

Open Forum on “The New Media and the Youth”
 Institute of Social Communication (ISC)
 Tangaza College
 Nairobi, Kenya
 10 April, 2010

Presentation/Demonstration on “The New Media: New Mode of Youth Evangelization”

Facilitated by Rev. Joseph G. Healey, M.M.

1. Introduction: For the next hour I invite you to use your creativity and imagination into enter into the world of the New Media. To think outside the box. “To see beyond your nose” as the expression goes of youth today. I am a *kijana wa zamani* and I am joined by five youth: two students in the third year of the Institute of Social Communication, one seminarian studying philosophy at the Apostles of Jesus, Langata, one student in his last year of Kenyatta University and one recent graduate of Kenyatta University. We will demonstrate live and online various examples of the New Media.

2. Question: What are the four largest countries/nations in the world by population?

Answer:

1. China
2. India
3. Facebook (over 400 million)
4. USA (308 million)

3. Facebook Nation. Facebook Generation.

Details for the month of February, 2010:

Daily Unique Visitors ----- 4,260,000
 Month Unique Visitors ----- 127,851,073

Daily Total Visitors ----- 93,357,577
 Month Total Visitors ----- 2,800,727,299

Information gathered from <http://siteanalytics.compete.com/facebook.com>

4. What are the New Media?

New media is a term meant to encompass the emergence of [digital](#), [computerized](#), or [networked information](#) and [communication](#) technologies in the later part of the 20th century. Most technologies described as "**new media**" are digital, often having characteristics of being [manipulated](#), networkable, [dense](#), [compressible](#), interactive and [impartial](#).^[1] Some examples

may be the [Internet](#), websites, computer multimedia, [computer games](#), CD-ROMS, and DVDs. Focus on social networking websites.

New media is not television programs, feature films, [magazines](#), [books](#), or paper-based publications – that go by the names mass media and mainstream media.

[Interactivity](#) has become a key term for number of **new media** use options evolving from the rapid dissemination of [Internet](#) access point, the [digitalization](#) of the media, and [media convergence](#).

Increasing involvement in online social networking and information websites. Focus on participation and interaction. The internet and mobile technologies are at the center of the story of how people's relationship to news is changing. In today's new multi-platform media environment, news is becoming portable, personalized, and participatory. See Pope Benedict XVI's "Message for 44th World Communications Day" on 16 May, 2010 on *The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word*. The challenge is to use the New Media not superficially as casual online social networking, but genuinely at the service of the Word of God and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. What are the New Media are not?

6. Meaning of "Youth Evangelization:"

- a. How we use the New Media to evangelize youth, to communicate with youth, to reach youth. Youth as objects, receivers. **The wrong topic.**
- b. How youth themselves use the New Media to evangelize, how youth evangelize through the New Media. Youth as subjects, senders, agents. **The right topic.**

7. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

POLL

Search Feature (18 results found for "Youth" and 5 results found for "Young People")

Student articles posted on the "Africa" Page. See examples from Kenya Youth SCCs including using Sheng.

8. "Small Christian Communities" Facebook Page (260 Fans after one month.

Research shows that 79% are in the 18-34 year old age bracket)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Nairobi-Kenya/Small-Christian-Communities/279921983315>

Presented by John Siyumbu

Facebook Page: online advertizing, animation, announcement, awareness-building, campaigning, education, evangelization, information, marketing and promotion. Exchange of comments is participatory and interactive. A Facebook Page has a section for “Events.”

Facebook Group: online social networking, social gathering, social communicating, social communities, sharing, bringing people together around a particular topic, idea – like an online discussion group. Exchange of comments is participatory and interactive. A Facebook Group has a section for “Events.”

Some messages:

“Jumuiya ndogo ndogo ya mtandao.”

“Promote this spirit of *mwaki* (Kikuyu for “SCC”) through the media.”

“Breaking new ground with ‘Virtual SCCs.’”

“Today’s challenge: How do we use the NEW MEDIA for evangelization? especially in Small Christian Communities?”

