.

Falcione, Rayond L. The Communication Consultant in Organizational Settings. ERIC, 1978. ED 168 096.

Describes how the communication consultant armed with ICA audit can help

an organization facilitate systematic change. Sees "information flow-diffusion process" as particularly relevant concern for communication consultant.

Falcione, Raymond L., Lyle Sussman, and Richard P. Hernden. "Communication Climate in Organizations." Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. Ed. F.M. Jablin, L. Putnam, K.H. Roberts and L.W. Porter. Newbury Park CA: Sage, 1987. 195-227.

Especially helpful definition of climate as the interaction and evolution of perceived expectancies and instrumentalities regarding communication in relationship to organizational practices and processes. Also argues that climate is a function of the socialization processes at work in the organization.

Foltz, Roy G. "Communications in Contemporary Organizations." Inside Organizational Communications. Ed. Carol Reuss and Donn Silvius. Longman, NY: 1981. 5-16.

Brief overview of elements and dynamics of communication in organizations especially how all of these combined project the "personality" of that organization. Importance of knowing both internal and external audiences and of establishing communication policies and objects for an organization.

Fore, William F. Television and Religion: The Shaping of Faith, Values and Culture. Augsburg Publishing: Minneapolis, MN, 1987.

Longtime communication director for the National Council of Churches of Christ in the US outlines his critique of television's influence on the values of American culture and the variety of response by the churches to this influence. Of particular interest to this study is the second chapter's focus on the threat posed by technology to religion. Fore points out the inadequacy of the churches' response which has largely regarded television as an enemy, if it offered any response at all. He proposes an alternative which has the churches challenging television's worldview at some points and using its strengths at others.

Goldhaber, Gerald M. and Paul Krivonos. "The ICA Communication Audit: Process, Status, Critique." Journal of Business Communication 15 (Fall 1977): 41-56.

An analysis of ICA audit process by founder and coordinator. The ICA was developed to provide both a process and an organization that can help various

businesses and groups prevent major breakdown due to faulty communication. Describes major problems in earlier audit systems and how ICA overcomes them. Five measurement tools which can be used independently or in combination: questionnaire, interviews, network analysis, communication experiences, and communication diary. The strengths of ICA: (1) attitudinal, perceptual and behavioral data; (2) sound conceptual framework; (3) only standardized system of communication measurement; (4) five instruments instead of one; (5) standardization of instruments and procedures; (6) process consultation model; (7) on-going relationship with larger organization. Weaknesses include practical concerns regarding time and money, subjective nature of some data collection, snapshot of communication limited to one specific moment of time and may be atypical.

Goldhaber, Gerald M., D. Thomas Porter, and Michael Yates. ICA Communication Audit Survey Instrument 1977 Organizational Norms. ERIC, 1977. ED 140 367.

The original team that worked to develop the ICA Audit outlines history, products, components and the 'norms' or summarized results in the data bank as of 1977. Seven products are listed: an organizational profile of perceptions of communication, a map of communication networks, verbal summaries of communication experiences, organizational and individual profiles of communication behaviors, a set of recommendations, several personnel of the organization familiar with the audit process and access to the data bank. In summarizing the survey conclusions, the authors note that respondents generally receive more information than they send, that the best sources of information are those closest to them and that communication problems are related to the relative distance to sources of information. They note that the data bank is building toward testing contingency approaches to organizational communication.

Greenbaum, Howard H. "The Audit of Communication." Academy of Management Journal 17 (1974): 739-754.

An early work that lays some of the foundations and descriptions of the audit process. Notes that to date in most organizations there is a lack of awareness that communication was a problem to be studied. Suggest an appraisal structure and work plan for actually conducting an audit.

Greenbaum, Howard H., Susan A. Hellweg, and Raymond L. Falcione. "Organizational Communication Evaluation: An Overview, 1950-1981."

Handbook of Organizational Communication. Ed. Gerald M. Goldhaber and George A. Barnett. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1988, 275-317.

Survey of OCE studies and theoretical descriptions. Develops a taxonomy within the areas of interpersonal, group and organization-wide communication which are further subdivided into types of studies. The chapter is concluded with a review of the three standardized instruments for OCE. Of particular value is the extensive bibliography.

Grunig, James E. Structural Reconceptualization of the Organizational Communication Audit, with Application to a State Department of Education. ERIC, 1985. ED 263 631.

