TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY OF PROPHETIC COMMUNICATION

Communicating the Prophetic Voice of the Mainline Churches and the Prophetic Role of the News Media in Contemporary Fiji-Island Society

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By

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ABSTRACT

Fiji Island society is becoming a media-driven society. The mass media, through radio, television and newspapers and to a certain extent magazines and the internet influences the way we view the world, each other, ourselves and even our faith. The news media, which regards itself as the watchdog of society, is often in conflict with the Church, which sees itself as misunderstood and stereotyped.

This thesis examines the theological imperative for the use of the media in the Church’s call to be prophetic in modern-day Fiji Island society. The role and effect of the mass media in Fiji Island society is discussed before looking specifically at the news media and its relationship with the Church. Next the theology of communication is discussed, examining divine communication and prophetic communication, in terms of the various methods of communication of God’s Word to humankind. The thesis examines the communication of the prophetic voice from Christian tradition to our time. It then discusses the need for a prophetic voice in the Fiji Islands, taking into consideration the culture of silence, common to many Pacific Island countries, examining the Church’s prophetic voice today in Fiji. It looks for other prophetic voices from within and outside the churches, asking the question whether the news media has a prophetic role to play in Fiji-Island society.

Finally it looks at communicating the prophetic voice of the Church in Fiji. Using the model of a communicative Church based on the Fijian concept of the Matanivanua (traditional herald), the thesis explores and suggests that this model is useful in restoring relationships between the Church and the news media, and transforming the culture of silence to a culture of mutual and simultaneous communication where the views of the
Church and society are expressed freely and without malice through the news media for the greater good.
DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgment of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________
In Memory of

My Father, Benjamin Shri Bhagwan, General Secretary of the Fiji Council of Churches,

who understood the art of communication and heeded the call to be prophetic

and Rev. Jione Lagi, President of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma,

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCF – Assembly of Christian Churches in Fiji
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
CCF – Citizens Constitutional Forum
CFL – Communications Fiji Limited
CSO – Civil Society Organisation
ECREA – Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy
FBCL – Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Limited
FCC – Fiji Council of Churches
Fiji TV – Fiji Television Limited
MCIFR – Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
WACC – World Association of Christian Communications
WCC – World Council of Churches
INTRODUCTION

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. (Jn 1:1)

There is no denying the power of the Word of God. God’s spoken word (Hebrew: *dabar*) brought creation into existence. This word set down in writing, provided the people of Israel with the Law and a binding covenant with Him to be their God and for them to be a nation of priests unto Him. As the Word (Greek: *logos*) made flesh, His Son, Jesus the Christ dwelt in this world, offering hope, love, grace and redemption for humankind.¹ Throughout history, God has communicated with his people, revealing himself to us, speaking to us through many channels, including men and women chosen by God to speak out against those who would break the covenant between God and Israel and today, those who reject the new creation offered through Jesus. For humankind the word also contains power. The word informs, educates and illuminates. The power of the word for us is also a double-edged sword, inspiring many to commit acts that are both good and evil. In the twenty-first century the mass media has become a major method of transmitting the written, spoken word enabling it to be read and heard all over the world.

The original use of media was to inform people of important announcements, news and current events. Gradually as technology developed, the media also became a means of mass education and entertainment. Today technology has revolutionized the media industry, news stories can travel the world in an instant by email and pictures can reach millions of people.

¹ Evangelical Lutheran Church Of Finland, *The Communicative Church: The Church’s Communications Strategy*, (Helsinki: Central Church Board, 2004), 13.
The global communications revolution has meant better access to information and communication technology for those in rural and maritime areas, opening up the world to them. Here in the Fiji Islands the media has continued to play a large part in not only informing the public but also shaping public opinion and providing entertainment to a pluralistic society. This means finding the lowest common denominator; in other words playing down to its audience rather than lifting the standard of literacy and critical thinking of the people. In the last half century, the impetus for information and education has taken a back seat to entertainment. New types of programming or formats developed such as info-tainment, and edu-tainment,\(^2\) which places a larger value on the pleasure derived from watching, reading or listening than the content of the messages communicated.

In terms of news and current affairs in the Fiji Islands, the adoption of globalised media practices of sensationalistic journalism, where “bad news and controversy sells,” implies a conflict with any other institution that promotes another “truth”. In fact a source of the conflict is that institutions such as the Church are targeted by the secular media who thrive on conflict and tension. In this sense, the Church is like John the Baptist, a voice in the wilderness of materialism and individualism. Yet as God spoke to Moses in the wilderness, the Church must be willing to listen to and communicate the Gospel. If the Church is to be truly prophetic and communicate the Gospel today, it needs to be able to communicate clearly and effectively with society by understanding and using the media rather than being used by it.

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\(^2\) Info-tainment and edu-tainment refer to the current practice of adding entertainment value to informational programmes such as documentaries, current affairs and educational programmes to ensure the largest number of viewers across the board.
From the spoken Word that brought light into the world, the call to Abraham, Moses, Samuel and the prophets, God has continued to reveal Godself to us sometimes as an angel, a burning bush or in visions. God reveals herself in order to address the suffering of her people. To understand God as a communicator, I will examine the methods and contexts for divine communication, and its cultural, historical and technological relevance as a basis for the church to be innovative in its communication placing emphasis on creating community, being participatory, liberating, supporting and developing cultures and being prophetic.  

The call to be prophetic is one of the key traditions of Christianity. This calls for media to speak truthfully to address oppressive regimes, corporations and injustice. Many non-Christian programmes in the mainstream media as well as media or press releases by secular organisations such as governments, regional and international agencies and non-governmental or civil-society organisations struggle to embrace this prophetic role. The Churches, while accepting the challenge to be prophetic in their media work, need also to listen to and assist others to be prophetic.

To be truly a prophetic and communicative Church, the Church must be open to critical self-evaluation and be willing to listen to traditional channels but to others that God is speaking through. In short the Church must be open to dialogue, to examination and, if warranted, criticism by the media on behalf of society which traditionally practises a culture of silence, especially in relation to the Church. This thesis examines the theological imperative for the use of the media in the Church’s call to be prophetic in modern-day Fiji Island society.

• In the first chapter the role and effect of the mass media in Fiji Island society is discussed before looking specifically at the news media and its relationship with the Church.

• The second chapter discusses the theology of communication, examining divine communication and prophetic communication, in terms of the various methods of communication of God’s Word to humankind.

• Chapter Three examines the communication of the prophetic voice from Christian tradition to our time:
  o discussing the need for a prophetic voice in the Fiji Islands, taking into consideration the culture of silence, common to many Pacific Island countries, examining the Church’s prophetic voice today in Fiji;
  o looking for other prophetic voices from within and outside the churches, asking the question whether the news media has a prophetic role to play in Fiji-Island society;
  o and finally discussing the model of a communicative Church, based on the Fijian concept of the Matanivanua (traditional herald), with a view to restoring relationships between the Church and the news media, transforming the culture of silence to a culture of mutual and simultaneous communication.

To understand the role of the media in communicating the prophetic voice of the Church in the Fiji Island context, this study undertakes a survey of Fiji Times
newspaper articles from January 2000 to 2006, *Daily Post* and *Fiji Sun* newspaper articles from January 2005 to January 2006 as well as Fiji One television news stories from 2000 to 2006. Research also included interviews with leaders and those responsible for communications on behalf of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, senior journalists with experience in radio, print and television news, and the author’s own experiences of thirteen years of working in the media industry.

The author acknowledges that this scope of research is limited as those interviewed are exclusively male and predominately indigenous Fiji Islanders. However as a Fiji Islander of Indian Origin, the author’s own observations offer an alternative perspective as do source material by female authors and media practitioners. The issue of gender and ethnic balance in the senior positions in the Church and media is an issue separate from that discussed in this thesis. The author also at the outset wishes to make clear that for many churches only the head of the church is generally empowered to make media statements that are representative of the church or delegate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the church.

While this Bachelor of Divinity thesis of one hundred pages has limited the scope of this study to the news media and the prophetic voice of the church it is hoped that this thesis will provide an introduction to the issue and some possible areas for further discussion and thought in the area of communication theology.
CHAPTER 1
MEDIA AND SOCIETY

A. Mass Media

The media affects our lives on a daily basis. News informs us on current events in our country and around the world; entertainment, in the form of music, films and television programmes, provide a form of escape from our reality to the reality or fantasy of others and commercials compete to tell us not only where to shop, even what to buy. The media also affects the way we perceive each other and ourselves. The news media calls itself the “Fourth Estate” or “the watchdog” of society.¹ It purports to be the champion of the people and, more importantly, the freedom of expression and access to information so that the public can make informed decisions about their lives.

¹ The Fourth Estate is a phrase that refers to the profession of Journalism, specifically the Press or news media, and was made popular by Jeffrey Archer’s book of the same name.

It is derived from the old English idea that there are three estates:

- *The Lords Spiritual* - those members of the clergy, mainly bishops, who are members of the House of Lords;
- *The Lords Temporal* - those members of the House of Lords who are either hereditary peers, Law Lords, or Lords appointed for life; and
- *The House of Commons* - the lower house, or "people's house" of the British Parliament, now the seat of government.

The notion that the Press is the fourth estate rests on the idea that the media's function is to act as a guardian of the public interest and as a watchdog on the activities of government. Depending on one's view of the media, this is either self-serving rationalisation or an important component of the checks and balances that form part of a modern democracy.
1. **The Media: A definition**

*Media* is the plural of the word medium, taken to mean a channel, form or path, usually of communication. The *Mass Media* usually refers to organised means of dissemination of fact, opinion, entertainment and other information.\(^2\) Industries that produce the content for the mass media are often referred to as ‘the media’. Towards the end of the last century, it became widely accepted for the media to be understood as singular rather than the plural as traditionally defined.\(^3\) While there are varied descriptions of the media, for the purpose of this thesis, four broad divisions will suffice: print, broadcast media, audio-visual media and the Internet.

Print media refers to the written word and includes newspapers, books, magazines, flyers or leaflets, posters and billboards, although the last is usually used for advertising. Broadcast media includes radio and television as sound and pictures transmitted by signals from local stations or via satellites from overseas broadcasters. These signals are received on radio and television sets wherever the signal reaches. Audio-visual media refers to films and videos viewed at the cinema or on cassettes and discs (VCDs and DVDs\(^4\)) and to the spoken word or music recorded on analogue cassettes, reels, vinyl discs (records), or digital tape and disc (CD\(^5\)). The Internet is a new addition to the media and is often grouped together with radio and television in the category ‘electronic media’. Through computers, one can connect to the World Wide Web and access information, entertainment and send messages to others who have access to this technology.\(^6\) These four major media divisions operating in Fiji today are

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\(^4\) Video Compact Disc, Digital Video Disc.

\(^5\) Compact Disc.

commonly known as the mass media because of their collective ability to reach every
citizen in this country, regardless of that person’s location or socio-economic status.

a. *Print*

The origins of the medium of print can be traced back to the Egyptians writing on
papyrus six thousand years ago. Babylonian tablets found to document legal and
financial records have been dated as being over four thousand years old. The written
word on parchment was extensively used up to the ninth century CE. The beginning of
the printing as we know it today occurred in China around 868 CE with the invention of
the printing press with movable type. However, when Johannes Gutenberg published
the first printed Vulgate Bible in 1456, he sparked the print revolution with over thirty
thousand different books printed by the end of the fifteenth century.  

Here in Fiji, the *Fiji Times* newspaper began publication in Levuka in 1869.
Today it is one of three daily and six vernacular weekly news publications. The trans-
national corporation *News Corporation* owns the *Fiji Times*. The *Sun* newspaper is
owned by a group of companies whose primary business is in the distribution of
imported consumer products. The *Daily Post* newspaper, once with the Fiji Government
as a major shareholder, is now owned by an Australian company.

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7 Viggo Søgaard, *Media in Church and Mission: Communicating the Gospel*, (Pasadena: William
Carey Library, 1993), 175, 176.

8 Fiji Times Limited also publishes monthly the Fijian language newspaper *Nai Lalakai* and the
Hindustani newspaper *Shanti Dutt*. The *Daily Post* also publishes monthly *Nai Volasiga* (Fijian) as well
as Chinese and Rotuman language newspaper.

9 Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation also owns media outlets around the world, including radio
networks, newspapers as well as the Fox TV Network (Fox News and Fox Sports), Star TV in Asia and
motion pictures studios such as 20th Century Fox and Fox Searchlight Pictures. Until recently, News
Corp. owned broadcast rights to all international rugby union matches played by members of the
International Rugby Board as well as the Super 14 rugby competition, broadcast on the Fox and Sky
satellite network and also broadcast in the Pacific region under Sky Pacific operated by Fiji Television
Ltd (which is listed on the South Pacific Stock Exchange but has as its major shareholders the fourteen
provinces of Fiji).
The major revenue earned by newspapers is not sales to the public or subscriptions but proceeds from companies wanting to advertise their goods and services to the readers. Newspapers have thus turned from informing the public on news and current events to acting as a print medium to deliver commercials for businesses. Information provided in newspapers is now designed to fit the spaces in between advertisements for shoes, clothes, cars, cosmetics, fashion, groceries and electronic goods. News is often sensationalized to generate greater readership, a trend common in radio and television as well in an attempt to gain as large an audience as possible. Unofficial circulation statistics for the three daily newspapers show the Fiji Times with the largest circulation of forty-four thousand newspapers printed a day and The Sun and Daily Post with fifteen thousand and six thousand respectively.¹⁰

Print media¹¹, like newspapers, require their users to be literate. In the case of the three daily newspapers in Fiji, this literacy is narrowed to mean being able to read English, the language in which these newspapers is published. However, the impact of newspapers would seem to be greater than the initial circulation figures would indicate. For example, it is common for one newspaper to be read by multiple readers in a village, workplace or any communal area.¹² It is also common for newspapers to be read aloud to the visually impaired or illiterate and even translated for those who do not understand the English language. This in turn allows the newspaper to be influential in

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¹⁰ These figures are unofficial as the newspapers do not release their circulation figure publicly. I quote from an anonymous source who works in the advertising industry.

¹¹ 2006 has seen an increase in magazine publications in Fiji, apart from tourist information magazines. Living in Fiji and Fiji Living are lifestyle magazines while Marama is a local women’s magazine, with Turaga, a men’s interest magazine is expected to begin publication by the end of 2006. There are also issues and current affairs based magazines such Island Business, and The Review.

¹² The single copy of each day’s Fiji Times, placed in the George Knight Library at the Pacific Theological College, is read by the majority of students and their families, as well as the faculty and staff of the College, well over fifty people.
the informing, educating and shaping of opinions for a large percentage of the population.

The print medium also has an effect on the process of communication. It encourages individuality as it confirms a person’s right and ability to make personal choices, to have the same or different opinion as others, and to understand the value and relevance of these choices. The print medium, being sequential and linear, compels logical and linear thinking as well as providing readers a way to distance themselves from the text and objectively encounter ideas, words, symbols and meanings. By offering word pictures, statistics and calculations as well as illustrations in the form of photos or cartoons, which can be read, re-read and studied, the print medium facilitates the reader’s ability to understand abstract concepts and symbols. Print also provides for self-gratification and relaxation, in terms of enjoyment of reading, the understanding of events, affirmation of literacy and entertainment.  

The major limitation of print as a medium of communication is that it relies on a certain level of literacy of the reader. This is certainly an issue here in the Fiji Islands, which remains an oral culture. Even countries that have a high literacy rates have a tendency to not have a high level of readers able to use or understand the persuasive form that print offers in communication. Secondly, as the vernacular language newspapers are only published monthly, those who do not have access to, or the ability to read the English-language daily newspapers do not have, as a result, access to the same amount of information.

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13 Søgaard, 179, 180.
14 I have included Fijians of Indian origin in this statement. Although a written language such as Sanskrit has existed in India for millennia, the majority of indentured labourers brought by the British to the colony of Fiji were illiterate.
15 Søgaard, 176, 177.
b. Radio

The roots of radio broadcast lie in the development of transmission electromagnetic messages over wire by Samuel Morse\textsuperscript{16} in 1844. By 1920, wireless radio broadcasting was an expanding industry with the transmission of news and live musical performances. The development of the transistor enabled the radio to become smaller, cheaper and portable. The use of the radio wave spectrum allows for transmission on short wave, AM as well as FM. Today radios come in a variety of shapes and sizes and broadcasts can be received on mobile phones as well as via the internet.\textsuperscript{17}

The Fiji Broadcasting Commission began radio transmission in 1954. Modelled on ruling England’s British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the FBC or Radio Fiji as it was known operated three public broadcasting services, Radio Fiji One in the Fijian Language, Radio Fiji Two in the Hindustani Language and Radio Fiji Three in the English Language. All three stations had matching formats of news, informational and educational programmes with music and light entertainment to fill in between. This continued until 1985 when FM96, a privately owned commercial radio station began to broadcast a format of music, news, entertainment news and gossip as well as sports. The competition for the ears of the public had begun. Faced with rising costs, Radio Fiji had to maintain its listening audience so began to change its format to compete. As government reform took place and state funding for Radio Fiji decreased, the

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\textsuperscript{16} Commonly referred to as “Morse Code” this is still in use in military and civilian communication for emergencies. The advent of more sophisticated transmissions such as cellular and satellite communications, incidentally developed primarily for military use, has rendered the Morse code almost obsolete.

\textsuperscript{17} Current advances in satellite technology allow for the broadcast of radio signals around the world and the development of digital radio provides effective utilisation of the radio spectrum by enabling the radio receiver to distinguish from signals that are very close to one other (e.g. 104FM and 104.2FM). More recently, a new type of digital radio receiver has been developed which allows for shortwave signals to be broadcast around the world with a simple radio transmitter and aerial and be received with FM stereo quality sound.
organisation became dependent on advertising for revenue. As a result, public service broadcasting has been affected by this paradigm shift to profitability and economic viability. Today, following transition from a statutory organisation to a government-owned corporation, the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Limited operates two vernacular Public Service stations and four commercial stations in the main languages. Communications Fiji Ltd, the owner of FM96, now operates three commercial stations, one Hindi public-service station, as well as a website and two radio stations in Papua New Guinea, with plans to expand into the Solomon Islands. The radio frequencies are further teeming with rebroadcasts of the BBC, Radio Australia, Radio France and four Christian stations operated by new religious movements as well as one mobile community radio service operated by femLINKPACIFIC, a Non-Governmental women’s media initiative and Radio Pasifik, the student-run campus radio station of the University of the South Pacific.

