and women for careers in communication research, teaching, and as professional specialists in radio/TV, journalism, film, and other connected fields.

A country goes to war with its complete armed services, a combination of military, naval, and air forces. We Christians should enter into the global battle of evangelization with united, accorded, and well-coordinated media forces if we are to win.

We have no objection to the diversification of Christian media. Yet media coordination has today become a necessity. It not only makes media diversity meaningful; it makes a global communication of the message of Christ possible.

COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

Menkir Esayas

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In his book, *Man's Need and God's Action,* Reuel L. Howe, who is recognized by many as a practical theologian, expresses compelling ideas as to the basic concepts of communications as they relate to the Christian faith. He writes:

"We have the gift of the new relationship from God in Christ into which baptism is the door. He gave us this gift not for ourselves only, but for all men. The Christian Church exists primarily for those who are not in it, which is to say that our chief aim is missionary. The first meaning of baptism for us is that we are cared for, but its second meaning is that we are called to care for others; first we are ministered unto; but finally we must minister. How easy it is, however, for us to think of the church as existing primarily for those who are already in; how easy it is for us to be concerned for our parish's success, prestige, and adornment and to forget those to whom we are sent. We may be so forgetful of our mission as to resent any reminders of our responsibility to those outside and to resent, also, their intrusion into our "fellowship" when they appear as a result of others' invitations. On the contrary, the Christian's mark of maturity is his readiness to seek out and care for, or minister. All of us having been baptized are ministers of Christ, both laity and clergy."

As part of the concept of baptism defined in the preceding quote, it would seem that Christian communication has an essential function to fulfill in the broadcast sense of the mission of the church. The key essence here is one of "seeking out" and then ministering. The process of seeking-out is a complicated procedure in all areas of scientific involvement, not least within the area of communications. However, while difficult, this "searching" is also the most necessary if there is to be any element of effectiveness and any consolation in knowing that a job is being done well.

The church is beginning to realize the significance of the use of mass media as a cogent force of propagation. However, what is still needed is the knowledge of how to disseminate its message to receptive audiences.

The realized need of audience analysis is not limited to our age. The phenomenon can be traced back as far as to Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek philosophers who took great pains to understand their audiences in order to communicate with them. Shakespeare was obviously well aware of his audience, as he drew upon it for many characters in his plays. Christ exemplified in the Gospels the art of knowing to whom one is speaking so as to communicate in the most meaningful manner. In any communication endeavor the question of *whom are we talking to* is

perhaps the most crucial one if our communication is to bear fruit. Christ makes this point clear as we see him speak with absolute precision to a variety of different types of audiences, individuals and masses alike. His discussion with Nicodemus certainly is not in the same fashion as to the Samaritan woman. He spoke to the men on the road to Emmaus in a different way than he spoke to the Roman commander whose child was dying. His address to the elders and scholars in the temple was not in the same manner as his address to a crowd of 5,000 hungry and helpless people.

So we, whether starting outreach or re-thinking on existing outreach, must know who our audiences are and what they are made of. We have demographic information, information which gives us indications of people, who they are, what their age groups are, their backgrounds, social situations, their aspirations, their education, their sentiments, and in what ways they live and perceive the world around them. The *type of audience* is a phrase which may remind communicators of segments of audiences which characterize our present day. It is said that there is no one monolithic audience "out there" for any communication medium. Instead one can think of tens, hundreds, and even thousands of different *sub-audiences*. And it is, therefore, essential for the communicator to think in terms of a specific segment of a given population as his audience. In evangelism as well as in any other communication undertaking, one has to say here that there is a time where the Bible has to be put aside and life in the target audience area studied in detail and the total needs determined. It is said that "the fisherman must think like the fish if he expects to catch any of them."

In a writing, I once came across the correlation of the communicator to a lover:

"The missionary broadcaster is wooing the world for Christ. Research is required to find out the best hour to call or to visit in order that courting may be conducted under the most favorable conditions. It involves finding out what the interests are of the person we are courting, so our conversation may be directed to this. What problems has she had today? What are her tastes in music and in people that will cause her to smile upon us, to accept us, and to listen while we tell about the Risen Lord, the fierceness of his power, the depth of his love?"