Demonstration of how to join by clicking on: **Become a Fan.**

9. “Evangelizers of the Word” Facebook Group

http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=app_2373072738&gid=328247078038#!/group.php?v=wall&gid=328247078038

Presented by Robert Chris Ndung’u

10. Christ the Teacher Parish (Catholic Chaplaincy Center) Kenyatta University Website

Presented by Peter Kyalo King’oo

11. You Tube especially Christian music videos and information/awareness-building videos on ecology/environment.

a. Christian Reggae Music. Ruffton, a Kenya Gospel singer.

b. “Earth Song” by Michael Jackson.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYHguBEXkac> A well-done video having to do with earth's destruction and rebirth. Issues a plea to God about problems ranging from war to endangered animals.

Presented by Oguba Everlyne Nekesa, SND

12. Uses of Cell phone/Mobile Phone

a. Gospel ringtones on a cell phone.

b. We all know how much young people love text messaging. Members of SCCs in Kenya can get the Daily Bible readings on their cell phones/mobile phones. You simply SMS the word "READING" to 3141. You get the Saint of the Day and the Daily Old Testament, New Testament and Gospel texts in English. For Swahili tuma neno “SOMO” kwa njia ya

- SMS kwa nambari 3141. This is especially helpful for SCC members who want to prepare the gospel of the following Sunday in advance.
- c. Cell phones that are internet-enabled to get Bible texts like the Gospel of the following Sunday.

Presented by Selene Patricia Mwithi

13. African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website (for Sheng Sayings and African Stories Database)

<http://www.afriprov.org>

14. African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Facebook Page (over 4,000 Fans)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/African-Proverbs-Sayings-and-Stories/134538163421>

15. Chapter 26 (pages 177-187) on "Promoting SCCs via the Internet" by Joseph Healey in Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton, editors. *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*. Orbis Books, 2005 and Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

Internet Resources on The New Media: New Mode of Youth Evangelization

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

“Small Christian Communities” Facebook Page

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Nairobi-Kenya/Small-Christian-Communities/279921983315>

“Evangelizers of the Word” Facebook Group

http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=app_2373072738&gid=328247078038#!/group.php?v=wall&gid=328247078038

Christ the Teacher Parish (Catholic Chaplaincy Center), Kenyatta University Website

<http://www.kucatholic.or.ke>

You Tube

<http://www.youtube.com>

Options on cell phones/mobile phones:

Daily Bible readings. You simply SMS the word "READING" to 3141. You get the Saint of the Day and the Daily Old Testament, New Testament and Gospel texts in English. For Swahili tuma neno “SOMO” kwa njia ya SMS kwa nambari 3141.

African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website (for Sheng Sayings and African Stories Database)

<http://www.afriprov.org>

African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Facebook Page (over 3,900 Fans)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/African-Proverbs-Sayings-and-Stories/134538163421>

Chapter 26 (pages 177-187) on "Promoting SCCs via the Internet" by Joseph Healey in Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton, editors. *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*. Orbis Books, 2005 and Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word. Pope's Message for 44th World Communications Day on 16 May, 2010.

http://pope2you.net/download/44_GMCS_Eng.pdf

The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word

Pope's Message for 44th World Communications Day on 16 May, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The theme of this year's World Communications Day - The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a **Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word** - is meant to coincide with the Church's celebration of the Year for Priests. It focuses attention on the important and sensitive pastoral area of **digital communications**, in which priests can discover new possibilities for carrying out their ministry to and for the Word of God. Church communities have always used the modern media for fostering communication, engagement with society, and, increasingly, for encouraging dialogue at a wider level. Yet the recent, explosive growth and greater social impact of these media make them all the more important for a fruitful priestly ministry.

All priests have as their primary duty the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, and the communication of his saving grace in the sacraments. Gathered and called by the Word, the Church is the sign and instrument of the communion that God creates with all people, and every priest is called to build up this communion, in Christ and with Christ. Such is the lofty dignity and beauty of the mission of the priest, which responds in a special way to the challenge raised by the Apostle Paul: "The Scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame ... everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10:11, 13-15).