The Fiji Islands has, therefore, the entire range of radio broadcasting organisations. The World Service of the BBC, for example provides, a global news service with current affairs and human-interest programming. Radio Australia and Radio France while providing similar broadcasting to the BBC are government-owned and therefore may be at times more pro-Government, while at the same time focusing on their target audiences: Radio France to French citizens and French-speakers and Radio Australia to the inhabitants of the Asia-Pacific region (thus giving more time to Pacific interests).

Locally, public service broadcast stations of Radio Fiji One (Fijian) and Two (Hindustani – both FBCL) and Radio Sargam (Hindustani –CFL) target both urban and rural audiences with a mix of news and information / educational programming and light entertainment and provide space for religious broadcasts (devotions, commentary
and music). CFL’s *Viti FM* (Fijian) is a commercial station that provides a mix of traditional, religious and popular music with a strong news and current affairs *talkback* focus. CFL’s *FM96* (English, audience: 11 to 25 years old), *LegendFM* (English, audience: 25 to 55 years old) and *Navatarang* (Hindustani, audience: 18 to 45 years old) as well as Radio Fiji’s *BulaFM* (Fijian, 11 to 45 years old), *2DayFM* (English, audience: 11 to 25 years old), *Radio Fiji Gold* (English, audience: 20 years and upwards) and *Radio Mirchi* (Hindustani, audience: 15 to 45 years old) are commercial stations that play current and older popular music. *ZFMClassic* (commercial, older popular music in English, general audience), based in the city of Lautoka, is the only commercial radio broadcaster based outside of Suva. These commercial stations survive on advertising, which is specifically targeted at their audiences. In addition to radio commercials, live broadcasts from retail outlets promoting sales are incorporated into the regular broadcast programming of music and personality-driven shows. As the majority of English and Hindustani/Urdu language music is imported from overseas along with entertainment news, the culture that is developed through these broadcasters is gradually being homogenised with western culture.

Community radio broadcasters have a more specific target audience. A management team runs *Radio Pasifik*, established by the University of the South Pacific with all programmes hosted by students. The programming is predominantly for students living in and off campus. *femTALK 89.2FM* is a mobile community radio

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18 “Talk-back” refers to programmes where the opinions of the listening (and in the case of television, viewing) audience are broadcast. Audiences are invited to telephone the broadcaster with comments or questions about the issue being discussed or for the person being interviewed.

19 For example, a number of broadcasters or “radio personalities” on English-language popular music stations which target youth often speak with an accent represented as American or western, even though they may not have lived or for that matter visited those countries. As a result their audience, in emulation of their favourite personalities speak in the same manner – even if the language is grammatically incorrect.
project of *femLINKPACIFIC*, a Fiji Island-based women’s non profit community media organisation, which exists to empower women and communities by giving them a voice to fully participate in decision making for equality, development and peace. The mobile radio project is unique in that it physically takes the station to the people. Given the low power broadcast nature of mobile radio, its transmission is only received on radios within a limited range. This makes ideal for dealing with individual communities. Programming and broadcasting is done by a group of women which is representative of its target audience, young women, women with disabilities and women who are “under-served”. This provides an alternative to commercial and public radio format with specific gender-based issues for women.

Christian broadcasters also have a specific target audience, although one could argue that Christian radio targets both Christians and potential (or non) Christians. Christian radio stations in Fiji are operated by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Christian Mission Fellowship (FM97) as well as other non-denominational Christian groups (*Radio Light* – 106FM; *Your Own Christian Station* FM103.4; and *Radio Naya Jiwan* 94.8FM). Programming is based on Christian formation and evangelism through stories, music and dramas as well interviews and scripture readings and sermons. Many programmes are also sourced from overseas.

Radio as a medium has a number of unique characteristics. Radio has the potential to reach all, as it requires listening only, making it accessible to the non-literate, the blind and the elderly, even those driving a car. As radio is only the broadcast of sound, it uses speech, music and sound effects to create visual images or pictures in the minds of listeners. Radio for the most part takes place in real time with live voices and sounds, current news and information and the latest updates. With the

advent of the digital age, entire programmes can be pre-recorded and broadcast later ‘as live’, giving a false sense of immediacy. Radio also provides a “face to face” type of communication as most radio presenters speak on a one-to-one basis.21

c. Television

Television has developed considerably since its introduction in the 1930s, becoming broadcast in colour in 1966 and from the 1970s, introducing subscriber based programming (cable and now via satellite) to becoming a globally encompassing form of communication. The advent of televised live and current events beginning with the Vietnam war and culminating in the global coverage of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the war in Iraq, the Asian Tsunami crisis, and the funeral of Pope John Paul II has enabled viewers around the world to share the experience and receive immediate information transmitted directly into their homes.

Television was introduced into Fiji not because of information, but demand for entertainment, during the 1991 Rugby World Cup. Fiji Television was given an exclusive licence in 1994, and despite the exclusivity being revoked, remains the sole commercial broadcaster of television programmes in Fiji.22 Today television has grown to be the dominant medium in the country, surpassing even radio, which has ease of accessibility and until now greater range.

Fiji Television Limited (Fiji TV) operates Fiji One as a free to air channel and three pay TV channels as ‘SKY Fiji’. This year Fiji TV began operating ‘SKY Pacific’, a regional satellite-based pay television service with up to twelve channels of movies, music, sports, entertainment gossip and programmes available. Fiji One is free-to-air;

21 Søgaard, 131-134.
Sky Fiji charges an annual subscription fee of approximately $490 with SKY Pacific charging approximately $1,080 annually. Fiji TV has sixteen locally produced programmes broadcast a week. These include five daily news programmes from half hour news bulletins to five-minute vernacular news breaks; three current event programmes, one weekly news roundup; one police information programme, two government propaganda programmes, a children’s programme, sports programme, a pop music programme and a late-night popular culture programme. In contrast, it broadcasts thirty-four overseas-produced programmes, including approximately three hours of repeat programming daily, re-broadcasting ABC TV from Australia between 12am and 2pm and six religious programmes produced and paid for by new religious movements. All programmes except the children’s programme, news and government programmes are sponsored. All programmes on Fiji One have commercials played during their broadcast. The price of one 30-second television commercial played once during Fiji One News ranges from $300 to $400 broadcast. With three commercial segments within the news of 2½ minutes each, a total of 7½ minutes, that is an average of 15 commercials and a revenue of $4,500 for a half hour news programme that contains only 22½ minutes of news programming. Companies wishing to reach a certain market may also sponsor entertainment programmes. With the introduction of its Sky Pacific satellite service, Fiji Television now claims to have not only 80 per cent of the

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22 In 2005, Pacific Broadcasting Services (PBS) began operation in Fiji. PBS provides a satellite-based pay-television service, similar to Fiji Television’s Sky Pacific service, but broadcast from Australia, until it receives a broadcast license from the Fiji government.

23 This is based on counting each news-broadcast as a separate programme due to content. Fiji Television makes the same assumption when calculating the percentage of hours of local programming broadcast on Fiji One compared with imported programmes.

24 This information is based on the current broadcast schedule and pricing information as published by Fiji Television on their website (www.fijitv.com.fj) as of 13March, 2006. However as the website is out of date the thesis takes the liberty of including an additional local programme which is broadcast. Repeat local programming as additional programmes, which Fiji Television does, is not counted.

25 Based on personal research conducted for the Fiji Government in 1999.
population as viewers but also 100 per cent coverage in the Fiji group, including the remote island of Rotuma as well as broadcasting to Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands.

As a broadcast medium that utilises both pictures and sounds, and reaches a large group of people at the same time, television is a powerful medium. Enjoying enormous appeal and effect among a large section of the people, it can transmit the same message to potentially the entire world at the same time. For a large number of users, television is the primary recreational activity. American children, for example, spend an average of 28 hours each week watching television. Television exploits every type of programme available including drama, lecture, dialogue, dance, and song to create effective influence on the cognitive and affective domains of viewers. It brings the real or the imagined world into the living rooms of the viewers.

Television is engaging, gives the illusion of a sense of intimacy and, as with radio, has a perceived sense of immediacy. It has the ability to create an emotional connection between the viewer and what is being viewed. Non-dramatic programmes manipulate the studio environment, camera angles and appearance of those presenting themselves on the small screen to create impression of closeness. The use of a studio audience, either live or in the form of pre-recorded laughs and applause assists in making the viewer part of the action. By being able to record events as they happened and broadcast them later as well as broadcast in real time, everything viewed on television can be perceived as happening in the present as the reaction and emotional connection from the viewer occurs as they watch. Above all or perhaps because of the above, television is

believed. This credibility stems from the acceptance by many viewers that ‘seeing is believing’.

At the same time, television is an expensive medium due to the amount of time and expertise that is required for the production of broadcast content (programmes). Because of the immense cost, television content remains in the hands of those who can afford to own and operate television broadcasts and produce material for broadcast. As a result, these owners of broadcast capability decide what is profitable to them to broadcast. This means that for the most part, programming is done according to costs and potential revenue possibilities with out much consideration of the cultural values of viewers. Due to the large potential audience it is able to reach, television must also cater for varied viewer tastes which results in the “lowest common denominator” principle being followed in programming. As a result, television tends to shun profound issues, while reinforcing the opinions and beliefs that viewers already have. As a broadcast medium, it generally lacks continuity although some programmes may be repeated at a later time due to a perceived demand or significance. Although television gives the illusion of intimacy, it is, in fact, impersonal and does not make provision for immediate feedback.\(^{27}\)

d. Internet

The Internet is a global system of large and small computer networks. It was created in 1962 as a computer network for the U.S. military, capable of withstanding military strength attack\(^{28}\). Since its introduction for public use in 1991, the Internet has grown to become a global communication tool, linking a myriad of military,打开了一个新的网页。Internet, http://www.tamu.edu/ode/glossary.html, 13 March, 2006.

\(^{27}\) However the introduction of talk-back television and broadcast or response to text messaging in live broadcast programming has begun to address this issue.

government, industrial and financial corporations, non-profit organisations, educational institutions and businesses.\(^{29}\) Embraced by commercial enterprises as a communications revolution, the Internet connected Fiji to the World Wide Web a decade ago. Primarily used for communications, the Internet is also a source of information and entertainment. According to Ernst, since 1995 the Internet has grown by fifty percent each year. In 1998, there were approximately one hundred and forty-seven million people connected to the Internet and it is estimated that by 2000 one in every forty people had access to the Internet.\(^{30}\)

The most commonly used features of the Internet include electronic mail (e-mail), search engines for research, discussion groups (also known as bulletin boards), on-line conversations (known as chatting), role-playing and adventure games (often with players from all over the world) and electronic commerce (e-commerce).\(^{31}\) As such, it is also used for advertising. Pop up ads and junk mail often clogs up internet mailboxes and clutters the screen\(^ {32}\). Another issue with the Internet is the unfettered access to users to all sorts of material, especially children’s accessibility to adult rated sites and the fact that on the Internet one can be virtually anonymous. This has led to paedophiles using the net to snare young children by pretending to be young children themselves. The use of the Internet for banking and financial transactions has led to Internet or e-commerce fraud.

\(^{29}\) However, it is estimated that no more than ten per cent of the global population has access to the Internet.


The Internet is a tremendous source for information about whichever topic one may want to explore. The potential for obtaining information and being educated about a plethora of issues have accessible for anyone with a computer, a modem, a telephone line and access via an Internet service provider. Knowledge is no longer only the domain of specialists or governments, but has become commonly accessible. This freedom has also highly increased the likelihood of dis-information. Within the anarchistic design of the Internet, whoever really wants to can be a publisher and an advocate for whatever cause. In the same way as people generally believe what they read or watch, there is a tendency to view as basically true, whatever is read on a computer screen With information downloaded from unknown Internet pages or sites, “there is a need for careful consideration and evaluation of sources becomes even more important when we deal with information downloaded from unknown Internet pages or sites.”

At present the number of Christian ministries and churches on the Internet number in the thousands. There are numerous discussion groups for religious issues in many forums on the Net, both moderated and un-moderated. Electronic versions of the Bible are accessible in many editions and languages, as are a vast array of Christian resource material for almost any reason. The eighth Assembly of the WCC in Harare first reported the possibilities of the internet, allowing thousands of people to become

34 See Appendix I
35 An internet or online moderator monitors the discussions on these websites to ensure that the contents of the messages are appropriate, and deal with the issue at hand.
36 Fjeldstad ,Communicating Christ on the Internet.
“virtual” or “online” participants.\textsuperscript{37} The 9\textsuperscript{th} WCC Assembly held in Brazil in early 2006 made extensive use of the internet for coverage of the Assembly with event information, news releases and reports, electronic versions of papers presented including text and audio/visual broadcasts.

In Fiji, apart from the high start-up cost, with a government backed monopoly to only one internet service provider, the cost of accessing internet is high, limiting the number of users. However, a review of internet and telecommunication charges by the Fiji Commerce Commission in 2005 and the introduction of broadband and wireless internet, the internet is rapidly becoming an important facet of business, education, communication and entertainment in Fiji.

2. The Impact of the Media in Fiji

a. The Influence of Media on Modern Fiji Island Society

The traditionally oral cultures of the Fiji Islands have been affected greatly by the introduction of the mass media. From as early as the mid-nineteenth century, missionaries developed the first written forms of the Fijian language to assist in their evangelism work. The printing of Biblical texts in the Fijian language were the first publications and resource material in Fiji’s development of literacy. The introduction of public service radio in 1954 appealed to the oral culture of Fiji and made radio the preferred medium of choice for over forty years. The introduction of the transistor in the 1960s in Fiji made music accessible in the plantation and until the introduction of television was the most pervasive medium, more than print.

According to Father Larry Hannan SM, former president and current patron of Fiji Mediawatch, Fiji managed to escape the brunt of the mass media influence until 1980, due largely to its geographical isolation. It was in the 1980s that video was introduced to Fiji Island society and quickly became the dominant medium for entertainment. Video libraries not only rented out movies but also provided selected recorded television programmes, including comedy, music, drama, action and even documentaries. While this all changed in 1991 with the introduction of broadcast television, audiences had been exposed not only to the concept of television through videotaped television series, they also were aware of what choices were available in terms of television programming. They were not prepared, however, for the impact of having the medium available to them twenty-four hours a day, at the touch of a button.

According to Hannan, when television was introduced in 1991, there was a concerted effort to train local television production practitioners and broadcast technicians. However, there was no serious thought given to how this new medium would affect them, nor any attempt to educate the potential users to develop the ability to reflect critically on what they saw on television:

Old men from the village who experienced television for the first time would sit in front of the TV all day…there was no differentiation between real life and fiction for them. It was a semi heaven, offering a substitute and escape to their mundane life.

Hannan suggests that oral cultures, like that of Fiji, are more susceptible to the impact of the mass media because people from these cultures are attracted to the visual image and sound-based media is very popular. Television now dominates this oral culture:

In some households, it (television) is left on all day and become part of the home. It has become a little temple, a corner of devotion, not worship as such, but a controlling influence on the household.\textsuperscript{40}

The largest impact on Fiji Island society by the mass media has been a shift in values from traditional to material. Through television and the mass media, global capitalism reduces people to consumers. By standardizing production and taste and by homogenizing cultural values to match capitalist values of individualism and materialism, there is a shift in the original value system. The effects of programmes with high contents of violence, sex or immoral scenes, negative portrayal of women and emphasis on material wellbeing as the key to happiness has resulted in the diminution of personal and corporate integrity, the acceptance of the “might is right” or justified violence philosophy, consumer acquisitiveness, the breakdown of law and order, trivialization of sex, increase prevalence of abuse and the commoditization of women, promotion of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as racism as part of the loss of human dignity.\textsuperscript{41}

In Fiji, children are particularly at risk to this value shift. A study undertaken in 1995 showed that television programmes influenced the eating and dressing habits of Fijian girls, who wanted to look like or emulate their favourite television stars.\textsuperscript{42} There is a very real possibility that, because of passive absorption of media content, children will have less interaction with their families. As society relies more on mass media or popular culture for its primary source of information ahead of the family, traditional knowledge, school and the church, there is a movement from the historic experience of humankind with stories being passed from the older generation to a situation where the mass media tells most of the stories to most of the people. There is a risk of abandoning

\textsuperscript{40} Hannan, Interview.
\textsuperscript{41} Fiji Mediawatch, \textit{Criteria for Policy}.
\textsuperscript{42} Amelia Vunileba, “Study shows TV’s impact on girls,” in \textit{The Fiji Times}, 3 September, 2005, 13.
the imagination and consciousness to cultural images of other countries resulting in an absence of our own stories and images.

Since the introduction of video over twenty years ago and the fifteen years since the arrival of television, there has been a gradual awareness of the negative impact of the mass media on Fiji Island society. A poll conducted in 2004 by Tebbutt Research of over a thousand men and women aged between eighteen and forty-five found that that cultural sensitivity was a major concern in regards to television programming content, advertising and comments by radio announcers.43 Concerns have also been raised over the negative impact of what is shown in films or on television. An example given of the negative impact given by one concerned television viewer was the explicit depiction of the preparation and execution of an armed robbery, complete with balaclavas, explosives, guns and an impostor security guard, at a time when armed robberies were on the rise in Fiji.44 Producers of media content often argue that even fictional media content is a reflection of society. Speaking in defence of the New Zealand-based soap opera, ‘Shortland Street,’’ one of the programme’s executive producers, Andrew Shaw said that the public could not “blame television for all the problems in society,” as most of their programmes “reflect what is happening in society.”45

There is, therefore, a need to make the media take more responsibility on how they are affecting culture and eroding values. There is also a need for Fiji Island society to learn the new language of the image, to understand that the media construct reality using identifiable techniques; that the media are businesses with commercial interests, present ideologies, and value messages, which may not be compatible with their own. The impact of the media on Fiji Island society as a whole has also, to a certain extent,

affected Christianity in Fiji in terms of the image of Christianity and the image of the Church.

b. *The Media Influence on Christianity in Fiji Today*

Because of the globalised mass media, global symbols of consumerism or capitalism have replaced the symbols of traditional cultures and of Christianity. Logos and brand names are worn with pride as marks of identification with the new culture, the new society, the new religion. This reshaping of values, faith and culture represents a shift from dealing with human questions to utilitarian questions. Today the cross, a symbol of suffering, redemption and salvation is replaced by the Nike logo, a symbol of sporting achievement and style.