A study of the cross-section of a society within any one country of a geographical giant is enough to convince one that there can be no complacency in the evaluation of the communication of words for effectiveness and for anticipated and desired responses. To compound the study with the complexities of all the countries in a given geographical area, each with its own distinctive mark, may leave one astounded. The so-called mass audience if taken as a whole, could become a cause of frustration, but it need not be completely bewildering.

In a sense, with communication, Paul's philosophy of being "all things to all men" is not a pragmatic philosophy. One has to understand that when the average person, if there is such, listens to any communication medium he is expecting entertainment. In most Christian communications undertakings we are not in the business primarily to enter-

tain, although programs in this sphere are certainly to be desired from the standpoint of strategy and psychological necessity. The theme, as I have experienced in the last ten years, in Christian communication, seems to be *to persuade the listener that in Christ there is a measure of communication to which he can relate with significant meaning, no matter what his status and philosophy of life.* To communicate this theme effectively it seems that one must be discerning in one's choice of an audience and in one's choice of a medium so that one can be at least "something to some men." To put this in communication language, the Christian communicator must be concerned with what's known in communication as *"the potential audience," "the available audience," "the actual audience."* But more specifically, with the *"most valuable audience."* These breakdowns are not necessarily the absolute determining factors in Christian communications. For the Christian Gospel is for all men, in all places, at all times, with the power of the Holy Spirit at work reconciling men to God. However, in any communications undertaking the determination of certain groups of people to be exposed to a given medium is extremely essential. Speaking, for example, of what may be termed the "valuable audience" for any communication may cause us to pose questions before producing a certain message, questions such as: "What is the audience made of? Women, men, children? In what age groups are the ones who are most available for a given medium and at what time, in what sex, what background?" And consider also the availability of listeners, or a given audience to the times during the day or the night when they are either at home, at work, or at whatever circumstance they may be.

It is often said that the Christian message is irrelevant to the needs and problems of today. I maintain that it is not the message which is irrelevant, but the thoughtless way in which it is often presented. Changing the content of the message is an exercise in futility. Reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ has, through the ages, satisfied the deepest hunger of men's hearts. But changing the presentation to suit the audience is absolutely essential, and it is the failure to change the presentation that makes the message seem irrelevant. It is at this point that the Christian communicator has to be disciplined or commit himself or herself to the principles of communications to effect the desired message, thereby making it relevant to the intended receiver of the message.

The rationale for communications research

The first question that one is confronted with here is a basic one. *Why is communication research necessary?*

The first consideration may be *to understand the audience delineation.* It cannot be emphasized enough that for a message to achieve the purpose for which it is designed, it must reach a certain type or types of audiences, and must also reach a sufficiently large number of them to warrant the expenditure of time and money required to put a particular program on a given medium or point. Both the size of the audience reached by a given program and the type of people making up the audience are matters of considerable importance.

In communications research the main categories of audience delineation are as follows. In effect, these are audiences rather than audience. In some areas, they are characterized as sub-audience.

a. *The potential audience* of a given communication undertaking will include all those (men, women, boys, girls, and young children) who live in a given area equipped with the necessary communications medium or are able to relate to that medium and which can be reached by the medium conceived satisfactorily.

b. The second classification of audiences for our consideration in the discussion of communications research would be the audience included in what is called *the available audience*. This includes, of course, all (men, women, boys, girls) included in the potential audience and who, at the particular time that a message is relayed, are in a position to participate (this would mean listening, reading, etc.), if they wish to participate. In most cases, this would mean that those in the available audience must at the time of the program broadcast, or at the time the communication is made available, be at home, be awake, and be able to relate to the communications.

In the cases of radio and television, the available audience is influenced strongly by *the exact time of the day*. The number of possible listeners who are at home and awake would be substantially different, for example, in the case of electronic media at six o'clock in the morning and at eight o'clock or nine o'clock in that same morning. In considering "available audience," time becomes vitally important. The size and composition of the available audience naturally vary at different hours during the day. It has been calculated that enough people are always out of their homes, or at night asleep, that the available audience never at its peak includes more than 75 percent or 80 percent of the individuals who make up the potential audience.