Grunig concludes that the ICA audit too narrowly assessed the total system of publics that the audit needed to consider to be able to give a comprehensive view of communication effectiveness. By broadening the scope of the audit and by asking for descriptions rather than merely evaluations of communication, a more appropriate audit form is developed and applied.

Hamilton, Seymour. A Communication Audit Handbook: Helping Organizations Communicate. New York: Longman, 1987.

Hamilton provides a comprehensive overview of the rationale for, processes of and benefits from a communication audit. A fictionalized case study is used throughout to make specific application of the audit clearer. The book's strength is in its comprehensiveness regarding the audit processes from first contact between the auditor and the CEO of the organization and the final evaluation. Significant consideration is given to the political and finesse issues that can complicate or undermine the audit. Hamilton strongly recommends a triangulated system of corroborating techniques to conduct the audit for more reliable results. The weakness of the handbook is insufficient detail and few supporting references that would be more useful to a scientific examination of the auditing process.

In the Sight of All-Communications: A Vision All Can Share. The United States Catholic Conference: Washington, DC, 1986.

This document by the leadership of the American Catholic Bishops stresses the importance of communication work as a ministry of the Church today and encourages bishops and dioceses to implement pastoral communication plans as part of their pastoral work.

"Inter Mirifica (Decree on the Means of Social Communication." Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. Ed. Austin Flannery O.P. The Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, 1975. 319-331.

This brief statement on the role of communication in contemporary society was among the first written by the Council. The decree treats the Church's use of technology in its work of spreading the Gospel and offers words of encouragement and pastoral advice to professionals in the media.

Jablin, Frederic M. "Organizational Communication Theory and Research: An Overview of Communication Climate and Network Research." Communication Yearbook 4. Ed. Dan Nimmo. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1980. 327-347.

An overview of communication research and theory related to psychology-based communication climate and sociology-based communication networks. ICA is suggested as one means of assessing both the evaluative questions of job satisfaction surveys and the descriptive one of climate questionnaires since it asks respondents to indicate how they presently feel about a situation and what they need with regard to the same situation. Suggests that there are probably many communication climates at work at the same time in a organization with some dimensions common across all climates and some unique. Notes, similarly, that organizations are not a single, unitary communication network but a series of overlapping and interrelated networks. Organizational communication studies must consider climate and networks simultaneously and on both the subject and objective levels.

Kopec, Joseph A. "The Communication Audit." Public Relations Journal 38, no. 5 (1982): 24-27.

Popular description of audit for benefit of managers. Outlines process, benefits and cost. Notes how the climates necessary for successful management outcomes are the result of planned communication strategies based on periodic audits.

McDonnell, James M. "Communicating the Gospel in a Technological Age: Rediscovering the Contemplative Spirit." Communicating Faith in a Technological Age. Ed. James M. McDonnell and Frances Trampiets. Middlegreen, Slough, England: St. Paul Publications, 1989.

Book presents the talks and responses from the colloquium of the same name held at the University of Dayton in 1988. Of particular interest to this paper is the Introduction by McDonnell. He deals with how the Church in general has and has not responded to the technological milieu of the present era.

Monge, Peter R., Jane A. Edwards and Kenneth K. Kirste. "The Determinants of Communication and Communication Structure in Large Organizations: A Review of Research." Communication Yearbook 2. Ed. Brent R. Rubin. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1978: 311-331.

An interdisciplinary review of research findings that attempts to generate principles regarding determinants of organizational communication structure. Posits seventeen 'intriguing regularities'. With regard to status in an organization, the following seem noteworthy though not especially urgent: high-ranking individuals communicate more than lower status persons; though functions differ, both horizontal and vertical communication essential to continued organizational functioning; job responsibilities and requirements influence quality and direction of flow; communication between organizational members of differing status usually initiated by person of higher status; status equals are more likely to discuss organizational change than those with differing status.

Morgan, David L. Focus Groups as Qualitative Research. Sage: Newbury Park, CA, 1988.

Of particular interest in this overview of focus group usage is the section on linking focus groups to other forms of research. Author suggests that focus groups can supplement the quantitative research by helping to select and adapt questions in surveys and by affording an opportunity to explore aspects of the analysis that the quantitative research sparks. Also helpful is the overview of the moderator's role.

Paul VI. Evangelii Nuntiandi (On Evangelization in the Modern World). Daughters of St. Paul: Boston, MA, 1976.

Pontifical Commission on Social Communication. Aetatis Novae (Pastoral Instruction Social Communication on the Twentieth Anniversary of *Communio et Progressio*.) Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1992.