The mass media has long been recognised as a tool for evangelism; however, in a predominantly Christian country, the largest users of the mass media are the new religious movements. Established in Fiji in 2002, Trinity Broadcast Network is a satellite rebroadcaster of programmes from an evangelical television network in America. It also operates one of four Christian radio stations, with two being operated by another evangelical church and one by Seventh Day Adventists. Christian programming on Fiji television is also provided and paid for by Pentecostal churches and new religious movements. As a result, there has been a major shift in the recognition of these new churches by a large number of the population, who because of the nature of the programming do not differentiate the content by denomination, preferring instead to accept it as Christian programming.

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The introduction of pentecostal and charismatic religious programming on television and radio has resulted in a broad acceptance by viewers of the worship pattern, preaching style and contemporary music of these churches. The slick production style, engaging presenters who understand the language of the mass media and the fact that the programme purports to be Christian is a major part of the appeal. As more people become dissatisfied with programming on Fiji One, those who cannot afford to use the Sky pay-television use Trinity television as an alternative channel. The same applies to radio. This has serious implications for the spirituality of the mainline Christians who are just as susceptible to this new Christian media. Mainline churches do not have the resources nor the opportunity (in mainstream media) to provide specialist programming on television although the Catholic Church has a paid half-hour weekly radio programme and the Methodist Church in Fiji has three paid half-hour radio programmes a week. Morning devotions in the Fijian and Hindustani languages and regular Sunday broadcast services on the Fijian vernacular language radio station of Radio Fiji One complement their broadcasting efforts. The mainline churches have not known what to do with television as it is viewed primarily by the way the new religious groups use it and the mainstream media: for evangelism. Keck writes that while mainline churches complain about tele-evangelism they have no alternatives “but their own talking heads”.

The most serious issue in terms of the impact of the media on Christianity in Fiji has to do with the image of the Church as portrayed in the media — as will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. However, a number of observations can be made to understand the influence of the media in the way Fiji Island society views the Church.

47 Tele-evangelism: Televised evangelism programmes.
Hans Kung, writing on distortions of the image of the Church, states that the Church can be an object of admiration and criticism without any essential relevance to the Christian faith, which occurs equally with reference to other historical institutions. The admiration of the Church, stated by Kung more than thirty years ago but still valid today, is directed at a façade, which is not the real nature of the Church. Any criticism of historicity of the Church likewise is directed at the façade of the Church. It may have to do with wrong actions which he terms “evil un-nature” of the Church, but this only relates to the visible Church and not the invisible, spiritual nature of the Church. He raises, as a point of discussion on the Church as an object of faith, the issue of believing the Church verses believing in the Church.\footnote{Hans Kung, \textit{The Church}, (London: Search Press, 1968), 26 – 37.} However, while the Church, as Kung rightly states, is both visible and invisible, the mass media, especially the news media, in only being able to speak the language of the image, can essentially only relate to the façade as it can only describe the visible image of the church, albeit using historical, sociological and even psychological descriptions. Considering this, the media can only affect the way that the façade of the Church is perceived by society. However, to the media the façade is the Church. Therefore, the actions and statements of those who represent the Church, in particular the leaders of the Church, portray the image of the Church as communicated to society by the media, in particular the news media.\footnote{Netani Rika, Interview with Author, November 2005.}

The following sections examine how the image of the Church is perceived by the news media and communicated to society, based on the actions and statements of its leaders. First, though, it is essential to get a basic understanding of the news media.
B. News Media

1. News Media: A Definition

The news media is a term used to describe mass media that focus on news. This includes print media (newspapers and magazines), broadcast media (radio stations and television stations), and increasingly Internet-based media (World Wide Web pages and web logs).\(^5^1\)

2. How is News Made?

My work in the media in the last decade has offered me an insight into the workings of a number of media organizations. These experiences shed some light into the rationale, or sometimes lack thereof, behind the news and the honest difficulties faced by reporters bringing their stories in time to make publication deadlines. The average age of a journalist/reporter in Fiji is 27 years old. While in the last six years graduates from the University of the South Pacific Journalism programme have entered the media industry, the majority of reporters currently in the industry entered the field as cadet reporters, fresh out of school or on a “practical” work attachment from the School of Journalism. The only training these reporters have has been work experience, coupled with in-house training and for those fortunate enough to be selected, overseas and local workshops and training seminars.

Journalists in the media industry are known as “generalists”. Their knowledge base is wide but shallow, for their assignments vary from day to day. It may be the launch of a research document on Monday, a robbery on Tuesday, the expiry of land leases on Wednesday, public health on Thursday or a garden party at Government House on Friday. Most articles are a quarter-page to half a page in length, some even less, with the lead stories maybe exceeding a page to a page and half. Unless the reporter is working on a feature article, he or she is most likely to find out about their topic either the day before, at the editorial meeting on that particular day, or perhaps, in the case of a crime, as soon as a tip-off is received. That, coupled with the deadline at the end of the day for two or more articles per day, leave little time for background research, and unless the reporter has worked on a similar story before or has prior knowledge of the subject, is limited to what is learned from press releases, interviews and briefs.

3. Editors, Bias and Sensationalism

Every day in every newspaper in Fiji and in most of the world, the editor of that particular newspaper makes his or her statement of opinion on a particular issue of concern or story covered by the paper. These topics are taken from the lead stories for that day’s paper and reflect the paper’s stand on a particular issue. However, once again because of the smallness of society and familiarity with most subjects in the public eye, these editorials and article can contain bias or favouritism. This can range from public relations pieces to attacks on a particular organization or person. Of course, unless one has worked in the industry and dealt with this issue it is often very difficult to address, as no reporter would openly admit to being biased on a particular issue they are covering.
Netani Rika, Director of News for Fiji Television, states that just as Church policy is often a reflection of its leadership, a news organisation’s approach to news is usually a reflection of the news editor’s leadership:

A sensational story should be sensational mainly for the content not because we make it sensational. If somebody burns a church or a temple, it is sensational because someone has taken the matter into their own hands. We do not need to create a sensational story; it is sensational because of its nature…Responsible journalism means you do not create a sensational story; that you ask all the questions that you are supposed to ask and sometimes in the journalism industry here, in the rush to get the story to press, on air or to broadcast, we neglect some of those questions that should be asked and some non-stories become stories.52

Radio Fiji News Director, Matai Akaoula, who says there is a need for news editors, news directors as well as journalists to have integrity when writing stories echoes this statement.53

Newspapers today also operate as a commercial enterprise, designed to maximise profits for the shareholders of the company. The actual return from subscription or selling of papers is minimal compared to the money made from selling advertising space. Today, articles fill the spaces between commercials. In this highly commercial and competitive market, a newspaper must scoop the competing papers in terms of exclusive stories and getting the news out first. In a small society like Fiji with three newspapers competing for the same market, catchy and sensational headlines may give a paper the lead in being read ahead of the other. For example, people are more likely to pick up a paper with the headline, “Audit exposes church accounts”, than one that read, “Schools use flipcharts to educate children”.

52 Rika, Interview.
53 Matai Akaoula, Interview with Author, November, 2005.
4. Any Room for Religion?

There are no reporters who specialise in religious issues in Fiji and even in news media in other countries; this continues to be an issue. In his article “The God Beat”, John Dart highlights the difficulties religious writers for the popular press face in providing coverage of religious issues in a secular environment. He begins by illustrating the valuable role of news media in validating the religious identity of media consumers, “who feel [that] they and their values are noteworthy aspects of community life.” Dart goes on to quote a 1989 study by the University of Colorado, which stated that the American public wanted religion mainstreamed in the media, especially newspapers. He cites other examples of the push for media organisations to engage or use religious correspondents as examples of the call for greater recognition, by editors and chiefs of staff of news media, of religious issues in media coverage.

Dart highlights an issue that is common to all newsrooms, stating that often only popular news items about religious leaders or in his words “spiritual celebrities” are covered while serious religion news and stories are neglected. Here he cites an example a historical visit of Pope John Paul II to Cuba in 1998 when The Miami Herald newspaper sent two political reporters to cover the event but neglected the paper’s religion writer. He also identifies the need for investigative reporting on religious issues or as he puts it, “scrutinizing ‘sacred cows’”, to examine and expose corruption, and criminal activities in religious organisations and institutions. While Dart’s article is written for and based on trends of the American media and public, the fact is that these

55 Dart, 28.
56 Dart, 30.
57 Dart 30,63.
media trends eventually manifest themselves in Pacific-based media organisations, including Fiji.

The situation in Fiji is compounded by the fact that newsrooms are smaller than most developed countries due largely to financial constraints. As a result, fields such as health, politics, business, environment and religion do not have specialist reporters. News editors are then required to find a reporter who has an interest in that area and allocate the news story to him or her. In the case of religion, it is usual for a reporter who is connected to the church and has a working knowledge of the structure, internal politics of the particular church as well as contacts in the church administration to be assigned to the story.

A survey of Fiji One News stories from January 1, 2000 to January 31, 2006 found that out 269 religious stories, there were a total of 186 stories that related to the Church. A similar survey was also conducted of The Fiji Times, also from January 2000 to January 2006. Initial results found more than 1000 pages of Church-related stories, opinions, editorials, cartoons and comments. Stories ranged from Church finance to the Church’s involvement in politics, evangelism, conflict between mainline churches and new churches, social services, Church and para-statements on social and political issues by church leaders, church activities and events, personality stories on church leaders and workers, spiritual matters and criticism of the Church.

58 Now ‘One National News’.
C. The Church and the News Media

1. The Media’s Perception of the Church

According to Rika, most news media organisations have an in-house code of ethics or code of conduct to treat all religions fairly in particular with religious matters. He believes that in a pluralistic society it is important the news media does not jump to conclusions about people’s faiths and beliefs, “We need to respect this. We may not share the same belief but we must respect their right to it.” The news media usually has to approach the churches for comment. Akaoula describes the churches responses as being a “reactive mechanism”. He believes that churches need to be very proactive and not wait for things to happen. Rika observes that most churches, including the Pentecostal churches, are willing to speak on spiritual matters and social services but not on financial issues. Rika also observes that there is a general ignorance amongst both the news media and the Church on their respective roles in society. This often results in a negative reaction from churches to criticism by the news media. The media for its part views church leaders as leaders in society and, as such, are accountable to society for their actions and statements.

59 Rika, Interview.
60 Akaoula, Interview.
61 Rika, Interview.
2. **The Church’s Perception of the Media**

The Church initial perception of the media relates primarily as a tool for evangelism and information dissemination. In terms of the mass media, there is a concern from Church leaders and members on the quality of media programming in terms of music and commentary on radio and the relevance of television programmes. In regards to the news media, the mainline churches tend to request news coverage of activities such as fundraising, provision of social services (feeding of the poor and free medical clinics), the dedication of church buildings, induction or ordination services and other celebrations. According to Randy Naylor, General Secretary of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), Christians must actively participate in media because they can offer an alternative vision of life through the media:

> The Church often thinks only of using the media for free publicity for their own programs. They forget that the media is how people more and more experience the world. The media shape values, fashion change and define the agenda for society. The media affect what happens in politics, our view of the economy, our understanding of our neighbor. If you're not part of that social influence, you are not part of declaring what is important, what is valuable, what it means to love your neighbor.\(^\text{62}\)

Archbishop Petero Mataca, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Fiji believes that the media is a gift to humanity. “We must use them effectively so our voices can be heard in isolated places where the people who need to hear our voice are, speaking for them, on their behalf, with them.”\(^\text{63}\) Mataca goes on to add that the Catholic church recognises the role of the media and that the use of the media will allow Catholic families in remote and predominate protestant communities to be brought into the Catholic community by hearing the Catholic voice in a multitude of voices. He believes that there is a need for a space for the Catholic Church in the media beyond the weekly

half-hour radio programme and monthly English and Fijian language newspapers which they produce. He is now looking at television due to the power of “visual observation” and prefers to use television ahead of radio because of its audio-visual characteristics.

He states that the media must be evaluated so that we take what is really truth and what is good and discard the rest:

Now, every morning I go through the papers, see the headlines, read the first paragraph then move on to the next one. I do not read all of the article. Reporters tell the story in the first paragraph, then the rest is rubbish, sensationalist.

A regular contributor of opinion articles to the newspaper on social and religious issues, Mataca strongly believes that the Church, reading the signs of the times, must say what needs to be said, stating that as Christians, we all need to see ourselves as responsible to society as each of our contributions makes up what kind of society we live in. He argues that since the political crises of 1987 and 2000, Fiji is heading to “moral and spiritual bankruptcy” and that each member of Fiji Island society has contributed by action or inaction, through statement or silence to the atmosphere of this society.

Archbishop Jabez Bryce of the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia echoes the sentiments of Archbishop Mataca. He states that the Church, in order to proclaim the sovereignty of God, should be involved in all facets of human nature, offering well informed comments based on an understanding of scripture, tradition and reason, adding that the news media and the Church often have common goals on issues of national importance. However, Bryce expresses a concern on the approach of the news media when seeking the Church’s comment on an issue. In his view, journalists need to allow

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63 Petero Mataca, Interview with Author, January 2006.
64 Mataca, Interview.
65 Mataca, Interview.
66 Mataca, Interview.
time for Church leaders to review an issue and develop a response rather than being put on the spot for an immediate comment.  

Rev. Akuila Yabaki, a former Secretary for Communication of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma and current Executive Director of the Citizens’ Constitutional Forum, believes that the Methodist Church has suffered a media persecution because it has not managed the media well:

It has been preoccupied more with its power and what it assumed to be its influence. It has not been able to announce the gospel in a way that is good news to the people out there, outside the Church, especially for whom the gospel is just about them as those in the pews.  

According to Yabaki, who in 1986/87 was responsible for communications both within the Methodist Church as well the publication of the Church’s bilingual newspaper, Domondra, radio still has more impact for reaching rural and island members and as such is used more by them. As such, the Methodist Church regards radio as a powerful tool in promoting its views:

…not making direct political statements but used for services and forcefully expressing in an aggressive manner what they regard the Church is about; that it has a place in Fijian society, that it has been here for a long time and against other faiths. Those things come through the radio.

Immediately following the WCC Harare Assembly, the central committee reviewed communication strategies in response to the programme guidelines committee’s call for clear implementation of an integrated communication strategy and process throughout the WCC. The strategies paper set out management priorities, objectives and principles to be used as a basis for communicating the work of the WCC.

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67 Jabez Bryce, Interview with Author, December 2005.
68 Akuila Yabaki, Interview with Author, 24th July, 2006.
69 The Methodist Church in Fiji currently spends over $100,000 annually on radio programming: three half hour slots on Radio Fiji One, the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation’s Fijian language public service broadcast station. The programmes are all in the Fijian language.
Following the Harare assembly, the WCC expanded its output for secular and religious media in terms of format, content and languages. Intensive efforts have been made to improve relationships with media — working with media to respond to their interests and improve their knowledge of ecumenical issues, and expanding the WCC’s understanding of how best to work with media.\textsuperscript{71}

The mainline Churches have an awareness of the potential of the media to aid them in their work. There is still, however, a certain suspicion surrounding the media, outside the understanding of news and evangelism, for a number of church leaders. The media needs to be “de-mystified” by mainline churches so that it is viewed as a gift for the propagation of gospel rather than a curse.

3. The Cult of Personality

A major influence in the way the news media and by extension society views the Church, and the way the Church treats the news media has to do with the relationship between the journalist and the church representative involved. For example, Archbishop Mataca claims to have a good relationship with the news media, admitting that he has a number of admirers in the news media. However, he also points out that due to the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church, he as Bishop with the “full priesthood,” is the head of the Church and speaks on behalf of the Church.\textsuperscript{72} This point was reiterated by Archbishop Bryce who also stated that often it was Bishop Apimeleki Qilio who was approached for comment in his position of (then) chair of the Fiji Council of Churches. However, if a statement was to be issued from the Anglican Church, it would be Archbishop Bryce who would make that statement.

\textsuperscript{70} Yabaki, Interview.
\textsuperscript{71} World Council of Churches, “Communicating the Ecumenical Story,” 158–160.
\textsuperscript{72} Mataca, Interview.
There is also a tendency in the news media to approach a particular church leader because of the type of comment they require. Rika agrees this is common practice for most journalists:

We go to people when we need a provocative comment... it also depends on the issue... We know the stand of each religion and denomination (on a particular issue) and if we feel we need a comment to show the hard stand of (for example) the Methodist Church then we know where to go... radical comments make for good TV...73

This issue is of particular importance when church leaders do not make the distinction between personal and official statements. As mentioned earlier the image of a particular church is dependent, largely, on the statements and actions of the leaders of that church, especially in times of crisis. As Rika states:

Whenever there is political, civil unrest it is important for the churches and church leaders to step away from their personal beliefs and allow the church, which they represent, to take over its role as prophet and (tell) the leaders (of the unrest) or whoever, “This is wrong!”

D. Summary

From this examination of the mass media and the news media a need for the churches, as communicators of God’s word, to clearly understand the role and impact of the media in Fiji Island society and in particular on the way the Church is perceived through the media, is discernable. Therefore there is a need for the Church to examine how it communicates its prophetic voice from a theological perspective. In the next chapter examines the theological imperative to communicate with and on behalf of God and attempts to develop an understanding of the prophetic voice for the modern age.

73 Rika, Interview.
CHAPTER 2
THEOLOGY OF COMMUNICATION

A. Communication: An Introduction

The World Council of Churches in 1983 articulated its definition of communication at its sixth Assembly in Vancouver by stating that communication is the “activity by which the truth is told.”\(^74\) At its most basic form, communication refers to the sending and receiving of messages as represented by the diagram below. The message travels from a sender to a receiver.