Any grouping is somewhat, of course, artificial and the dichotomy of sub-audiences within the available audience is very difficult. Some easily researched things that often correctly divide the audience in significant sub-groups, as has been indicated earlier, are developing categories such as age, sex, language, education, residence, religion, status, occupation, etc. Any group is somewhat artificial in its characteristic ascertainment, because every individual within a group or a sub-group is different. But if a Christian communicator is to use communication media, some sort of grouping must be done. The factors mentioned often are useful as indicators of individuals who may have a "world view" which is similar — they may share, more or less, similar experiences, and they may understand the same kind of exposition or participate in the same kind of discussion.

c. The next category of audiences, or sub-audiences, is one which is termed as the *actual audience*. This is the one comprised of, in the electronic media, the listener, viewer, or in print media, the reader who is actually participating in a given communications at a specific time. Say that the percentage of *actual* audience in terms of the *available* audience can only be calculated in terms of particular program or programs at a given time. Naturally, the actual audience will consist of a percentage of the available audience. The actual audience is the most important for two primary reasons: (i) it helps the communicator to understand his effectiveness in reaching a percentage of people who are tuned to a given station and therefore gives him some figures with which to work as the cost and time estimate; and (ii) it helps the communicator to be more specific in his choice of message which will enable him to reach the most valuable audience.

d. *The most valuable audience* has already been discussed but it is important to note that it seems that this factor should be the most important factor in determining communication policy. Without some careful consideration of the nature of the "right" audience in terms of the projection of effective communication of ideas, the Christian communicator will be continually "shooting in the dark."

The second consideration under the rationale for communications research is the *determination of the composition of message receivers*. The main consideration in determining such a composition is to try and have information available which will help in understanding the receiver in terms of the variety of habits, and the variety of division of the population which is further classified in various social groups. You will understand what I am talking about more clearly if you have some knowledge of the social structures of some of the African cultures and particularly in the country where I come from. Where, for example, social classes go much deeper than a superficial division of upper class, middle class, lower class, and the different shades of upper, middle, lower classes. It gets deeper into the hereditary birth tradition, which is embedded in the personality make-up of individuals. And so it is that when one is to address one's self to any of the sub-groups, within a very deeply integrated and clearly identified sub-group, one has to be discerning in the preparation of any message.

These classifications which are deeply sociological and psychological in nature, sometimes can automatically dismiss Western concepts and social class, group identification, and group dynamics. In countries of Africa and Asia, one finds one's self staggered with the complexity of group dynamics to be carefully assessed and analyzed. It is not merely a question of population density and ideological identity. It is density in the deepest sense of a personality structure of which to a great extent modern scientific endeavor has not given adequate explanation.

The third consideration is *being informed as to who is on the receiving end of the communications*. There are, of course, three basic pieces of information vital to effective communications involved in this category, and in the case of Christian communication, it would be necessary to add a fourth. For example, age, sex, and educational status are simple and necessary breakdowns of *available, actual* and *most valuable* message receivers. It is not necessary here to further elaborate on these categories except to reemphasize that these factors can be instrumental in determining a more effective communications strategy. If, for instance, it were found that the percentage basis of listeners at a given broadcast time, out of a hundred homes for a 60-minute listening period was:

		MALE	FEMALE	YOUTH	CHILD
SEX		25%	50%	20%	5%
AGE		40-50	30-41	17-21	8-15
EDUCATION	COLLEGE	2	1	0	0
	HIGH SCHOOL	10	15	8	0

the type of program in that case, in order to be effective, should concentrate for that hour in terms of numbers, on the women in the 30-41 range and having no high school education, so that out of one hundred available listeners one could possibly get an effective program to thirty-five women if the consideration were numbers. Many other equations can be deduced from this simple equation, depending upon strategy and, of course, the medium involved. Another significant factor in the preceding analysis would be the added information concerning the ideological breakdown. If, for example, these women were all Muslims, the method of communicating Christian philosophy would have to be different than if the women were Christians. The question would then arise: to whom should you, a Christian communicator, disseminate the message in terms of preference at that given hour — to the Christian or to the Muslim?

The fourth consideration is the understanding of the inherent strength of acceptability for the recipient of the given message. There is considerable variation in broadcasting between listeners who fall between different variation in their degree of liking for sex or age or educational or cultural groups in their degree of liking for the different types of broadcast programs. Here we can say that the attractiveness that any program has for listeners depends on the kinds of tractiveness that any program has for listeners depends on the kinds of appeals offered and the strength of these appeals. It is not the purpose of this paper to develop the use of these presentations, ways, or appeals, but only to acquaint ourselves with some concrete material which can be harnessed for use by the Christian communicator. What can be said further is that, by and large, most message receivers within a given group will behave in a predicted fashion, or will respond in a presumed manner to a given appeal within a program. Allowances must always be given for individual variations, of course.