The Pontifical Commission charged with responsibility for communication

policy in the Catholic Church outlines the role communication plays in the mission of the church and how the advances of technology in this century have changed the methods and priorities of the Church in using the tools of media: "This document is concerned with encouraging reflection on the current media landscape and promoting the design of pastoral social communication plans in the Church." The commission suggests that it is imperative that all Catholic dioceses and national episcopal conferences develop an integrated pastoral plan for print and electronic social communication. Such a plan should involve a research phase (including a needs assessment, a communication audit and a resource inventory) followed by a design phase.

----- *Commuino et Progressio (Pastoral Instruction for the Application of the Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the Means of Social Communication.)*
Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1971.

As directed by the Council's decree, the Pontifical Commission wrote this document expanding that of the Second Vatican Council and more fully articulating the relationship between the Church and the media. The document also treats the role of the media in shaping the unity and advancement of the human community. A final section deals with the role of Catholics in the media in general and in specific media.

Poole, Marshall Scott and Robert D. McPhee. "A Stuctural Analysis of Organizational Climate." *Communication and Organizations: An Interpretive Approach.* Ed. Linda L. Putnam and Michael E. Paconowsky. Sage: Beverly Hills, CA, 1983. 195-219.

Poole and McPhee propose that organizational climate is an intersubjective construct and not merely one that can be studied either from an individualistic or from the organizational perspective. They wonder how it is possible in research to go from an individual-oriented perspective to a quality of organizational life. The shortcoming of several traditional social science approaches to study of climate are critiqued and found wanting. The structurational approach is proposed as a means of viewing the intersubjective processes that produce and continue the development of an organization's overall climate. In structured organizations climate is the outcome of the day-to-day practices of the members which "reinforce or challenge the prevailing climate". In unstructured organizations climate results from the various rhetorical processes that "reproduce and maintain it".

Sincoff, Michael Z. and Robert S. Hoyer. "Communication Audit Critique: The

Researcher's Perspective." Journal of Business Communication 15, no. 1. Fall (1977): 51-63.

A brief critique of the ICA noting it as the only broad-based attempt by communication trained specialists to develop standardized processes and instruments to assess communication variables in complex organizations. Criticizes too broad claims for audit's benefits: the comparability of data across different types of organizations and the use of the term "communication" for every instance of information processing. In passing critiques the construct and criterion validity of the instruments. (A brief rebuttal by Gerald Goldhaber follows.)

St. John, Walter. "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Your Organization's Communication." NASSP Bulletin (November 1989): 99-109.

Delineates ten areas to be included in any organizational communication evaluation survey and suggests 300 questions on the same. Potentially helpful were four critical incident questions at the end of the survey. Also notes that the evaluation itself is not the end goal; improvements based on the findings of the process are.

Stewart, David W. and Prem N. Shamdasani. Focus Groups: Theory and Practice. Sage: Newbury Park, CA, 1990.

An overview of the focus group technique of research. Authors give specific instruction as to why a focus group would be chosen as a research tool, on how to structure the questions, and on how to moderate the group.

Tomaszewski, Dawn. "An Analysis of Communication within a Religious Community." Masters Thesis. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1984.

This thesis analyzed the communication structures, methods and priorities within a Catholic women's religious community which went through substantial change over the past twenty-five years. The author conducted interviews with the principal leadership, group interviews with middle level management and an audit survey that was administered to the general membership of the community. Though the survey instrument apparently was not validated and is only loosely based on the ICA Audit, it seems especially appropriate to the type organization being surveyed. Similarly the questions used for the leadership interviews and group sessions provided an applicable model.

Wiio, Osmo, A. Organizational Communication Studies: The LTT and OCD Procedures. ERIC, 1978. ED 157 110.

Wiio described the history and methodological considerations behind the development of the other two main organizational communication evaluation tools which he and his associates developed in recent years (in addition to the ICA Audit). He noted that the general lack of comparative organizational communication research and the small number of samples had hindered the usefulness of much of that research. The LTT Communication Audit grew out of a business need, unlike the ICA Audit which grew out of theory building needs. Principle conclusions to date from the LTT indicated that most people feel they send enough information but that they don't receive enough. Similarly, dissatisfaction with communication seemed to be the rule when the distance between sender and receiver is great and the subject is a receiver. The OCD was a refinement of its predecessor and seeks to be a quicker and cheaper tool. Wiio noted that communication satisfaction and job satisfaction are two different things and that their relationship seemed to be contingent on organizational and communication climate.