![Basic model of communication](image)

Figure 1: Basic model of communication

The word communication has its origin in the Latin root *communis*, which means “to share, to have in common”. Communication can thus be defined as the “sharing of

information and ideas.”\textsuperscript{75} This implies the creation or maintaining of a relationship between sender and receiver. Valle offers a definition of the four characteristics in basic communication: the message; the sender; the receiver, and the medium of communication. He states that the \textit{message} is often reduced to “a verbal concept whose words have their own energy that produces results.”\textsuperscript{76} According to Valle, the \textit{sender} “personifies the authority that validates the message and authenticates it.” As such the sender is not the message but “administers it,” interpreting it for any given context.\textsuperscript{77} Valle describes the \textit{receiver} as a “faceless human being,” and that the same process of communication is applied regardless of who the receiver is according to universal truths.\textsuperscript{78} The medium to be used in communication is a channel that is measured by the effectiveness of its faithfulness and rapidity.\textsuperscript{79}

Communication takes place on a number of different levels and situations. These include:

- Intrapersonal Communication or communication within a person, the interior speech of the soul;
- Interpersonal Communication between two people, which can be face-to-face communication or point-to-point communication over distance;
- Small Group Communication, which also can be face-to-face as in a bible study or meeting, or point-to-point such as a conference call;
- Communication with Large Groups, such as a church sermon, rally, public address, drama or choir and film; and

\textsuperscript{75} Viggo Søgaard, \textit{Media in Church and Mission: Communicating the Gospel}, (Pasadena, William Carey Library, 1993), 29.
\textsuperscript{77} Valle, 34.
\textsuperscript{78} Valle 34, 35.
\textsuperscript{79} Valle, 35.
Mass Communication, which is communication with multiple audiences.80

The various situations in which communication takes place require different approaches. While specific models of Christian communication will be discussed later in this chapter, it is interesting to note three different generic approaches to communication:

Table 1: A Typology of Approaches to Communication81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Approach I (Monologue)</th>
<th>Approach II (Dialogue)</th>
<th>Approach III (Life Involvement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Method of Presentation</td>
<td>Monologue / Lecture</td>
<td>Dialogue / Discussion</td>
<td>Life Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Appropriate Type of Message</td>
<td>General Messages</td>
<td>Specific to Thinking</td>
<td>Specific to Total Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appropriate Audience</td>
<td>Large Groups</td>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>Individuals or Very Small Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Time Required For Given Amount of Information</td>
<td>Small Amount</td>
<td>Medium Amount</td>
<td>Large Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Formality of Situation</td>
<td>Formal Dominant</td>
<td>Informal Prominent</td>
<td>Informal Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Character of Communicator</td>
<td>Reputation Important</td>
<td>Personality Characteristics Important</td>
<td>Total Behaviour Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Focus of Participants</td>
<td>Source Dominant (Message)</td>
<td>Message Prominent (Source – Receptor)</td>
<td>Receptor Prominent (Source – Message)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Activity of Receptor</td>
<td>Passive – Merely Listens</td>
<td>Considerable Mental Activity</td>
<td>Total Life Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Consciousness of Main Message</td>
<td>High (both Source and Receiver)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low (Perhaps Contradictory Verbal Message)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reinforcement and Retention</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Feedback and Adjustment</td>
<td>Little Opportunity</td>
<td>Considerable Opportunity</td>
<td>Maximum Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Discovery by Receptor</td>
<td>Little – Message Pre-digested</td>
<td>Considerable Discovery</td>
<td>Maximum Opportunity for Discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Type of Identification</td>
<td>Source Identifies Primarily with Message</td>
<td>Reciprocal Identification with Each Other’s Ideas</td>
<td>Reciprocal Source- Receptor Identification on Personal Level over All of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Impact on Receptor</td>
<td>Low – Unless Felt Need Met</td>
<td>Potential High on Thinking</td>
<td>Maximum on Total Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Appropriate Aim of Approach</td>
<td>Increase Knowledge</td>
<td>Influence Thinking</td>
<td>Influence Total Behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80 Søgaard, 31 – 35.
It is also important to take into consideration the context in which the process of communication takes place. According to Nida, one of the causes of breakdown in communication or difficulties faced in communicating is that “we take communication for granted,” with the sender of the message assuming that his or her understanding of the words used are understood by the receiver in the same manner. As the diagram below shows, the perspective of the sender, the interpretation of the receiver and the context in which the communication event takes place will ultimately have a bearing on how the message being communicated will be understood.

Figure 2: Contextual model of communication

Kraft disagrees with Valle’s description of the “faceless receiver,” suggesting rather that the receiver (or receptor) is in fact the key participant in the communication event. According to Kraft, receivers are “active,” interacting in a “transactional process in which the results are negotiated on the spot rather than predetermined.” Kraft recognises that receivers have “deep-level needs”; that all communication deals with the reality of the receiver, regardless of the objective reality; that receivers are part of a reference group of significant others. In this regard, the sender of a message would

83 Kraft, 67.
84 Kraft 68,69,71
need to have an appreciation of the “individual dynamic of each medium,” and the significance of the “socio-economic context in which these media develop.”85 The World Council of Churches, in its Issue Paper on Communication for its Sixth Assembly in Vancouver further stated that when dialogue takes place, there must be equal respect of both receiver and sender just as there is a covenant relationship between God and the people of God and that the “credibility of any communication depends on the quality of the community that sustains it.”86

B. God’s Communication

1. Christian Communication

From a theological perspective, Christianity can be “wholly and completely interpreted as a religion of communication, divine-human and at the same time inter-human communication.”87 According to Nida, “No other religion is so thoroughly word-oriented as ‘Judeo-Christianity’. ”88 While the Judeo-Christian perspective and impetus for communication will be discussed later in this chapter, it is important to briefly discuss the basic understanding of the Christian context of communication. The simplest expression of the desire to communicate in this context is to spread the Gospel, the “Good News.” Valle, in a theological reflection of communication, states that while all human beings are called to communicate with God and with other human beings,

85 Valle, 35.
88 Nida, 6.
communication between one another is the essence of what it is to be human,\textsuperscript{89} the image of God.

Nida suggests that, for the most, Christians struggle to understand the characteristic manner in which the gospel has been communicated as well as the wide-ranging responses it has received.\textsuperscript{90} The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics discusses the danger of evangelism being reduced to Christian propaganda, stating that today propaganda is understood as, “contriving conditions where people’s critical resistances are so weakened and their freedom of choice so severely reduced as to make acquiescence all too likely.” In this regards, such a response is “incompatible with the free responsible response of faith.”\textsuperscript{91} Similar sentiments are expressed by Field who points out that while the aims of those who use the media for evangelism may be “laudable,” there is a danger of that patterns of communication may be used which, “instead of liberating people and giving them dignity as human beings created in the image of God, exploit, demean and devalue them”.\textsuperscript{92} Kraft proposes that as the Christian message is a “life message” and not merely a “word message,” then the best way to communicate this message is through life itself and not just in word.\textsuperscript{93} The task of communicating Christ can, therefore, not just be restricted to evangelism but is the demonstration of how Christ, “as the centre of the universe, is related to every aspect of the created order.”\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{89} Valle, 41.

\textsuperscript{90} Nida, 7.


\textsuperscript{93} Kraft, 41

2. The Church and Communication

The Great Commission by Jesus to the disciples (Matt 28:19–20; Acts 1:8b) to “go and make disciples of all nations…” has been the mission-call for the Church for the past two millennia. This mission is primarily a communication task with the ensuing mission aimed at improving or re-establishing communication between human beings and God. The Church maintains a complex attitude in regards to communication; viewing themselves as “agents of communication” and understanding themselves based on communication as an administrator of information for comprehension of life, values, morals and the awareness of God. The development of the media as an alternative administrator of similar information has challenged this. The result has been the affirmation that “Communication is prophetic” and as such is needed in order to “serve the cause of justice, peace and the integrity of creation,” is the call by the Church for a New World Information Order.

3. Communication and Theology

Anne van der Meiden in discussing the relationship between communication-theory and theology highlights four basic elements, which form a communication framework for theological discussion. The first of these is that in a broad sense theology is a “‘fruit’ of communication,” suggesting “there is only theology because the Gospel has been communicated.” The second element is that theology “speaks about communication,” through disseminating information about a “speaking God, a witnessing Church” and by developing a systematic framework for “the contents of human faith” to deliver the message efficiently. Van der Meiden’s third element in this

95 Rainbow Study Bible, New International Version.
96 Søgaard.3.
relationship is that “theology commits communication” or that communication is an “instrumental component of theology,” through preaching of the word, Christian education, training, Bible translation and field and mission work. Significantly, theology commits communication by “prophesying in terms of political comment or protest.” Finally van der Meiden states “theology aims at communication” because theology is a device to “bring people to God, men to each other, the world nearer to the Church and vice versa.”

4. Divine Communication

a. God as Communicator

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Judeo-Christian religion is a communicative religion. The primary reason for this is based on the understanding of God as a god who communicates. Nida points out that only in the Judeo-Christian tradition is there “so strong a rejection of visual images and likenesses and such an utter dependence upon ‘Thus saith the Lord.’” God is a god who speaks from the very beginning of creation and still speaks today. God has spoken in the Scriptures and continues to speak, not in new revelation but through the contextual interpretation of the Scriptures. This means, rather than being static, God is active and to hear God today, we must know what God has already said.

Three fundamental aspects of God as communicator are immediately discernable. In the first place, God speaks through creation. From the first utterance by which the

100 Valle, Communication and Mission, 40.
101 Nida, 6.
102 Webber, 15-16.
divine energy was manifested in light (Gen 1:3), God’s spoken word released the power by which the world was created. Webber describes creation as a “worthy vehicle through which God actively makes himself known to us today.” Secondly, God has spoken in Scripture. The Scriptures are the “authentic and authoritative writings of those who heard the word of God and wrote it down.” Thus the Scriptures contain what God has said to humankind and how God came to humanity in the person of Jesus. Scripture also continues to speak to us in the here and now because it is the written source of God’s communication to humankind. Thirdly, God’s communication is preserved, interpreted and transmitted through the Church. The Church therefore is the “living voice of God to the world.” This implies that “unless the Church speaks, what God has said goes unheard.”

So why does God express God-self? What is the basis of the self-revelation of God’s name as Yahweh, the I am (Exodus 3:14) and self-communication in the person of Christ (John 3:16)? Kraft suggests that God’s communicational goals indicate that God “wants a relationship with the human beings he created,” seeks to bring forth a “response in which the whole relationship is keyed,” and that because of this “wants to be understood.” In this sense, God’s communication can be described as divine revelation, the source of which is divine love. Later in this chapter, it will discuss the different ways in which God chooses to reveal the God-self to humankind.

To say that God communicates with humankind means that God gives the divine self to human beings. “God in his own most proper reality,” says Rahner, “makes

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103 Webber, 16.
104 Webber, 16.
105 Webber, 16.
106 Webber, 16.
himself the most intimate constitutive element of man”. God bestows the divine to humankind and makes it fundamental to their very identity. This form of communication is a spiritual one, made known, for example, through the call of conscience. According to Rahner, God’s self-communication takes place both in history and transcendentally. There is a specifically Christian interpretation of God’s communication. It is a communication that has been given in history and handed down in Christian tradition. However, God’s communication is just a starting point. Having received it in history, humankind acts in response to it. Christians are invited to accept or reject the offer of transcendence in the tradition they have received. God’s self-communication always has this dual structure – a historical medium and a transcendent invitation to respond.

Rahner explains the ways in which God communicates:

- God communicates not just by sending a message, but also by forming a relationship.
- The relationship consists of God’s invitation (message) and our response.
- We know God as the one who created us and who invites us to transcend our present situation, thereby realizing the possibilities that existence offers.
- God not only gives us these possibilities, but also enables us to receive them and so becomes a gift, which we can receive.
- Like parents who give their life to their child, God gives the divine life to us.
- This life is more than the simple capacity to hear God’s call; it is also a transformation and a capacity to love as God loves.
- No doubt, this capacity is part of our human nature; but it is created freely by God and not “owed” or deducible by means of a system of logic.
- The offer of the divine self is not something added to human nature, but is the satisfaction of the very hunger God has created.
The Scriptures speak of this as the ability to be a child of God and a dwelling place of the Spirit.

Our response is to accept the offer in gratitude and to surrender to the one who makes the offer.  

God’s communication

Our response

Figure 3: Model of Divine Communication and Response

5. God’s Spoken and Written Word

The “primary sphere” in which God communicates with creation, humankind in particular, is “history and culture” The Bible can be thus seen as the record of God’s communication with humankind.

a. Divine Communication in the Old Testament

The noun $Dābār$ in Hebrew can be translated as ‘word’, ‘speech’, ‘command’ or ‘saying’. $Dābār$ is generally used in the Hebrew Scriptures to mean ‘speak’ as in the phrase “vayidābars YHWH el Moshe l’mor” (“...and the Lord spoke to Moses saying…”). The fifth book of the Pentateuch or the Torah, Deuteronomy, is called Debarīm (Words) in Hebrew. This term refers to the spoken word. It is the spoken word, ’āmar, of God which calls creation into existence (Genesis 1), as in the words of the Psalmist, “For he spoke and it came to be” (Psalm 33:9).

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110 Pronounced: davaar
Genesis records God speaking with Adam (Gen. 2, 3), Cain (Gen. 4), Enoch (Gen. 5), Noah (Gen. 6–9), Abraham (Gen. 12–22), Rebekah (Gen. 25), Isaac (Gen. 26), and Jacob (Gen. 28, 31, 32, 35, 46). Exodus, which tells of God bringing God’s people out of bondage in Egypt, contains many discourses between God and God’s elected leader of God’s chosen people, Moses (Exodus 3, 4, 6–14, 16, 17, 19–35, 40). God’s communication with Moses, over seventy times alone and about ten times in the presence of Aaron, continues in Leviticus (Lev. 1–8, 11–27) and Numbers (every chapter), once with Miriam, as well as with and through Balaam (and his donkey), and following Moses’ oration in Deuteronomy (Deut. 32, 34). God continues to speak to Joshua, the successor of Moses and to and through successive prophets, prophetesses, and His champions. God’s words are statements of truth as well as commands and instructions. God’s word in the Old Testament, therefore, is an active and dynamic effective force. God’s Word is able to manifest whatever God’s intention may be.


In the New Testament, the term Word of God refers not to the expressive force by which God chooses to manifest the divine intention, but to the manifestation of the God-self. The Word is God’s self-expression to humankind and history. The Word as it is described in the New Testament, is the Greek “logos”. While logos is often used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew noun, dābār, there are about eighteen other Hebrew words from the Septuagint which are translated as logos.

114 See Appendix III.
The meaning of *logos* in the New Testament would seem to be shaped along the Old Testament concept of *dābār* than the philosophical usage in the Greek world. The term *logos* itself is only found in the Johannine writings (Jn. 1:1-14; 1Jn. 1:1; Rev. 19:13). However, *logos* is included in twenty expressions in the New Testament.

The most common use in New Testament Scriptures of the phrase “Word of God” is in terms of the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. The verse “He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created,” (Jam. 1:18) is a reference to our response to this proclamation of the Gospel. The Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles also refer to the “Word of God” or simply, “the Word” in terms of the Gospel message itself, which the early Christians spoke “with boldness” (Acts 4:41). Therefore, the “Word of God” in the New Testament refers to both, the communication of the message and the message itself, the seed that is sown and the act of sowing it. While this is understood to mean the work of the writers of the New Testament and the message of the Gospel, the “Word of God”, the *Logos* as referred to by John (Jn.1:1–14) also means to the one who was both messenger and message, the incarnation and physical manifestation of the divine Word, Jesus Christ. Before addressing the incarnation of the divine Word in the life,

115 Classical usage (around 5 BCE) of *logos* included the meaning of something displayed, clarified, recognized and understood. According to the philosopher Heraclius, *logos* meant discourse (including didactic discourse), word, reputation, relation, proportion, meaning, common universal law and truth. Parmenides added to the word *logos* the concept of pure thought undisturbed by the senses. Sophists described *logos* as the rational power set in man, the power of speech and thought. The Socratic-Platonic concept of *logos* is that man alone of all living beings has *logos* because his actions are determined by the word and he himself is capable of speech and understanding. For Stoics *logos* was a term for the ordered and teleologically oriented nature of the world. In Neo-Platonism (3 CE) the concept of *logos* was as a force which invests material objects with shape, form and life.


117 See Appendix III.

118 Wenger, 18.

119 See Appendix III

120 See Appendix III
words and action of Jesus it is important to first discuss written Scriptures which Jesus referred to, and which record His ministry and that of the early Church.

c. The Scriptures: Divine Communication Written

Divine communication has thus far been explored in terms of the use of the (Hebrew or Greek) term “Word” in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible — God’s communication to humankind through those divinely called to be God’s oracles and the proclamation of the Gospel and the message of Jesus. However, the written covenant of the Ten Commandments and messages of the prophets, written down, was the oral Word of God committed to text. Thus, the literature collated as the Pentateuch, the wisdom literature, writings of the prophets and the gospels and epistles can be viewed as having their ultimate source in God. Jesus referred to the written Scriptures as the “commands of God” (Mark 7:8). Barth describes Scripture as a “witness to revelation,” the record of God’s communication with and revelation to humankind. By writing down God’s Word, biblical authors were not just recording divine speech; they were providing a point of reference for the generations to come, making an event in history accessible in the present and future.

In terms of contemporary communication, the Scriptures provide the message for communication and the current perspective provides the context through which this data must be filtered. The best communication of ideas always speaks in reference to the original source, to one’s experience of the idea, to one’s understanding of it and to the culture through which it is expressed, as per the model of contextual communication.

121 Wenger, 22.
123 Figure 2
6. Models of Divine Communication

a. God and Creation: A basis for communication

The doctrine of creation institutes the relationship between the Creator God and God’s creation. God created the world from nothing. Creation is the result of an act of God’s will, an act of speaking which released God’s creative energy. Creation is dependent on and sustained by God. The doctrine of creation, therefore, attests to a communicative relationship between God and God’s creation. Webber argues that the images of God in the world are expressions of the relationship that God sustains with God’s creation:

The Christian view of creation affirms that no reality exists without God, that he created the world freely by His will, that the world is a reality in and of itself. For these reason the images of God in the world are seen as expressions that communicate the nature of God.124

These expressions take on the outer being or shape such as creativity, love, joy, peace, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness which the communication of God’s inner essence with creation. Not only does God communicate with creation, God communicates through creation. Through creation, humankind can comprehend the significance of the created order (Ps. 19:1–4; Rom. 1:19, 20). Therefore, it can be said that while the world is not an extension of God, it is a reflection of Godself. God’s self-communication to the world as creation occurs through nature as well as time, space and history.

b. History: God’s direct communication

Christianity is rooted in history. The message of redemption offered to save humanity from the power of sin is a historical message. It was communicated at particular points in history. The redemption of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt was
so that they could be unto God a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation,” (Exodus 19:6) not in a mythical time and place but on earth in a point in history. The resurrection, offering the ultimate redemption through Jesus, (Rom. 8:18–25) also occurred in a place in time and space. These redemptive experiences, which not only reflect past events but also make promises for the future\textsuperscript{125} offer us evidence that it is possible to know and experience God in real life. However, even as God empties the God-self into creation, God’ self-expression is only a fraction of the God-self. Yet even that fraction of revelation can be overwhelming. God’s revelation as communication will be discussed later in this chapter.