The degree to which communications recipients within any particular groups will have a sense of involvement may depend in part on the nature of the "appeal" of a given program, in part on the characteristic of the individuals within the group, and in part on those experiences which are common to all or to most members of the group. All of the various things which make for differences between groups are in considerable degree based on differences in past experiences or on differences in present interests which may not find their foundations in past experiences.

The fifth aspect to consider is the need for communications research in order to organize programming in terms of defined audience needs.

It is obvious to those who have some knowledge of psychology and sociology and particularly in the light of our previous discussion that the knowledge of the make-up of an audience is important in trying to relate to the various segments of that given group or audience. Some of the factors that need consideration along this area are:

a. What sort of audiences are available to receive your message? In the area of electronic communication media, one has to take into consideration certain information that needs to be ascertained before sending the message. For example, (i) interference, (ii) television, (iii) medium wave stations, (iv) number of shortwave receivers in use? If, for example, there is only a small or perhaps no audience available for broadcasting on shortwave, or if your programs are on medium wave and the bulk of your audience is not within the reach of the medium wave

target, then perhaps concentration has to be in the areas where these factors are operative. The question of the composition of your audience whether literate or illiterate, rural or cosmopolitan, has to be answered.

Having determined the composition of this audience, one has to look into the breakdown of that audience. That information must be put in analytical form so that it can be used in strategic planning. One rural group I came across had been invited by the gentle persuasion of a given leader to listen to a radio program. I underline the term rural in this case. The group sat down obediently as the leader turned his set on, and over the air came the strains of the Elizabethan era of classical music. A silence that was ominous settled over this group. The leader, overcome by regret and embarrassment, looked at his group apologetically, turned off the set, and of course continued with his group activity as was his normal custom. This incident, though very simple, rings a bell in many a Christian communicator who has prepared a message and used a medium without any consideration as to who is to benefit from that message, using that particular medium. This indeed is the sad picture of many communicators, particularly in Africa today.

b. What is the Christian communicator able to deduce of the persuasive elements to be used in reaching the actual audience? For example, the Christian communicator should try to collect information as to:

(i) Its own credibility as a communicator, attempting to determine just what image is being reflected by the message, in terms of the average listener. If the Christian communicator is considered to be a high credibility source, its programming, its message will be more readily acceptable to the receiver. If it is of a low credibility, then ways must be found of boosting the image. After all, communications have rules and principles and no message has the guarantee to be readily acceptable particularly because it is a "Christian message." Those who have been in the communications business for a decade or two should expect some kind of image which ought to be conveyed to a given communication recipient.

(ii) The influence of the communication with respect of various programs which should be evaluated in terms of purpose of such programs.

(iii) The personality and susceptibility of the audience to persuasion. This takes on special importance when we consider that the effects of a communication are partly dependent upon the characteristics of the individual members of the audience. The need is to try to find out, for instance, how much social pressure affects the auditors when exposed to ideas which may cause them to make value judgments.

The sixth and final rationale for our consideration in the need for communications research is the idea of analyzing of the purpose of the message in terms of the needs and responses from the communications recipient.

Certain Christian communications have specific objectives and a purpose for being engaged in communications. In some cases it would be direct proclamation, in other cases it may be only educational programs. In still other cases it may be a combination of proclamation, culture and information. Be that as it may, the need for evaluation and assessment of our intended purpose and the content of the message in view of the communications recipient and the expected response need to be investigated in the most honest and meaningful manner. For example, in terms of

pragmatic involvement, how would the Christian communicator expect his message to affect a broad audience? Also in terms of the audience make-up in general, how can the *widest possible audience* be reconciled with the need to be truly honest and effect communication to an *actual audience?* Further, how does that relate to the *most valuable audience?*

Some Christian communicators see the need of the communication of the message as one being a *Nurture program* of the life and ministry of the Christian churches. The question I would like to pose here is two-fold:

a. How is the Christian communication agency to be used as a strengthening medium in the work of the church?

b. Are believers or members of a given church being nurtured by the programs broadcast? We need to know how if they are. We need to ask why if they are not.