There is a profound significance for communication theory from the historical action and experience of God. The first is that just as God’s communication is historical, so to contemporary communication must be directed to the here and now. Communication must be contextual. Secondly, God must be communicated through the message conveyed. Thirdly, this communication of God to a particular context must not only be in speech or writing but in action, as the Word of God is at once speech and action. Finally, communication must be not just a single event but an ongoing process, with more of the message communicated each time.

c. Language: the voice of God

In Exodus (Exod.4:12) God not only commands Moses to go to Pharaoh and speak on God’s behalf but also tells him that God will literally be Moses’ mouth. Speaking was the most direct form of divine communication and God’s self-revelation. The form that this communication took was intrapersonal (the interior speech of the

\textsuperscript{124} Webber, 75.

\textsuperscript{125} With the liberation of the Israelites from slavery and the making of the covenant came the commitment by God of a promised land. The incarnation was at the time a present fulfillment of a past
soul) or interpersonal (audible speech). From the Creation and the Fall to the Revelation, the Scriptures contain indications of God’s direct communication through language. God speaks and holds conversations, asks questions, and expresses the God-self in a language that is understood by humankind. God walked and spoke with Adam and Eve, with Cain, Noah, Enoch, Abraham and Moses. God’s indirect communication with humankind has also used language. The prophets and angels have been recognised as messengers of God. The divine speech indicator of “Thus saith the Lord,” at the beginning of prophetic utterances in the books of the major and minor prophets and visitations by angels to God’s chosen (Abraham – Gen 18, Lot – Gen 19, Zachariah – Luke 1:12–23, Mary – Luke 1:26–38) witness to God’s use of intelligible language.

God in the person of Jesus Christ communicated from Galilee to Jerusalem in a language understandable to peasants and fisher-folk, centurions and tax collectors, scribes, priests and teachers of the law, puppet ruler and a Roman governor. The Gospel of Christ was spread across the Mediterranean, Ancient Near East, Africa, India Europe, America and the Pacific in many different languages. The Gospel message transcends language barriers by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Key to the use of appropriate language between humankind and God is the understanding of huminty in terms of Imago Dei, the image of God. This facilitates the contextualisation and translation of divine communication while maintaining biblical and theological truths.

d. Angels: Heralds of God

As noted earlier,\textsuperscript{126} God has spoken through angels to God’s chosen servants and through prophets to God’s chosen people. Just as Moses has been typified as the first prophecy and at the same time a allusion to the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ, the perfection of the Church and the second coming of Christ.

\textsuperscript{126} See above, page 56, Language: The voice of God.
prophet, Enoch, who walked with God for 300 years before being taken away by God (Gen.5:22–25) is traditionally believed to have been transformed by God to be Metatron, the Angel of the Lord’s Voice.\textsuperscript{127} There are other manifestations of God as the three who visit Abraham (Gen 18) and the two angels as men who visit Lot in Sodom (Gen 19). While given various divine tasks such as the assistance and protection of humankind (Gen 24, Ps 91:11–13), execution of judgement (Matt13:24–50), service in heaven (Rev 8-9), be spiritual warriors (Rev 12:7–12), the angel and archangel primarily function as a visible manifestation of the word of God. Angels have delivered messages of judgement, instruction, pleasure, anger, hope and love from God to humankind. As the divine herald of God’s divine will, angels have wrestled with Jacob (Gen 32), called Gideon to lead Israel against the Midianites (Jud 6: 11–16), interpreted Daniel’s visions (Dan 8–9), announced the births of John the Baptist and Jesus (Luke 1, 2), and freed the apostles from the public jail where they had been placed by the Sadducees and Peter when arrested by Herod (Acts 5: 17–20, Acts 12).

The Angel of the Lord acted and spoke as God and yet remained clearly distinguishable from the God-self, “the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the Archangel and the trumpet call of God” (1 Thess 4:16). The symbolism of the personal visible manifestation of a heaven-dwelling invisible God on Earth is found in God’s desire to come close to God’s people in a personal, affirming, and empowering encounter.\textsuperscript{128}


e. Dreams and Visions: Symbols of Divine Will

The Scripture contains many accounts of God’s self-revelation through visual means. There is a pronounced distinction between direct or interpersonal communication and intrapersonal communication. Dreams and visions fall into the latter category, each with its own particular set of circumstances. Dreams, for example, take place among certain individuals who are not “people of God,” as well as those seen to be “spiritually immature,” such as Joseph and those, like Jacob, who were out of touch with God. Lehman describes the experience of divine communication in dreams:

…the consciousness of the individual is more of less detached from his personality. The individual does not share in the revelation. His mind is only the receptacle of the message. God is in direct encounter with the individual and has complete control of all that takes place. This fact does not lower in any way the revelation character of the dream…

Visions are recorded in both the Old Testament and New Testament and seem to have more significance or energy than dreams in terms of the level of God’s communication to human. In a vision, God speaks to humankind through our senses. The Hebrew word chazon conveys the understanding of seeing a vision, while marah is associated with seeing or observing. The majority of visions in the Old Testament are occasions of ecstatic experience in which new knowledge is revealed. New Testament visions also contain revealed knowledge but usually contain specific instructions. Often visions are given for the express purpose of guidance for an immediate situation.

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129 These include: Abilemech, Laban, the butler and baker imprisoned with Joseph, Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar and the Magi.
130 Lehman, “God’s Revelation Through the Patriarchs”.
131 This refers to both Joseph the Patriarch (Gen 37) and Joseph the earthly father of Jesus (Matt 1:20, 2:13, 2:19). Joseph the Patriarch was also to be given the gift of interpretation of dreams.
132 Lehman, “God’s Revelation Through the Patriarchs”.
133 Lehman.
134 The visions of prophets such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Amos in the Old Testament and the Revelation of John in the New Testament are the best examples of ecstatic visions. The revelatory and instructional visions of Annaïs (Acts 9), Peter (Acts 10) and Paul (Acts 16).
An interesting communication technique can be discerned from the use of vision as a form of divine communication. Visions make use of symbols, metaphors and other visual images that stimulate the imagination and reach the emotive essence of the receiver of the vision. This underlines the notion that God is not limited to words as the only means of communication.

f. *Oracles: Determining Divine Will*

The use of the word “oracle” in terms of communication in the Bible refers to the “various kinds of mysterious utterance,” delivered by a prophet, in most cases a court prophet, “in response to a worshipper’s question.”\(^{135}\) These divine responses to human questions were also given by priests who divined the will of God by the casting of lots known as *Urim* (Hebrew: ãûrim) and *Thummim* (Hebrew: tummîm). The Urim and Thummim are first mentioned in Exodus (Ex. 28: 30 and later in Lev. 8:8) in the instructions for priestly vestments, where they are to be placed in the breast-piece, to be on Aaron’s heart when he entered the presence of the Lord. This meant that whenever Aaron went before the Lord, he bore over his heart the means of making decisions for the Israelites. The Urim and Thummim were to be used to obtain decisions during times of war and for those who could not find God’s guidance in any other way (Num. 27:21; Jos. 9:14; Deut. 33:8; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65, 1 Sam. 14:41; Jdg. 20:18.). As the role of the prophet gradually took precedence, the use of Urim and Thummim faded from use with the return from the exile.

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g. *Theophany: Manifestations of Divine Presence*

Quite set apart from visitations by angelic messengers, visions, dreams and oracles, there are a number of theophanies\(^{136}\) or events where God actually allows the God-self to be seen by humankind or manifests the God-self in a visibly comprehensible manner.

This direct or interpersonal form of communication between God and human had a greater effectiveness. God spoke directly with Adam and Eve (Gen 2, 3) and with Cain (Gen 4). God walked with Noah (Gen 6:9) and Enoch (Gen 5:22, 24). God spoke face to face with Moses (Exod 33: 11) in the tent of meeting. On Mount Sinai God revealed the divine glory to Moses (Gen 33:18–23). Non-human theophany recorded in the Scriptures include the Burning Bush where God first reveals the God-self to Moses (Exodus 3:1–6); the pillars of fire and cloud (Exodus 13:17–32); the Ark of the Covenant (or Testimony) where God’s presence would manifest itself above the two cherubim (Exodus 25:22), and in the cloud in the tabernacle (Exodus 33:9–10). This non-human theophany continued in the New Testament with the disembodied voice of God at the baptism (Matt 3:16–17) or in a cloud at the transfiguration (Luke 9:34–35).

Theophany, therefore, distinguishes biblical history from all other history. It is the assurance that the contents of Scripture were a divine revelation instead of human spiritual speculation.\(^{137}\) The ultimate theophany, and thus, the ultimate form of God’s self-revelation lies in the incarnation of the Word in the person of Jesus.

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\(^{136}\) *Theophany:* from the Greek — *Theos* (God) and *phainesthai* (to appear). Theophany is the manifestation of God to humans.

h. Incarnation: the Word becomes Flesh

John’s Gospel states that the “Word was made flesh and dwelt among us…” (Jn 1:14). The incarnation has been described as “the climax of God’s self-communication,” where God in an “act of great humility,” became human and communicated with humankind face to face. In the incarnation of the Word of God, the message, the communication of the message and messenger are one. Jesus, as the Word incarnate, can therefore be described as a model of communication. Webber alludes to the notion that Jesus’ method of communicating is the definitive earthly reference point for a theology of communication.

Through the incarnation of the Word of God the people living in darkness received the light. Jesus is the Word (Jn 1:1), the Light of the world (Jn 8:12), and the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6). He said that the, “the truth will set you free,” (Jn 8:32). Jesus Christ spoke truth to the power of hypocrites and in speaking the truth removed their power. The incarnational model of communication that is Jesus is an unparalleled model, with a use of language that was contemporary with the history and culture of His day, by miracles that bore witness to His supernatural relationship with God the Father and in full solidarity with humankind. He experienced and communicated through the full extent of human life, from celebration and joy to fatigue, hunger, sorrow, grief, rejection and persecution. In terms of the table of approaches to communication, (See Table 1, page 42) Jesus’ method of communication follows the life involvement typology of communication. Based on the description of the typology one

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138 Webber, 96.
139 Webber, 98.
141 Nida, 32,33.
can see why Jesus chose this particular method of communication in order to influence the total behaviour of His followers.142

7. **Principles of Christian Communication**

Humankind’s response to God’s gift of communication must therefore reflect humanity’s place in creation as ‘Imago Dei’, albeit an attempt to restore the broken communication of the Fall. In exercising the role of God’s steward of Creation, and as an extension of Creation, the gift of communication, humankind must base use of this gift in Scripture and Tradition, to accomplish the will of God, revealed as the creation and maintenance of a “just, peaceful and loving community.”143 This calls for Christian communicators to “witness to God’s transforming power in all areas of human life,”144 and for Christian communication to be an act of love which unshackles both the sender and receiver of the message. In this regard, the World Association of Christian Communications expresses the place of Christian communication in society by five principles for guiding the work and mission of Christians in communication and for the Church’s process of establishing communion and community.

- **Communication creates community**: People come together regardless of ethnicity, gender, religious belief, social class and wealth and where there is a recognition of and faithfulness to one another.

- **Communication is participatory**: It is a two-way process that shares meaning and establishes relationships. Communication is a human right that takes in to consideration the established freedoms of expression, of the right to seek,

142 Kraft, 62.


receive, and disseminate information. By adding access and changing the authoritarian structures of communication, participatory communication offers a new sense of human dignity, a new awareness of community and the satisfaction of a fuller life for all.

- **Communication liberates**: It empowers people to articulate their own needs, to work together to meet those needs, thereby strengthening their sense of dignity, while affirming their right to equal and full participation in society.

- **Communication supports and develops cultures**: It uses and develops indigenous communication methods. These methods nurture the symbolism of mutually shared images and meanings, that respect human dignity and the religious and cultural values, which are at the very core of ‘Third World’ cultures. The variety of the world’s cultures is a celebration of the rich diversity of the Imago Dei.

- **Communication is prophetic**: Media workers and communicators attempt to interpret the signs of the times and in doing so listen to God and are led by the Spirit. Prophetic communication, as will be seen in the next chapter, expresses itself in words and deeds, and is willing to challenge principalities and powers. Communication is prophetic when it serves the truth and confronts falsehood.\textsuperscript{145}

8. **Silence**

One of the key elements in communication, especially verbal communication, is silence. Silence in communication can be seen to signify the reception of communication. The importance of silence lies in its relation to listening to or receiving the word of God. Prayer, for example is not just a medium of offering praise, thanksgiving, confession and petition to God but also a medium for God to communicate to the individual. Silence signifies respect and the invitation for
communication. Silent meditation and reflection allow for the interior speech of the soul to occur.

C. Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed a number of models of divine communication. These models serve to express how God communicates with humankind and along with the principles of communication suggest how we should communicate with God and our fellow humans. God communicates the God-self in history, through language, through vision and the sense. God’s ultimate communication is incarnational.

The goal of God’s communication in and through history is communion with humankind. In the words of Forsyth, “God is the master of his own revelation; and therefore, he only succeeds if he wins, not the soul’s assent but the soul itself.”146 The message from the Scripture is that God speaks and that this speech is a historical event. The fact that God chooses to communicate through history means that God uses human culture as the vehicle of communication with humankind. In communication terms, this means that God’s communication is receptor orientated. The use of human messengers to speak to the human frame of reference reveals God as continually seeking out humankind to enter into a covenantal relationship. Humankind’s responding communication, therefore should create community, be participatory, and liberate. Communication should support and develop cultures. Finally, communication that responds to God’s communication must be prophetic. The next chapter prophetic communication as the key to communicating the liberating, participatory, diversity that is the community of God, the Church.


CHAPTER 3

THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGER

A. Prophetic Communication

1. Prophetic Communication in the Old Testament

Prophets are, according to Sawyer, primarily “proclaimers,” which refer to the Hebrew word for prophet, nabi. The Hebrew Prophet was not merely, as the word is generally understood, a man enlightened by God to foretell events. The Prophet was a supernaturally enlightened herald sent by Yahweh to interpret and communicate the divine will and intentions to people of Israel. His task consisted of preaching as well as foretelling. He had to maintain and develop the knowledge of the Covenant among Yahweh’s Chosen People, lead them back when they strayed, and gradually prepare the way for the new kingdom of God, which the messiah was to establish on earth.

Prophecy, in general, signifies the supernatural message of the Prophet, and more

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especially, from custom, the predictive element of the prophetic message. The prophet generally displayed the following characteristics:

- A sense of divine calling.
- Intelligent/tough decision-making
- Understanding
- Sense of responsibility
- Persistence
- Organisational skills
- Credibility
- Technical skills
- Sociability
- High levels of motivation

a. *The Call of the Prophet*

The call to prophetic office is in the hands of God, who knows what God wants and when, where, and why God wants it at any given time. The prophet is individually chosen, prepared, called, and directed by God, and yet it is done in such a way that the call to prophetic office comes to the individual with convincing power and sufficient evidence that both he and his associates know it for a certainty.

The call of Amos is to the point in question. “I was neither a prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock, and said to me: ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel’” (Amos 7:14, 15). God's call to Isaiah was of an entirely different nature. While

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in the temple God opened his eyes and gave him a vision of the throne of God and the angels about that throne, which seemed high and lifted up. Isaiah caught that vision of God in all God’s glory and celestial majesty. Immediately he felt his own humiliation and sensed his unworthiness. He would flee from the presence of such awful holiness and grandeur, but the Lord took a live coal from off the altar and, as it were, placed it upon his lips and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for” (Isa. 6:7). Purification made him ready to be God’s servant and God’s messenger. Then in response to the call, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah in his youth responded, “Here am I; send me.”

b. The Message of the Prophets

The prophetic gift rests upon the fundamental need for communication to take place between the Deity and the fallen family of humankind. God’s call to humanity to enter into communion with Godself was revealed through the prophets as a call to righteousness and holiness, the manifestation of union with God and obedience to the covenant. In this regards whatever truth was spoken and whatever consequences were heralded were spoken in love. One of the more prominent messages of the prophets was a call for social justice. Key to this prophetic message was the concept that there was a definitive link between ritual and ethical standards, so that sacrifice in the temple without justice for the under privileged members of society was worthless (Isa 1:17; Amos 4:1, 5:10; Jer 7:5; Eze 34). Righteousness, materialism and idolatry also related to social justice but were often addressed in terms of fidelity to the covenant between God and Israel. Another prominent message from God to God’s people via the prophetic voice was divine judgement or punishment either through natural disasters such as

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4 Sawyer, 44.
drought, or through military conquest by foreign powers. However, along with these admonishments were messages of hope and restoration.

The call to righteousness (sedakah) and justice (mishpat) by the prophets\(^5\) is fulfilled brotherly love and kindness (hessed) and holiness, which is defined by Isaiah as justice and mercy (Is 1:17). The prophetic call to holiness, while still associated with the issue of sacredness and purity in relation to humankind’s relationship to God, is achieved not merely through the rituals of the priests and temple but through ethical conduct.

c. \textit{Methods of Prophetic Communication}

Two predominant types of prophetic speech are discernable. The first is the oracle speech, where the divine will is sought. The second type of prophetic speech presents the prophet in the role of a messenger, bringing the word of God to either his king or this people. The most common of prophetic speech was the prophetic indictment and the pronouncement of judgement in the name of God. Many prophets were called not only to speak the word of God but also to personify that word in a particular symbolic action. Isaiah, for example, spent three years going around barefoot and in a loincloth (Isa 20). Jeremiah is told to wear a wooden yoke, in this case a symbol of the power of the Babylonians over Judah (Jer 27:28). Ezekiel’s extreme prophetic actions such as being struck dumb, lying on his left side for over a year and his right for over a month as commanded by God, illustrate the reinforcement or replacement of prophetic speech by prophetic action, both deemed divinely inspired. The medium in which the spoken prophecies were communicated usually began with the command to hear or to

speak, “Son of man prophesy,” (Eze 13) or “The word of the Lord came to me,” (Eze 15).

2. **Prophetic Communication in the New Testament**

Word and action as media of divinely commanded prophetic communication in the Old Testament made a paradigm shift when the Word of God was incarnated in Jesus Christ. The proclamation of the arrival of the Saviour by John the Baptist (Mk 1) echoed God’s message through the medium of the prophet Isaiah (Mk 1:3, Is 40:3; Mt 1:23, Is 7:14), the annunciation by the angel Gabriel (Lk 1:26), and marks the awakening of the Holy Spirit as the divine element of the Godhead which is to the medium of communication to humankind, sometimes even directly, albeit manifested as a dove (Lk 3:22). The Pentecost event (Acts 2) signifies more than the divine message for all ears, languages and cultures. It signifies humankind’s communicative redemption from the events at Babel (Gen 11) and restoration to the ability of universal and total communion with God through the channel of the Holy Spirit. The call to righteousness and holiness of the prophets of Israel and Judah still pervaded Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor and the world of the early church, except that the path now led to and through Jesus.