Still others in Christian communication have the aim of assisting churches in their *Witness and Outreach.* How is this being done and how effective is the result? It is the responsibility of the Christian communicator to realize that he is dealing with man, not in a vacuum. He is dealing with man who is, partially (significantly) a product of his social setup, of his culture and aspirations.

Others communicate to help education and culture flourish. This is done in many cases without giving any thought to *what sort* of "education" and *whose* culture is being flourished.

Marshall McLuhan has at least convinced us of one thing: that the media can have a dynamic far in excess of the message they contain. A given area's social pattern, emotions, behaviors, are to a large extent molded by the dominating medium. People also tend to think and perceive in patterns related to the media used in their conditioning. There is some truth in this understanding. The Christian broadcaster should constantly investigate these possibilities. This must be done by a constantly investigate and study to investigate particularly the electronic media with other media. Constantly searching and planning, producing, using and evaluating, the Christian communicator should leave no *means* — or no channel — in his efforts to reach the listener, the viewer, the reader, etc., and to introduce him to the one who is himself both message and medium.

The steps indicated above when seen in a *system* for a communication projection may be diagrammed thus:
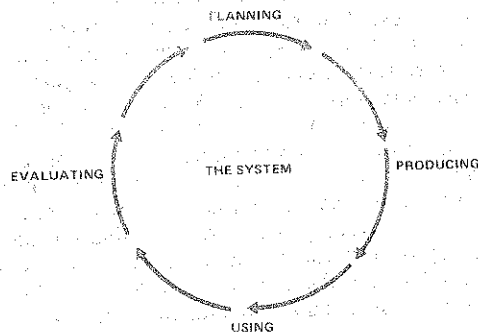
A projected program of communication research

The particular categories of involvements in communications research are many, and it would be presumptuous of me to give one model or one approach to communications research. It seems as if any given model does not present us with a permanent solution as to how we should go about doing communications research. It varies with experience, with areas, with the kind of communications involvement. The method to be used in communication research, therefore, should take into consideration primarily the need for a truly honest and a systematic assessment of the situation — and as far as possible scientific in its operation. Several approaches could be taken into consideration as far as communication research is concerned, and this would be dependent upon the need of the kind of the survey in mind. Approaches like "in depth" interviewing, "participant observation" on a restricted scale, would be one way. The other may be using a broader basis for which the number of variables are taken into consideration for investigation. The point here is that it is highly advisable, unless for specific purposes the approach on a limited scale, on an in depth interviewing basis, is called for. Particularly is this true in areas where the instruments, of scientific research, as we know them in the West today, are not one hundred percent reliable, particularly in areas where such scientific exercises are still in their infancy and the society is still free from the bondage of "opinion poll, colonialism." Particular categories of the involvement in communications research that I would like to discuss briefly in this section, and which need our attention when researching, may be divided into the following steps:

a. *Investigation:* This involves the encompassing of agencies which are conducting or have conducted research in the particular area. This should be followed up by inquiring about the availability of the information that has been gathered.
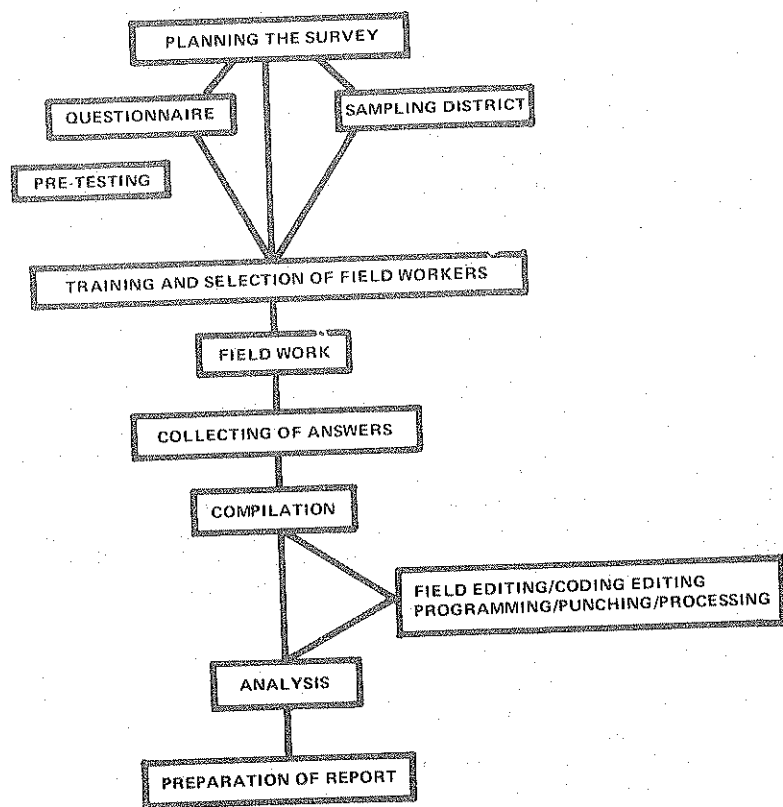
b. *Analysis:* After the investigation of the possibility of, or existence of, research materials, the next step would be the analysis of that particular information received. This can also be part of the basis for further communication research.