As the disciples spread out and the small community of believers grew into small communities of believers, the number of those who “sought to interpret the signs of the times” increased. Prophecy was given a high priority as gift of the Spirit. According to Paul it came second after the apostles and before teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, administrators and the popular speakers in tongues (1Cor 12:28). The gift of prophecy was highly valued for the edification of the church (1Cor 14:4, 5). The
establishment of the household of God with Jesus as the cornerstone lay on the foundations of the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20). As these gifts were the manifestation of an outpouring of the Spirit, rules governing prophetic speaking and speaking in tongues were established among the communities (1Cor 14:26-33). An interesting contrast in communication can be seen here between speaking in tongues as the sign of possession by the Spirit and communication with God but needing interpretation to be effective (1Cor 14:2, 6-22a), and prophetic speech which is God speaking to the church for its “strengthening, encouragement and comfort” (1Cor 14:3).

In the New Testament warnings against false prophets purporting to either speak for Jesus or claiming to be Him, in the New Testament had begun with Jesus Himself, who described them as “ferocious wolves” dressed in “sheep’s clothing”, intent on deceit (Mat 7:15-23, 24:4, 11, 24). Given that the gifts of the Spirit did not have specific standards, these warnings were quickly echoed by the leaders of the early church (2Thess 2; Col 2:4-18; 1Jn 4:1-6). The ecstatic vision of the Book of Revelation marks the final view of prophecy as foretelling (envisioning the future) as contrasted with forth-telling (speaking out).

B. The Prophetic Voice in Christian Tradition

1. The Early Church

The early Church Fathers of the second and third century such as Hermas\(^7\) and Ignatius\(^8\) had an acknowledged prophetic role in the development of doctrine in the defence of the Christian faith against heresy, which is what false prophecy and unsound

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theological thought was being called. Ignatius stressed obedience to Church authorities with a view to a single bishop as the leading figure in the Church, with authority over holding of services and actions taken by the Church and the combined role of teaching, ruling and prophet. At this time, prophecy was not stifled but subdued through regulation by the developing officialdom of the Church.

However, with the growth of heretical movements within and beside the Church such as Gnosticism, Marcionism and Montanism, which laid claim to divine wisdom and prophecy, in the case of Montanism, to revive the first century state of affairs, which entertained the expression of different gifts of the Spirit. Because of the resistance by the established Church towards the spread of heresy, an emphasis was placed on the apostolic authority, succession, and co-operation on these matters at joint council meetings with the development of Christian doctrine and the basis of scripture ahead of gifts of the spirit. The Old Testament was used as a source of discipline and doctrine, with prophecy placed under the control of written records. Although prophecy was not forbidden, it was subordinate to the Scripture. As attention to interpreting ‘the signs of the times,’ waned, the prophetic role was absorbed by teachers and preachers.

2. Luther and Wesley: Proponents of Modern Prophetic Communication

Following the Dark Ages and the Inquisition, the revolution of prophetic communication can be said to have taken place at the same time as the development of the printing press in the fifteenth century, more than a thousand years after the prophetic role was incorporated into the functions of the priest (preacher/teacher). At that time,

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9 *Early Christian Fathers*, 76.
the only Bible available was the “corrupt” Latin Vulgate. The Reformation was the result of the prophetic call to righteousness and holiness by Martin Luther against the selling of Indulgences by which forgiveness of sins was offered for price. Atkison, commenting on Luther as a prophetic reformer, says that when God addresses the human being, and when that person hears and obeys, it is a shattering and terrifying experience, self-authenticating itself in the truth. This experience gives the person experiencing it the “burst of power and energy to declare the fresh truth and make it effective.” Copies of the 95 theses which Luther wrote against the Catholic Church were quickly spread throughout Europe and unleashed a storm of controversy.

The advent of the printing press meant that Luther’s writing, some one hundred volumes, was easily disseminated and circulated widely, reaching France, England and Italy. Printing in Europe was by now around seventy-five years old and had been largely of expensive ecclesiastical books in Latin, which few people read. Luther’s pamphlets were only a few pages, quickly printed for little money, and they cost little to buy. From the year 1518 to 1520, thirty of Luther’s pamphlets were printed, while those wishing to counter Luther’s opinions had difficulty getting published - publishers having little interest in publishing pamphlets for which there was little demand.

John Wesley, whose conversion took place after listening to a reading of Luther’s preface to Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, also made good use of the eighteenth

10 Corrupt refers to words substituted in the Vulgate such as, “Priest” instead of “elder”, “Charity” instead of “Love”, “Church” instead of “congregation,” “idols” instead of “images” and “do penance” instead of “repent”. Under the name of Junker Geoge, Luther translated the New Testament from Greek to German in a few weeks, finishing it off with the Old Testament in 1522.

11 Begun by Pope Alexander Borgia in 1500 C.E.


century print media. Publishing copies of 140 Sermons and his notes on the New Testament, Wesley also published Journals, magazines and pamphlets. Topics were not confined to theological discourse, but included social justice issues such as the abolition of slavery, prison reform. Combining the elements of action to his speech, Wesley established a “poor man’s bank,” medical nursery and other social service support groups. Wesley was an avid reader and writer. He began his day at four o’clock each morning and worked ceaselessly preparing sermons, studying the Scriptures, absorbing the classics, creating pamphlets, studying medicine, making judgments about current affairs and writing books. Wesley composed many pamphlets calling for environmental change in housing, wages, community services, and condemning the conditions of the hospitals. Many of his concerns about health and social welfare came from his observations of the appalling conditions in which common people lived. Wesley is said to have coined the saying "Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”

“Wesley never ceased from reinforcing his spoken word by the written,” publishing 32 volumes of his collected works some twenty years before his death. During his life, he published around four hundred books and booklets.

In his *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, he wrote:

If, therefore, you have any regard to justice, (to say nothing of mercy, nor the revealed law of God,) render unto all their due. Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion! Be gentle toward all men; and see that you invariably do unto every one as you would he should do unto you.

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O thou God of love, thou who art loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all thy works; thou who art the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and who art rich in mercy unto all; thou who hast mingled of one blood all the nations upon earth; have compassion upon these outcasts of men, who are trodden down as dung upon the earth! Arise, and help these that have no helper, whose blood is spilt upon the ground like water! Are not these also the work of thine own hands, the purchase of thy Son's blood? Stir them up to cry unto thee in the land of their captivity; and let their complaint come up before thee; let it enter into thy ears! Make even those that lead them away captive to pity them, and turn their captivity as the rivers in the south. O burst thou all their chains in sunder; more especially the chains of their sins! Thou Saviour of all, make them free, that they may be free indeed!16

The sheer magnitude of published writing by Luther and Wesley, underscores the impact that the printing press had on communication, making the Christian message and prophetic thought accessible to thousands.

C. Communicating the Prophetic Voice

1. The Prophetic Voice in Our Time

The phenomenon of prophetic communication in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is the result of two basic factors. The spread of Christianity globally, with effects comparable to the growth and development of the early Christian communities in the New Testament, has seen an increase in the number of people who have heard the

Gospel as well as those who have accepted Jesus into their lives. Similarly, to the events of two millennia ago, the increase in number of Christians, and those who listen to God, interpreting “the signs of the times,” has led to men, women and children hearing the prophetic call to righteousness and holiness and accepting that call. Also at the same time, the development and expansion of communication technology has resulted in more accessibility, availability, and variety. With the pervasiveness of the mass media, opening of windows to many different worldviews and events, the stories of many prophets from other lands are received and retold. The following examples illustrate the common message within the diversity of the prophetic voice.

a. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

Rev. Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a theologian, who left the security of the United States to return to Nazi Germany to work in the Confessional Church and during the second world war worked in opposition to the Nazis and was arrested and ultimately executed in 1945 for plotting against Adolf Hitler in 1945, just weeks before Germany surrendered. The publishing of his letters and papers smuggled out of prison have served as an example of the modern prophetic call for righteousness. An essay titled ‘After 10 years,’ written a few months before his arrest in 1943 serve as to the point of death:

> Who stands his ground? Only the man whose ultimate criterion is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all these things when he is called to obedient and responsible action in faith and exclusive allegiance to God. The responsible man seeks to make his whole life a response to the question and call to God…. It is infinitely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than to accept suffering as free responsible men. It is infinitely easier to suffer with others than to suffer alone. It is infinitely easier to suffer as public heroes than to suffer apart and in ignominy. It is infinitely easier to suffer physical death than to endure spiritual suffering. Christ suffered as a free man alone, apart and in
ignominy, in body and in spirit, and since that day, many Christians have suffered with him.  

Bonhoeffer's story echoes the biblical tradition of prophecy. Like the prophets of the Old Testament who risked all to censure corrupt kings and priests, Bonhoeffer recognized that God calls us not only to care for the poor, oppressed and vulnerable, but also to challenge any religious or secular power that perpetrates injustice. His life exemplifies the prophetic call to action:

Loosen all bonds that bind unfairly, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke. Share your bread with the hungry, take the homeless into your home. Clothe the naked when you see him, do not turn from your fellow human beings.

Bonhoeffer's work came to fulfilment only after his death. His insistence on the significance of a committed response to Christ's Sermon on the Mount, a call to social justice, inspired many of the world's great civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Junior, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. His concept of a "religionless Christianity" has helped Christian theology face uncertain landscape of the future. It is an idea, which exposes the vitality and relevance of faith in a world, as Bonhoeffer put it, "come of age."

b. Martin Luther King Junior

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, can be considered a modern-day prophet who brought a message of freedom for his people while also speaking truths some did not want to hear. King's message was about more than civil rights. He was a dedicated

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18 Is 58:6-7
defender of economic justice, bridging the gap between haves and have-nots, raising up the poorest to reach the fullness of their potential. He was opposed to war, not only because cost in terms of lives and destruction of property, but also because it sidetracks the society from addressing the terrible ills that exist within it.

King's legacy continues to inspire those who march toward justice and peace. Sadly, his dream, “that one day all children will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character,” still only remains a prophetic vision. King’s concept of the prophetic role of the modern-day Church held that the churches must affirm that, “every human life is a reflection of divinity and that every act of injustice mars and defaces the image of God in man.”

King agreed with DeWolf that:

To be truly Christian, a prophetic utterance must arise from love for the victims of injustice or other evil and desire to bring all who are involved into a community of forgiveness, grace and mutual assistance.

Unlike Bonhoeffer’s posthumous publications and recognition, performing his prophetic role in the United States of America, King was surrounded by the media and the subject of news broadcasts on radio and television and articles in magazines and newspapers. He gave regular interviews and addresses to reporters and journalist associations. His “I Have a Dream,” address at the March on Washington for Civil Rights in August 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial was not only attended by hundreds of thousands of marchers and supporters of civil rights but also broadcast live on radio and television to an audience of millions.

21 From the speech, “I have a Dream,” at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington: 28 August, 1963.
c. **Oscar Romero**

In 1980, in the midst of a US funded war that the UN Truth Commission called genocidal, Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador promised history that life, not death, would have the last word. “I do not believe in death without resurrection,” he is quoted as saying. “If they kill me, I will be resurrected in the Salvadorian people.” On March 23, 1980, he preached his last radio broadcast sermon directed at the National Guard, the police and the military, which has been described as his most thunderous prophetic denunciation of repressive acts committed by the security forces\(^\text{24}\):

I should like to make a special appeal to the men of the army, and in particular to the soldiers of the National Guard, the police, and the constabulary. Brothers! We are the same people! You are slaying your campesino brothers and sisters! When a human being orders you to kill, the law of God must prevail: “You shall not kill!” No soldier is obliged to obey an order in violation of the law of God. No one is bound to obey an immoral law. It is time you recovered your conscience, and obeyed your conscience instead of orders to commit sin. The church is the defender of God’s rights, God’s law, human dignity, and the worth of persons. It cannot remain silent before such an abomination. We ask the government to consider seriously the fact that reforms are of no use when they are steeped in all this blood.

In the name of God, in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven more loudly each day, I implore you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God: stop the repression!

The next day, as he celebrated Mass, a sharpshooter murdered him. A number of those who attended his funeral were also shot in front of the cathedral. Romero had a prophetic view of the church’s voice and speaking truth to power at the peak of the repression and persecution:

If they ever take our radio [which had already been jammed and bombed], suspend our newspaper, silence us, put to death all of us priests, bishop included, and you are left alone – a people without priests – then each of you will have to be God’s microphone. Each of

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you will have to be a messenger, a prophet. The church will always exist as long as even one baptised person is left alive!25

2. The Need for the Church to have Prophetic Voice in Fiji Today

The coups of 1987 and 2000 had contrasting responses from the mainline Churches. On May 14th, 1987, three hours after the military coup d’état of the democratically Labour–National Federation Party Coalition, the President of the Methodist Church contacted some of the leaders of the Churches and produced a message on behalf of the Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian and Assembly of God Churches. The message which was broadcast at midnight that night and published in the local newspapers the next day appealed for the upholding of the Christian values of justice, peace, tolerance, goodwill, freedom and love, patience and forgiveness, sacrifice and obedience. The message called on the (at that time) Royal Fiji Military Forces to release all hostages and surrender to the sovereign authority of the land and for all people of Fiji of all religions to pray for the end of the crisis and immediate restoration of the democratically elected Government.26 Nine days later the Anglican Bishop, the President of the Methodist Church, the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church, the Regional Commander of the Salvation Army and the minister of the Presbyterian Church issued a joint statement condemning the coup and calling for the nation to come together. In the days, weeks and months that followed the leaders of the Churches issued two further common public statements. The Fiji Council of Churches, having been silent received letters of solidarity from the Pacific Conference of Churches and the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The first public statement by the Fiji Council of Churches was in March of 1988 and addressed the issue of the Sunday

25 Sobrino, 34.
Decree as well as Church and State. Further statements by the leaders of the Fiji Council of Churches were issued towards the end of the year (i) expressing concern on the constitutional process then underway and (ii) to give a combined Christmas message to the nation calling for the breaking down of barriers and creation of lasting peace.27

In May 2000 following the civilian coup, the prophetic solidarity of the Churches was not as evident as in 1987. The first statement on the events of May 19th came the next day when Methodist Church General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ilaitia Tuwere strongly condemned the civilian coup and associated looting in Suva city.28 The following Monday, the Fiji Times newspaper carried a photograph of the Methodist Church President, Rev. Tomasi Kanailagi outside the Parliament complex.29 The next day, in an article in the paper, Rev. Kanailagi disassociated the church from the coup, calling for prayers for the nation and saying that the church did not want “meddle into the politics” of the coup.30 Five days after the takeover, with hostages still being held in Parliament, the head of the Anglican Church, Bishop Bryce also called for prayer, saying that it was the “Christian duty to obey and support the lawful authority of the state.”31 The same day, former Methodist Church President, Rev. Joseteki Koroi in calling on looters to repent and for church leaders to be part of the repentance process, criticised the Fiji Council of Churches for its silence.32 The next day the Fiji Times published a statement from the Council stating that it was against the “unchristian act of those who seized members of the democratically elected government,” calling the takeover a, “very

27 “Fiji Coups: Church Statements”.
30 “Methodists stay out,” in *The Fiji Times*, (Tuesday, May 23, 2000), 15.
thoughtless crucifixion of democracy,” and called for Christians to assist in restoring order by “little acts of love and kindness.”

By the following week, newspaper reports contained more statements from the Fiji Council of Churches and church leaders, calling for peace and calm as well as condemning the coup. There was coverage of the daily peace vigil at the Holy Trinity Anglican church. As the hostage crisis continued for the next month with more statements from the churches calling for an end to the crisis and support for first the President of Fiji and then after his stepping down, the military. The Methodist church, in particular was trying to distance itself from the coup makers, having earlier looked like was supporting them. Their defence was that they were providing pastoral counselling to the rebels in Parliament. This was an issue for the Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army, who as members of the Fiji Council of Churches:

….wanted to take a united stand against the activities of those involved in the coup but were frustrated by the leaders of the Methodist Church who were, at that time, nationalistic in sentiment.

A lack of prophetic voice in the crises in 2000 when compared to 1987 is discernable. In 1987, there were common statements by the churches condemning the coup and calling for immediate release of the government. In 2000, the churches did not make common statements until the Fiji Council of Churches was criticised for its silence and began to raise its voice after almost a week. The Lund Principle of the World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Commission states that, “churches do not

34 Organised by the National Council of Women in Fiji.
say separately, what they can say together,” in order to maintain solidarity and a visible unity of the Church Universal. According to Yabaki:

The churches have reached a point of maturity in their journey towards unity where they have been able to agree on an understanding of scripture, doctrine, baptism, to the issue of trafficking of women and unmasking hypocrisy and speaking to each other and together, as in the case of the Fiji Council of Churches and the Assembly of Christian Churches in Fiji.  

There is also a danger that by not speaking out on injustice and tyranny, the church, in its silence, may be seen as making a statement: that it is supporting the status quo.

The Methodist Church and other non-mainline churches raised and supported, in 1987 and again in 2000, the issue of Fiji becoming a Christian state. This goes against the image of the church in the secular world, where religion does not have a governing role. When a church is too closely aligned with the state, or traditional culture it is in danger of losing its prophetic voice as it concentrates on maintaining its power base, which is either the government support or the support of the people who favour the status quo. However, the Church is not a maintenance Church but an apostolic one, sent out with a mission to contextually address the issues of today.

For the Church to have a prophetic voice in the Fiji Islands, therefore, means speaking the truth, in love, to the issues of injustice, poverty, of peace, of making the church home for everybody in the household of God and being concerned about society. In a multicultural and pluralistic society, the Church has a particular mission to communicate the Gospel to that society. Therefore to be able to read the ‘signs of the times’ might entail having to do research on issues of morality such as homosexuality,

36 Yabaki, Interview.
37 Yabaki, Interview.
or social injustice such as privatisation of water supply. A church with a prophetic voice, as Nathan, Jeremiah and Micah, must communicate with people in power in a way that challenges them about the use of power, about peacemaking and peace building.