c. *Preparation:* Once the analysis is compiled from existing research, the information catalogue, the time schedule arranged, etc., the next phase of operation would be the preparation — and includes planning of the survey, (selecting and training of personnel, designing the questionnaire, the pre-testing of the questionnaire, the sampling to be used).

d. *Pursuance or conducting the research:* The next phase is that of the actual pursuance of audience research. This procedure is a pragmatical and technical involvement which need not be outlined in detail here but which needs to be mentioned in order to present, for the layman's understanding, a comprehension of a few ideas which might be helpful. This phase includes actual visitation of the area to be surveyed; and the programmed working arrangement and schedules previously organized are to be put in operation. The important aspect of audience sampling is carried out.

The following diagram shows the steps involved in the above briefly identified sequence of research.

PROCEDURAL STEPS IN THE PLANNING RESEARCH

```
              PLANNING THE SURVEY
            /          |          \
  QUESTIONNAIRE        |       SAMPLING DISTRICT
       |               |
  PRE-TESTING          |
                       |
      TRAINING AND SELECTION OF FIELD WORKERS
                       |
                  FIELD WORK
                       |
              COLLECTING OF ANSWERS
                       |
                  COMPILATION
                       \
                        FIELD EDITING/CODING EDITING
                        PROGRAMMING/PUNCHING/PROCESSING
                       /
                   ANALYSIS
                       |
            PREPARATION OF REPORT
```

e. *Application:* This term is perhaps the most vaguely understood and one which, particularly in Christian communication, fails to be adhered to. After having conducted all the scientific research necessary, great laxity is characteristic when it comes to the application for the findings of the research. It must be understood and expected that not all the results that we obtained after an expensive research exercise will positively impress us about our work. Some of the findings, in fact, are surely indicative of our weakness in communications endeavor, and it is at this point that communicators and policy makers find it most difficult to accept the bare facts represented by plain figures. On the other hand, figures should be taken as "indicative" rather than determinants of Christian communication. However, the results would be samples of the various types of pertinent information which could accrue from such research.
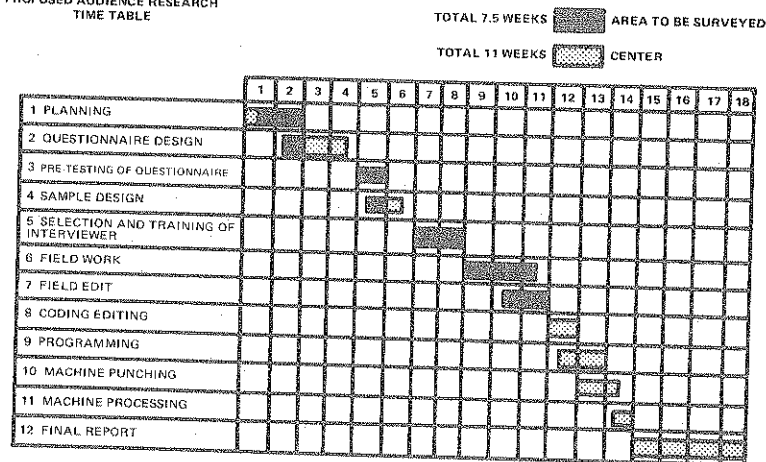
Second, the results of the research should present definite patterns of audience-availability and this information should be used in, if necessary, redefining the overall strategy of the communicator. The thrust of

communication should be emphasized in the areas — whether rural, urban, or both — where there is a substantial, and more precisely, an actual audience.

Third, the results of the research should present either a basis upon which to build further research, or a justification for not continuing such a program. In either case it is important that an evaluation of a research program be completed at the close of the designated period without postponement, as a healthy sign of a desire for improvement and above all for effective service.

The next diagram will indicate a sort of timetable which may be used as a sample for a timetable for a research program. The table indicates an eighteen-week program of a survey presently under operation by Radio Voice of the Gospel. The programmed communications research under this timetable involves a questionnaire designed for a multimedia investigation, and may serve as a possible sample of devising a timetable which is extremely essential for any communications research undertaking. The table is by no means all-inclusive, but I hope it will give you an idea of what I mean by the need to plan communications research *within a given period.*

PROPOSED AUDIENCE RESEARCH TIME TABLE

TOTAL 7.5 WEEKS — AREA TO BE SURVEYED
TOTAL 11 WEEKS — CENTER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 PLANNING	■																	
2 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN		■	■															
3 PRE-TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRE				■														
4 SAMPLE DESIGN					■													
5 SELECTION AND TRAINING OF INTERVIEWER								■	■									
6 FIELD WORK										■	■							
7 FIELD EDIT											■	■						
8 CODING EDITING													■					
9 PROGRAMMING														■				
10 MACHINE PUNCHING															■			
11 MACHINE PROCESSING																■		
12 FINAL REPORT																■	■	■

Conclusion

The Christian communicator, today more than at any other time, is confronted by the challenge of being irrelevant to a people (audience) characterized by *change* — changes that are rapidly occurring not only from generation to generation, but from one given week to the next. People today are better educated and much more sophisticated than ever before, with more varied appetites, more cultivated tastes. They now have longer weekends and wider interests. They are becoming hard to satisfy, hard to fool, and above all, easier to bore!

This is the human situation in which the Christian communicator finds himself today. His task is to make the Gospel relevant to this rapidly changing situation. To do this on a day-to-day operation basis is not the answer. The effective communicator must constantly know his audience and must constantly be searching for the most appropriate means for effective communications.

RADIO AND EVANGELISM
DAVID CHAO AND PHILLIP BUTLER

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Radio has been given us by God as one of the most remarkable tools available in this modern age. Radio brings a number of unique characteristics to the challenge of the Great Commission — characteristics that should give radio a major role in our strategy to "let the earth hear his voice."

The first thing that sets radio apart from most other media is that it deals exclusively with the "theater of the mind" — the individual listener's imagination. Because there is no visual side to radio waves, the visual is constructed in the listeners' minds. This characteristic brings a range of creative opportunities to the radio broadcaster that are short-circuited by other media.

Further, radio, lacking the demanding visual treatment of television or films, is much less expensive when it comes to program production. A diversity of ideas can be treated in radio that are simply impossible in other media. Radio's lower cost, in production and technical expense, is a major reason recommending it to our use in evangelism. A natural corollary with the lower production cost of radio is that it is possible to reach individuals with the Gospel at a much lower cost per thousand.

Wide geographical coverage is one of the unique properties of radio — "omnipresence" in the range of its single coverage. Local medium-wave, and UHF (FM) stations typically have less coverage than do superpower medium wave or short wave stations. However, it is quite typical for an entire nation, in some cases, entire continents, to be covered by a single transmitter.

Unique features of radio

The wide coverage of radio brings certain unique properties with regard to audience penetration. For example, radio knows no geographical, social, political, or ideological boundaries. Radio leaps mountains, national borders, and quite often the barriers men have erected in their minds. The only constraints are signal strength and program content — attractiveness to the potential audience. Muslims, for example, might be unwilling to attend a Christian church. However, they might be curious enough to keep their radio tuned, in the privacy of their home or business, when a Christian program comes on — particularly if that program speaks to the individual's interest and/or need. The same certainly holds true for "closed" countries, places where the Gospel cannot be preached "openly," where missionaries or Christian workers are not allowed. In these circumstances, radio becomes a cornerstone of any contemporary strategy — because of its singular ability to transcend national borders and ideological barriers. This massive coverage carries certain drawbacks. The believability of the message tends to decrease the farther the listener is from the source of the signal. (You trust your neighbor's