Ernst calls for the Church to engage in a fourfold task to interpret the signs find solutions to the challenges of our times:

**Reconstruction**, in an attempt to identify and acknowledge the kinds of changes that have taken place and have negatively affected the lives of people;

**Critique**, to uncover ideological underpinnings and connections in order to unmask how economic and political power is maintained;

**Denunciation**, by assuming the prophetic role of identifying sources of evil and oppression;

**Resistance**, by mobilizing those who are oppressed;

**Advocacy**, by joining in solidarity in the struggle or in the promotion of specific projects in specified areas.\(^{38}\)

The prophetic church needs to know how to speak to and about power in its own way, being biblical and informed by the power of the Spirit. The prophetic church is a critique of power, of how power is used in the world.

### 3. Other Prophetic Voices

The Bible records in Numbers\(^{39}\) the story of Balaam and his donkey. King Balak of Moab tried to engage a sorcerer named Balaam to curse the Israelites as they journeyed through the plains of Moab. God spoke to Balaam, telling him not to curse the Israelites as they were blessed by Him. Balaam’s own donkey spoke at the

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39 Numbers 22 – 24.
command of the Lord. God opened Balaam’s eyes to enable to see the angel of the Lord. Although Balak tried his best to cajole, bribe and order Balaam to curse the Israelites, Balaam’s only response was, “Did I not tell you I must do whatever the Lord says?” (Num 23:26)

In the gospel of Mark, there is a story of a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus, who was stopped by the disciples because he was not one of them. Jesus exhorts them to not stop the man because, “no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us.” (Mk 9:38-40). The Acts of the Apostles records the conversion of Saul, the most persistent and effective persecutor of the early Church on hearing the voice of Jesus (Acts 9:4-6).

These three instances are of people empowered by God the Father and Son to speak and act in their name. The same can be said of the different backgrounds of some of the Old Testament prophets who were not all priests or religious leaders such as Jeremiah or Ezekiel, but from the educated middle class, civil servants, or farmers, or shepherds like Isaiah, Daniel, Amos and Hosea. History is full of those who have heeded the call to speak truth in love to situations of oppression and to call God’s people to righteousness and holiness. Christian witness is essentially prophetic when Christians speak out of the faith for which they stand.

This then raises the question of whether para-Church organisations, secular civil society or non-governmental organisations and non-Christians can also be prophetic. Mohandas K. Gandhi, whose non-violent concept of Satyagraha or “Truth Force” which earned him the title Mahatama or Great Spirit, influenced Rev. Dr. Martin Luther

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40 Mark 9:38 – 50.
King Junior in his non-violent campaign for civil rights, claimed to have been influenced by Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), and thus the Word of God written.

The Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA) originated in 1991 as the Fiji Institute of Contextual Theology, part of the Fiji Council of Churches. It developed into the Fiji Council of Churches Research Group and in late 2000 became autonomous from the FCC under its present name. ECREA’s objectives are to create, “a compassionate, just and inclusive society based on the concept of the Kingdom of God on earth.” While ECREA has “become known for its work in social activism and humanistic position that is critical of some of the philosophies and theologies emerging from Christian churches in Fiji,” it does not see itself, as a para-church organisation or other NGOs taking over the prophetic role of the Church. Rather it tries to provide a Christian response to the signs of the times. According to the former Executive Director of ECREA, Aisake Casimira, there is no redemptive message in the social critiques of Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) and Civil Society Organisations (CSO), while the Church has the capacity and the challenge to speak prophetically but with a sound theological understanding of the issue and offer, maybe not detailed but, practical steps:

42 According Casimira, the creation of ECREA grew out of three primary reasons:

Firstly, the FCC Research Group had outgrown the capacity of the Fiji Council of Churches in terms of personnel and finances. It had a larger staff compliment than the FCC and was receiving more funding from donor agencies than the FCC.

Secondly, the group was now moving into advocacy work which was beyond the scope of the terms of reference for the FCC Research Group. It determined the need for an independent voice to speak outside the Church on issues that required a Christian response. The group felt the need for freedom to speak without the constraints of denominational or the Council policy.

Finally, the catalyst for the break from FCC came in 2000 with what the Research Group perceived as the failure of the Churches to respond to the crisis of the coup and differences with the President of the Methodist Church in Fiji who held the chair of the FCC. Interview with Author – November, 2005.

43 Newland, 347.

44 Newland, 347.
NGO’s do not offer the graceful redemptive message that the Churches can offer. They may provide practical steps, for example on the issue of the Kyoto Protocol and the greenhouse gas emissions and the need to protect the environment, but the Churches can provide the same steps with the added theological impetus on stewardship of Creation.45

Casimira suggests that the prophetic word, while being redemptive for society, must underpin the pragmatic critique that NGOs and CSOs offer. There is a difference between being outspoken on issues and relating those issues to a source of authority based on Scripture and tradition and then speaking with a distinctive voice. Ultimately, the call to speak prophetically comes from God in the Holy Spirit, only the one called, and the One who calls can know if it is genuine or false.

4. Can The News Media Be Prophetic?

Following on from this question of other prophetic voices is the question whether or not the News Media, as a voice or form of communication, can be prophetic.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the News Media considers itself the “Fourth Estate,” and views itself as a watchdog of the first three Estates, namely Church, State and Society. In reporting events, the News Media is concerned with the facts and answering of “who?” “what?” “when?” “where?” and “how?” with a view to answering the question “why?”

The supposition of the News Media’s prophetic role comes from its position as social commentator and critic. The prophetic task of watching and warning comes from the prophet Ezekiel who was charged by God to be a watchman for the house of Israel (Ez 3:17). This entailed warning the society and dissuading it from being wicked (Ez 3:18-19). The major difference in the two types of watching is that the prophet is called

45 Aisake Casimira, Interview with Author, November, 2005.
to watch society on behalf of God and the News Media is empowered by society to watch it. So while this “watching” task is similar in both cases, they differ in for whom the task is performed.

However, in its search for the facts and presentation of those facts, the News Media is involved in the search for the truth. Archbishop Mataca sees the prophetic nature of the News Media from the perspective of a searcher and communicator of truth in society without fear or favour:

The truth gives joy and it can also hurt. But the truth must be told. Hence the truth is prophetic. So when the News Media reveal the truth it has a prophetic voice in society. The News Media need reporters and journalists who are committed to finding and reporting the truth.46

As God is the source of all truth (Is 45:19; Jn 8:32, 14:6), all who seek the truth seek God and those who speak the truth can essentially be speaking the Word of God. However, just as the truth is prophetic and those who speak the truth are prophetic, those who speak falsehoods as if they were truth can be termed as false prophets. As the News Media is a corporate entity, the onus is on the individuals who work in the News Media to be prophetic in their search for and speaking of truth.

The prophetic role of the New Media in terms of speaking the truth against injustice, persecution (such as racial discrimination), corruption and abuse of political power mirrors the understanding of the prophetic role of the Church. Former Methodist Church in Fiji President, Rev. Tomasi Kanailagi observing from the Church perspective, but also as a “member of society,” some three decades ago that the prophetic role of the Church in Fiji included being:

prepared to oppose and rebuke all social injustice and moral corruption in society. The Church should oppose strongly the spirit of discrimination now prevalent in this country…. …[As the] Indians

and other races do not have equal rights with indigenous Fijians. …She [the Church] must be ready to speak up against anything that is contradictory of the teaching of the Church. …I believe that true [C]hristian teaching concerns all men and their betterment.\textsuperscript{47}

It must be noted however, that the nature of this task coupled with the task of the prophet to speak God’s truth even to a priesthood sometimes does not follow the code of the covenant or the spirit of the Law (Hos. 4) can bring the News Media in to conflict with the institution of the Church. Kanailagi, himself, some thirty-four years later accused the News Media of being “agents of evil”\textsuperscript{48} after the Fiji Times and Fiji One News highlighted remarks by him against non-indigenous people. The news items were defended by the Fiji Times editorial staff\textsuperscript{49} as well as the Fiji Media Council as being factual.\textsuperscript{50}

**D. Towards a Prophetic and Communicative Church**

1. **The Communicative Church**

   a. **Elements of a Communicative Church**

   The Church is by its character, mission and deeds a communicating community. The chief characteristic of the approach of the Church that is Present, is that where its voice is heard, the one can also hear the voice of another world; that is primarily the voice of the gospel. The Church transmits the message of the gospel and God’s world, where grace and mercy reign, and where faith and love constantly create new hope. Preaching the gospel is a task that the Church cannot refuse. The Church carries out its

\textsuperscript{47} Tomasi Kanailagi, “A Study of the Prophetic Role of the Church in Fiji,” (BD thesis, Pacific Theological College, 1968), 91-93

\textsuperscript{48} “Times, TV called ‘agents of evil’,” in *The Fiji Times*, 27 August, 2002, 1

\textsuperscript{49} “Editorial” in *The Fiji Times*, 27 August, 2002, 6

\textsuperscript{50} Bernadette Hussain, “Abuse of house privilege,” in *The Fiji Times*, 2 September, 2002, 7
mission by telling of God’s acts, by preaching and celebrating the sacraments. The communion of saints, the *communio sanctorum*, is called to communicate, to tell of God’s love, of another world, in word and deed, so that the world might believe.

The word "communicative" can be defined as genuine or ‘equal’ dialogue in the sense that all participants have the right to express themselves and be heard. The Church that is Present is a communicative church, a church engaged in dialogue. In a Communicative Church:

- The dignity of every human being is respected — as in the Beatitudes (Mt 5: 3–16), the call to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 19:18) and the command by Jesus, “Love each other as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12).
- People listen and ask — just as Nicodemus of the Sanhedrin listened to Jesus and asked of Him how one could be born again (Jn 3).
- Interaction is encouraged — as the incarnation was the ultimate act of interaction when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among humanity (Jn 1:14). Our call to discipleship in the communicative Church is the call for interaction with the world.
- Diversity is appreciated — we are all given different gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4). In the communicative Church all of the different gifts of the Spirit find expression and use.
- Fellowship is built up — our fellowship comes from being a community of faith called by God into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1: 9).
- People communicate with consideration for the other party — so that “we may encourage one another on toward love and good deeds,” (Heb 10:24).
- People communicate their convictions clearly and intelligibly — Thomas, following his examination of the hands and side of Jesus, affirms his faith with, “My Lord and my God,” (Jn20:26–28), while Peter is clear in who he thinks Jesus is, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” (Mt 16: 13–20).
People are bold in expressing their opinions — our spreading of the gospel message and speaking truth can only be done if we speak without fear (Eph 6:19).

People are prepared to change — one cannot encounter God and remain unchanged. Zacchaeus encountered the living Word and was willing to change his ways and receive salvation (Luke 19: 1–10).

People take the initiative and react — as God’s self-communication calls for our response. We are challenged by the gospel to go out; for only then do we have authority to be and make disciples (Mt 28:18–20).

Information is provided openly and in advance — God’s truth, revealed to humanity, has been available to us in a variety of media. These allow the message of God’s love and salvation, the messages of the prophets and the gospel of Christ to be infused with the Holy Spirit in the present for us to be able to read the signs of the times.

People encounter the church in the media they use — the Church must make use of all available forms of media to be able to speak to as much of humanity as possible.  

The Communicative Church must listen to both people and the contemporary world. Listening means presence, walking alongside, giving space; presence in life and death, birth and growth, joy and pain. On the other hand, communication is sharing one’s convictions, including the mystery of faith, clearly and intelligibly. Only when all parties concerned are prepared to open up, is the point of actual communication reached. Then everyone is enriched by meeting others, so that people may leave the situation changed, even regenerated.

The Communicative Church creates an atmosphere in which there is room for different languages: speech, music, drama, dance, images. The gospel can be conveyed by anyone. Everyone has the right to be heard and the right to express his or her

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51 Evangelical Lutheran Church Of Finland, The Communicative Church: The Church’s Communications Strategy, (Helsinki: Central Church Board, 2004).
thoughts and religious experiences, even without theological training and mastery of the terminology. This “everyman’s right” is based on the priesthood of all believers received in baptism. In the Communicative Church, communications take into consideration the other party in the dialogue. Moreover, it is accepted that the Church’s large membership is comprised of very different groups with very different questions and expectations of the Church and its communication. Unless the Church recognizes the circumstances and questions of its members, acknowledges them and takes them seriously, what it says is easily ignored or rejected, and living interaction does not occur.

In the Communicative Church, communications, and with it such things as language, change with the persons involved. With a child, one communicates from a child’s perspective, with a young person from a young person’s perspective. Communications tools and channels are chosen according to the kind of communications that the receiving group is accustomed to. Being communicative is an attitude that can be realized in bilateral encounters, in Internet communications and when writing newspaper and magazine articles. Every message is a contribution to an ongoing discussion. In the Church, dialogue can mean both the Church’s internal debate and public debate. However, the requirement of functioning dialogue is always that the parties find a common language. People who enter into dialogue with representatives of the Church have in their minds a prior image of the Church and its representatives. This image is especially strongly affected by non-verbal messages based on such things as experiences and visual observations.

b. Talanoa: Contextualising the Communicative Church

In the Fiji Islands, the concept of talanoa describes the open communication of dialogue, discussion and even debate. Often taking place around the tanoa or kava bowl,
talanoa offers a space for even the least in society to communicate with others. Archbishop Mataca finds the talanoa an integral part of the Communicative Church’s pastoral approach to be informed by the lives of the people that make up the Church and is a tool in raising the Church’s prophetic voice:

I sit with our people around the bowl of yaqona and ask for questions and when I find out from one of them where they are by the questions they ask then I know that I must move them and I spend some time to say, “Okay thank you very much for what you have said, but that is not right. You as a Christian, you as a Catholic, you cannot stay there in that mindset, you have to move. Our teaching says this…and this is where you should be.”

Key to engaging in the talanoa process and being communicative is listening to what people have to say. If the Church is to be truly the “voice of the voiceless”, it has to listen very carefully to what is being whispered by those who are not used to being heard. According to Yabaki, this means the Church needs to spend more time to listen and listen beyond the boundaries of culture, listening instead to the demand of the gospel. It is from listening to the marginalised and the voiceless that Christ has commended to our care that the Church is prophetic and a shepherd to its flock.

It [the Church] needs to be out there in the frontier, making theology and struggling with questions….It does not even have to wait, until the answers to the questions it is struggling with are already packaged…[but speak] ….understanding that it may be imperfect but that the timing is right and that people want to hear what the prophet is saying to their situation. The Church has to do that work because it is supposed to be part of God’s creation, even if people don’t want to hear. The Communicative Church is a culture of how one proclaims the gospel.

Archbishop Bryce believes that the Church is already communicative but needs to open up in the area of dialogue. He cites the use of liturgy in a worship service as an example of the basis for the Communicative Church in which by taking part in the

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52 Mataca, Interview.
53 Yabaki, Interview.
liturgy the people engage and are not merely passive but use their ears, eyes, voice, and the whole of their body as an offering to God.

c. **Restoration of Communicative Relationships**

Casimira believes that there are enough issues of conversation and that the Fijian culture is conversational using words and symbols. To enter into conversation the parties concerned are either establishing or maintaining a relationship. Therefore while permission is asked of others before speaking, permission for self expression needs to be sought from oneself. With the request for permission and invitation to speak with another, to oneself or with God, the call to communication takes place as acknowledgement is made of the presence of the other who is different.

By providing spaces of dialogue and discussion, the News Media echoes the concept of the Communicative Church. The forum of Letters to the Editor in newspapers as well as radio and, more recently, television talkback programmes, offer a way to transform the culture of silence, characterised by the one directional model of communication. These spaces of dialogue in the News Media encourage the “voiceless” to be open and share honestly what they think, what they feel and question leadership if they feel that they are being misled. Just as God’s communication with humankind is a call to communion, so too, in its quest for truth the News Media can be in solidarity with the Church’s prophetic voice.

2. **Matanivanua: The Church as Prophetic Herald**

So how can the Church be prophetic in speaking truth in love to society in which it also lives? This entails listening to what God is saying to it through Scripture,

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54 Casimira, Interview.
tradition and directly through the Spirit. However, it also means listening to those to whom the Spirit is also speaking. In the Fijian context, the Church has replaced the position of the Bete, the traditional priest of the old religion. However, as the Communicative Church wishes to remain prophetic, speaking in truth (dina) with power (mana) and at the same time encourage dialogue and discussion (talanoa) to break the shackles of one-way communication. One way in which it can do this in the Fijian context is by taking up the role of Matanivanua, the traditional herald of Fijian culture.

a. The Concept of Matanivanua

The matanitu (confederacy or state) is ruled by a Tui (king). A Turaga (chief) rules a yavusa (clan). The matanivanua - herald or envoy and spokesperson of the turaga or of the tui (there are matanivanua of the matanitu and yavusa). The word matanivanua literally means 'eye or face of the land.' Matanivanua could also mean 'a representative' or an envoy from one tui or turaga to another. Large social units (matanitu and yavusa) normally have a matanivanua to act as a representative to transact customary and political business with the others and he is chosen from the matanivanua tribe.

The roles of the matanivanua are as follows:

1. To relay the command from a tui to another tui (from one confederacy/state to another confederacy/state) or from a turaga to another turaga (from one tribe to another tribe).

2. To safeguard the family of the chief when criticised by the vanua (people of the land).

3. To be a spokesperson of the chief to the people and of the people to the chief.

55In the Fijian language: mata –eye or face; ni- of or for; the vanua- land.
According to Tuwere, the *matanivanua* has a much broader, richer role than just a herald or spokesperson. The role of mediator that the *matanivanua* undertakes engenders relationship by relating people to the god, chief to the people and vice versa. “He speaks and listens, represents, reconciles, mends broken relationships, negotiates, introduces, announces and so on.”

*b. The Church as God’s Matanivanua*

The concept of the Church as God’s *matanivanua* has its roots in Dulles model of the Church as Herald. The mission of the Church in this model is therefore, proclamation; to proclaim that which it has heard, believed and been commissioned to proclaim. This type of ecclesiology is radically centred on Jesus Christ and on the Bible as the primary witness to Him. Therefore, this mission of proclamation of the Word of God is to the whole world. The Church, in this model, does not see itself as responsible for the failure of humankind to accept it as God’s Word; it is commissioned only to proclaim it with integrity and persistence. In this model the Church it is important that the Church does not “domesticate” the Bible and that there is a relative distance between the Bible and the Church. This will allow the Bible to testify against the Church. This is an important point to understand that the “message” and the “messenger” are separate unlike Christ who was both message and messenger. In this sense, the Church must be the place where the Word of God is truly heard. It must not imprison the Word but be a prisoner to it. It must point away from itself, like John the Baptist pointing to the Lamb of God. Finally, it must call humankind to Christ by openly acknowledging its own emptiness.


While trying to use the role of the *matanivanua* as a model for the Communicative Church as a prophetic herald, one has to take into account the important aspects governing its roles. This will bring into the surface the values, the meaning and the functions of this office, which can then be related to the prophetic office.

1. **Showing its lewa (authority), kaukauwa (strength), and veiwekani (kinship):**

   The authority of the *matanivanua* is a borrowed one. When he receives the command with the message from the *turaga* and relays them to the people, he uses the authority, that comes with the command.

   The prophetic office receives its command, authority, strength and kinship from God. In Deuteronomy God says, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (Deut 18:18).

   The introduction of most prophetic speech is “Thus saith the Lord” or “Hear the Word of the Lord”. Taking this into the context of the *matanivanua*, the prophet receives his authority, strength and relationship from the one who sends him, God.

2. **Tamata vakaivakarau (disciplinary):**

   He receives the *lewa* (command of authority) and *tukuna* (relays) them to the people. It is his responsibility to see that such *lewa* is adhered to. His duty is to see and encourage the people to do so. He should be a discipline man to check the carrying out of the *i tavi* (obligation) which are commanded by the *turaga* and to encourage the people to be disciplined also.

   The prophet’s role is not merely to speak the Word of God but to ensure that God’s will is obeyed. “And whoever will not give heed to My words which he shall speak in my name, I Myself will require it of him.” (Deut. 18:19) God in
commissioning Ezekiel calls him a “watchman”, and requires him to warn the wicked and to make them turn from their wickedness (Ez 3:16-21).

3. *Dautukutuku* (mediatorial):

The *matanivanua* serves as *dautukutuku* (to mediate) between the chief and the people and vice versa. He should be a man of *matata* (clarity), to be certain and clear of the *I tukutuku* (instructions) to be given to the people and in their fulfilment.

The prophet is called to speak God’s truth in love to God’s people. The fulfilment of God’s people lie in their return to him through righteousness and holiness as exemplified in the life of Jesus. The prophetic *Matanivanua* of the Communicative Church will also be responsible for ensuring the *talanoa* process takes place and that the Church listens with both ears before speaking. At the same time as God called prophets outside the established religious orders in the Old and New Testament, the Church needs to be able to recognise and respect the power and truths of what someone chosen to be God’s *matanivanua* may say to them.

3. **The Challenge to Christian Communicators**

Preaching and its conventional form, the sermon, form a necessary part of the Church’s communication. It is often thought that there is no space for dialogue. The message is given by God and is not open to discussion. The nature of preaching is, however, understood wrongly if lack of interest in the congregation is justified by the unquestionable nature of the gospel. God reveals his will in his Word and through people so that people might receive and understand it. The preacher acts communicatively when relating his or her message to the situation in which his or her
hearers find themselves. This is what the apostle Paul did: he wanted to be a Greek to the Greeks.

Jesus proclaimed the coming of God's Kingdom and entrusted us to proclaim the Good News to all people until the end of time. Hearing the Good News, living by it and witnessing to it, is the basic calling of all Christians. To enable them to carry out this task, they have been promised the power of the Holy Spirit. It is only the Spirit that can change the Babel of confusion into the Pentecost of genuine understanding. But the Spirit “blows where it pleases” (John 2:8). No one, neither church nor religious group, can claim to have power over it. The Good News addresses itself to the whole person and to all people. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom as well as for our daily food, for God's reign in the world-to-come and the here-and-now.58

For Christian communicators, the material and the spiritual are part of each other. Christ's own communication was an act of self-giving. He “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil 2:7). He ministered to all, but took up the cause of the materially poor, the mentally ill, the outcasts of society, the powerless and oppressed. In the same way, Christian communication should be an act of love which liberates all who take part in it. The gospel, being the Good News for the poor, needs to be constantly reinterpreted from the perspectives of the poor and oppressed.

In this way the church leadership is challenged not to align themselves with the power structures which keep the poor in a position of subservience. In this sense, the Good News for the poor symbolises true reconciliation by means of which the goodness of all people can be reaffirmed. By acknowledging Christ's dominion over all, the Christian communicator pronounces God's Kingdom rather than our separated churches.

58 Evangelical Lutheran Church Of Finland, The Communicative Church, 18.
The churches’ only reason for being is for the sake of the Kingdom. Because of this the Christian communicator must focus primarily on ecumenical communication so that Christians of different denominations can speak with one voice, thus bearing witness to the one body of Christ.

Christian communicators, as witnesses to the Kingdom, should awaken and reflect the shared witness of the Church. The lives of Christians, as well as the work of communicators, need to be liberated from the individualism which typifies some cultures and traditions. The early Christian community's comprehension of a witnessing and communicating church needs to be re-experienced. The church as a community of believers is God's chosen instrument for advocating the Kingdom. This is because the Church is meant to live out the central values of the Kingdom, among which are oneness, reconciliation, equality, justice, freedom, harmony, peace and love (shalom). Moreover, Christian communicators are mindful of and show respect for God's mysteries. God's ways can never be understood, let alone be explained. Likewise, the crown of God's creation, people, cannot be fully understood. Thus, Christian communicators, are always conscious of their shortcomings when speaking of God, and mindful of 'mystery' when telling the story of God's people.

The communication of Christians is, intended to glorify God. In that sense, all Christian communication is an act of worship, a praise of God through the shared word and action of a community living in the consciousness of God's presence. Christian communication is called to witness to God's transforming power in all spheres of human life. Paul describes himself and all servants of the Word, as “servants of your glory” (Eph 1:12) and thus “servants of your joy” (11 Cor. 1:24). The glory of God and the joy of the people should be the characteristic of all Christian communication.
Theological education institutions are encouraged to make communications a central subject of study and training. The main aim is to introduce students to the communicative culture, irrespective of whether they need communications skills in individual encounters, public speaking or performance or in media communications.

4. Communicating in the News Media

The imperative for it to communicate to society being established, the Church needs to find effective and appropriate means to do so. This means that rather than wait on the News Media to approach it for a comment on an event or issue, the Communicative Church needs to look for whatever opportunity presents itself to speak God’s truth in love.

a. Opinion Articles

On the page in the Fiji Times opposite that which contains the editorial and letters to the editor, one can often find a feature or opinion article. In terms of religious issues, a number of opinion articles by Dr. Robert Wolfgramm on the Christian state, Aisake Casimira on religion and politics and Archbishop Petero Mataca have been published in the Fiji Times. These articles range from half a page to full page and allow more in-depth analysis of issues than a letter to the editor would allow. Opinion writers also have more time to choose their thoughts and words, as well as those not intimately involved in the issue, to do basic research. Although dependent on the editor for publication, these opinion articles provide a forum to set the record straight or give a perspective different from reporters.

59 Robert Wolfgramm, “Unfair criticism” Fiji Times, (3 September, 2003), 7
60 Casimira, “Where is Christianity”, 7
b. Publications

The alternative to struggling to help the media get what is right is for churches to publish their own paper or magazine. This can be done individually or through the Fiji Council of Churches. It is an expensive option, given that one needs to be able to provide a basic news service to maintain journalistic credibility among the masses. This is an important point, as any such publications would need to target the public and not just members of the church or Christians in general. Fiji already has Christian radio stations and a television service. There have been forays into print media in the past but none managed to last. The Fiji Council of Churches often takes out newspaper supplements to have issues of concern and developments highlighted in the media.

E. Summary

The call of the prophets has and continues to be the call to righteousness and holiness, manifesting itself in justice and love. In His infinite wisdom God entrusts the prophetic task of speaking God’s truth to those who can best communicate and embody the message. He spoke through the prophets of eighth century (BCE) of Israel, the apostles and the early church and continues to speak to us today in the lives and words of those who search and speak His truth to power. The Church as a corporate entity and as the body of Christ also needs to speak the truth and to live the truth, especially at times of crisis, crying out against injustice and tyranny. Yet the truth to be spoken, on whatever issue, must be spoken in love and always calling humanity back to God. The Church needs to read the signs of the times to determine when to speak. At the same time, especially in pluralistic societies, the Church needs to recognise and support other voices that speak God’s truth. This includes those outside the Church as well as the News Media, which also needs to ensure that there are searches for the truth and that the truth is found before it speaks.
For the Church to be able to have credibility in a society that defines itself by how it communicates, it must practise true communication — listening as much as it does speaking. It must not only listen to the voice of God but to the voice of those that make up the Church. It must then communicate in a way that is true to the context that it is rooted in. In this regard the Church in Fiji can be seen as the Matanivanua, the spokesperson and envoy of God, deriving any authority from the command to speak and minister to God’s people and maintaining that authority only as long as it does so. At the same time, it must listen to the cries of the people. Christian communicators are challenged to speak and communicate both God’s truth and the good news in a manner that will not only be understood but also will be responded to.
CONCLUSION

The dialectic between being prophetic and being communicative provides the backdrop to this thesis. On the one hand, the prophetic call to righteousness and holiness comes from God alone and all who call for it are merely speaking God’s words. On the other, God’s self-communication demands a response in words and deeds. Ultimately, the goal of God’s revelation and the prophetic call is humankind’s communion with God. The incarnation of a living, breathing Word of God, in Jesus, calls the Church, as the body of Christ, to be the embodiment of communication.

To be truly prophetic and truly communicative entails listening to and speaking God’s truth in love. The Church, which sees itself as misunderstood and stereotyped, in order to be prophetic in modern-day Fiji Island society needs to reflect on communication of the prophetic voice from Christian tradition to the present time in order to find its voice. It also needs consider other prophetic voices from within and outside the churches, agreeing that the news media has a prophetic role to play in Fiji-Island society. In communicating the prophetic voice of the Church in Fiji, the Matanivanua model is useful in restoring relationships between the Church and the news media, and the Church and society.

The News Media for its part, as seekers of the truth, needs to speak the truth in love. The truth that they impart must do more than just inform society. It must transform society for the better. It, like the Church, needs to call society to righteousness, justice, kindness and mercy. Only then can it have any serious claim to being prophetic.

The Christian faith is a communicating faith. With the plethora of forms of communication available, the Church as an institution and as a community of faith must be able to use the media in a manner that glorifies God, proclaims the good news, and
leads to the manifestation of God’s Kingdom. The Church as a communicating agent must ensure that it is trained and equipped to handle this task. Communication must therefore be a core part of any theological training and the mainline Churches need to consider seriously its internal communications as well as how it communicates with its members and society in terms of the Mass Media and especially the News Media.

This all impacts the ecumenical movement in Fiji and the greater Pacific in that it provides for better inter-Church communication, cooperation in the pooling of media resources as well calling the churches to speak out with one voice. To facilitate this, it is recommended that communication or communication theology be incorporated into the syllabus of theological institutions. This can range from basic media and communication education to practical, ministry-based courses to more in-depth discussion on the theology of communication and the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in equipping ministers to be able to tackle issues such as globalisation on par with NGO’s and trans-national corporations. The Ecumenical Movement in the Pacific also must recognise the importance of clear communication to and between the churches of the Pacific and find ways and means to encourage dialogue and stimulate effective and relevant prophetic communication to the people of the Pacific.

In the final analysis, the Church must constantly communicate the gospel in not just in the way it speaks but the way it acts. This calls for the Church to live out the prophetic voice, personalising the scriptures and allowing itself to be wounded by the double-edged sword of the Word of God. Only then will it be able to walk in truth and speak with power.
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Hussain, B. “Abuse of house privilege,” in *The Fiji Times*. 2 September, 2002


**Interviews and Personal Communication**


Hannan, L. *Interview with author*. 17 March, 2005

Mataca, P. *Email to author*. 27 July, 2006


## APPENDIX I: A SAMPLE OF CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS ON THE INTERNET

### Anglican


Anglicans Online Resources: [http://www.anglican.org/online/](http://www.anglican.org/online/)

The Anglican Church of Canada: [http://www.anglican.ca/](http://www.anglican.ca/)

The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada: [http://www.zeuter.com](http://www.zeuter.com)

Church of The Province of Southern Africa (Anglican) Official Site: [http://www.aztec.co.za/cpsa](http://www.aztec.co.za/cpsa)

### Baptist


Det Norske Baptistsamfunn: [http://home.sol.no/baptist/](http://home.sol.no/baptist/)

The Primitive Baptist Web Station: [http://www.pb.org](http://www.pb.org)


### Catholic

The Vatican Official Site: [http://www.vatican.va/](http://www.vatican.va/)

Catholic Resources: [http://www.catholic.net/](http://www.catholic.net/)

Franciscan Resources: [http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/franciscan/](http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/franciscan/)

Catholic continued…

Rooms-Katholiek Kerkgenootschap: http://www.omreop.nl/rkk/
Old Catholic Church of America: http://www.olcatholic.org/
The Oriental Catholic Church: http://www.am-cath.org/occ-1.html
True Catholic: http://www.truecatholic.org
The Byzantine Catholic Homepage: http://www.epix.net/byzantin/byzan.html
Byzantine Catholic Church in America: http://www.byzcath.org/
Maronite Catholic Church of Australia: http://www.maronite.org.au

Lutheran

The Church of Norway Official Site (Den Norske Kirke): http://nettvik.no/kirken
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark: http://www.folkekirken.dk
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland: http://www.evl.fi/
The Church of Sweden: http://www.svkyrkan.se/
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Official Site: http://www.elca.org
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Official Site: http://info.wlu.ca/
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (Official): http://www.sem.elcic
The Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America: http://www.aflc.org
Evangelical Church in Germany: http://www.elba.org
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary: http://www.intehrern.alarmix.net
Asia Lutheran Resources: www.jlh.org/asia_lut.html
The Lutheran Church of Australia: http://www.lca.org.au

Methodist

United Methodist Church Official Site: http://www.umc.org
Free Methodist Church of North America: http://www.fcna.org
Evangelical Methodist Church: http://www.emchurch.org
Methodist continued…

Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church: http://cleaver.net/thelake/cme/index_2.html

The Free Methodist Church in Canada: http://www.fmc-canada.org

Methodist Church in Britain: http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/link/methodist/hpage/htm

# APPENDIX II: HEBREW WORDS TRANSLATED AS LOGOS IN THE LXX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Location in Old Testament Septuagint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>`āmar</td>
<td>saying</td>
<td>2 Kgs. 17:13 (Codex Vaticanus only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>`ēmer</td>
<td>word</td>
<td>Prov. 1:2, 16:24, 22:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>`imrāh</td>
<td>speech, word</td>
<td>Gen. 4:23; Ps. 119:154; Is. 28:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dābar (verb)</td>
<td>speak, ask, utter</td>
<td>2Sam. 20:18; Prov. 16:13; Mic. 7:3; Neh.6:12; Jer. 20:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dābār (noun)</td>
<td>word, act</td>
<td>Deut. 31:1; Jer. 22:1f; 2Kgs. 15:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dibra</td>
<td>because, on account of</td>
<td>Ecc. 8:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dabberet</td>
<td>direction</td>
<td>Deut. 33:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma`mar</td>
<td>decree</td>
<td>Est. 9:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>millā</td>
<td>word, speech, utterance</td>
<td>2Sam. 23:2; Job 19:2; Prov. 23:9 Dan. 2:9, 4:31, 4:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miswāwā</td>
<td>commandment</td>
<td>Jdgs. 2:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n bū́ā</td>
<td>prophecy</td>
<td>2 Chr. 9:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peh</td>
<td>mouth, command, word</td>
<td>1Sam. 15:24; 1Chr. 12:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pitgām</td>
<td>decree</td>
<td>Est. 1:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qōl</td>
<td>voice</td>
<td>Jer. 38:20, 45:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šāpā</td>
<td>speech, lips</td>
<td>Prov. 16:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šēbet</td>
<td>rod</td>
<td>Is. 11:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tbūnā</td>
<td>understanding, insight</td>
<td>Prov. 5:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōrā</td>
<td>commandment, law</td>
<td>Prov. 7:2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX III: EMPLOYMENT OF LOGOS IN VARIOUS NEW TESTAMENT EXPRESSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Location in New Testament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>logon tes basileias</td>
<td>Word of the kingdom</td>
<td>Mat. 13:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ton logon tou theou</td>
<td>The Word of God</td>
<td>Mat. 15:6; Lk. 5:1, 8:21, 11:28; Act.4:31, 6:2, 7, 8:14, 11:1, 12:24, 13:5,7,44,46, 17:13, 18:11, 19:20; Rom. 9:6; 1Cor. 14:36; 2Cor. 2:17, 4:2; Col. 1:25; 1Thes.2:13; 1Tim.2:9; Tit.2:5; Heb.4:12, 13:7; 1Pet. 1:23; 2Pet. 3:5; 1Jn.2:14; Rev.1:2,9, 6:9, 19:13, 20:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logon esaiou</td>
<td>The Word of Isaiah</td>
<td>Lk. 3:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tou logon tou kuriou</td>
<td>The Word of the Lord</td>
<td>Lk. 22:61; Act.8:25, 13:48-49, 15:35, 16:32; 1Thes.1:8, 4:15; 2Thes. 3:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to logo tes chariots autou</td>
<td>The Word of His grace</td>
<td>Act. 14:3, 20:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ho logos tou theou</td>
<td>The Word of promise</td>
<td>Rom. 9:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logos sophias</td>
<td>The Word of wisdom</td>
<td>1Cor. 12:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logos gnoseos</td>
<td>The Word of knowledge</td>
<td>1Cor. 12:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ton logon tes katallages</td>
<td>The Word of reconciliation</td>
<td>2Cor. 5:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logo alethias /ton logon tes alethias</td>
<td>The Word of truth</td>
<td>2Cor. 6:7; Jam.1:18; Eph. 1:13; 2Tim.2:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logon zoes /hou logou tes zoes</td>
<td>The Word of life</td>
<td>Phil. 2:16; 1 Jn. 1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ho logos tou christou</td>
<td>The Word of Christ</td>
<td>Col. 3:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logou dikaiosunes</td>
<td>The Word of righteousness</td>
<td>Heb. 5:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tou christou logon</td>
<td>The Word of Christ</td>
<td>Heb. 6:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ho logos tes horkomosias</td>
<td>The Word of the Oath</td>
<td>Heb. 7:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tou logou tes parakleseos</td>
<td>The Word of exhortation</td>
<td>Heb. 13:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ton prophetikon logon</td>
<td>The prophetic Word</td>
<td>2Pet. 1:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ton logon tes hupomones mou</td>
<td>The Word of my endurance</td>
<td>Rev. 3:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ton logon tes marturias auton</td>
<td>The Word of their testimony</td>
<td>Rev.12:11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>