Responding adequately to this challenge amid today's cultural shifts, to which young people are especially sensitive, necessarily involves using **new communications technologies**. The world of **digital communication**, with its almost limitless expressive capacity, makes us appreciate all the more Saint Paul's exclamation: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16) The increased availability of the new technologies demands greater responsibility on the part of those called to proclaim the Word, but it also requires them to become more focused, efficient and compelling in their efforts. Priests stand at the threshold of a new era: as new technologies create deeper forms of relationship across greater distances, they are called to respond pastorally by putting the media ever more effectively at the service of the Word.

The spread of multimedia communications and its rich "menu of options" might make us think it sufficient simply to be present on the Web, or to see it only as a space to be filled. Yet priests can rightly be expected to be present in the world of digital communications as faithful witnesses to the Gospel, exercising their proper role as leaders of communities which increasingly express themselves with the different "voices" provided by the digital marketplace. Priests are thus challenged to proclaim the Gospel by employing the latest generation of audiovisual resources (images, videos, animated features, blogs, websites) which, alongside traditional means, can open up broad new vistas for dialogue, evangelization and catechesis.

Using **new communication technologies**, priests can introduce people to the life of the Church and help our contemporaries to discover the face of Christ. They will best achieve this aim if they learn, from the time of their formation, how to use these technologies in a competent and appropriate way, shaped by sound theological insights and reflecting a strong priestly spirituality grounded in constant dialogue with the Lord. Yet priests present in the world of digital communications should be less notable for their media savvy than for their priestly heart, their closeness to Christ. This will not only enliven their pastoral outreach, but also will give a "soul" to the fabric of communications that makes up the "Web".

God's loving care for all people in Christ must be expressed in the **digital world** not simply as an artifact from the past, or a learned theory, but as something concrete, present and engaging. Our pastoral presence in that world must thus serve to show our contemporaries, especially the many people in our day who experience uncertainty and confusion, "that God is near; that in Christ we all belong to one another" (Benedict XVI, Address to the Roman Curia, 21 December 2009).

Who better than a priest, as a man of God, can develop and put into practice, by his competence in **current digital technology**, a pastoral outreach capable of making God concretely present in today's world and presenting the religious wisdom of the past as a treasure which can inspire our efforts to live in the present with dignity while building a better future?

Consecrated men and women working in the media have a special responsibility for opening the door to new forms of encounter, maintaining the quality of human interaction, and showing concern for individuals and their genuine spiritual needs. They can thus help the men and women of our digital age to sense the Lord's presence, to grow in expectation and hope, and to draw near to the Word of God which offers salvation and fosters an integral human development. In this way the Word can traverse the many crossroads created by the intersection of all the different "highways" that form "**cyberspace**", and show that God has his rightful place in every age, including our own. Thanks to the new communications media, the Lord can walk the streets of our cities and, stopping before the threshold of our homes and our hearts, say once more: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20).

In my Message last year, I encouraged leaders in the world of communications to promote a culture of respect for the dignity and value of the human person. This is one of the ways in which the Church is called to exercise a "diaconia of culture" on today's "**digital continent**". With the Gospels in our hands and in our hearts, we must reaffirm the need to continue preparing ways that lead to the Word of God, while being at the same time constantly attentive to those who continue to seek; indeed, we should encourage their seeking as a first step of evangelization.

A pastoral presence in the **world of digital communications**, precisely because it brings us into contact with the followers of other religions, non-believers and people of every culture, requires sensitivity to those who do not believe, the disheartened and those who have a deep, unarticulated desire for enduring truth and the absolute. Just as the prophet Isaiah envisioned a house of prayer for all peoples (cf. Is 56:7), can we not see the web as also offering a space - like the "Court of the Gentiles" of the Temple of Jerusalem - for those who have not yet come to know God?

The development of the new technologies and the **larger digital world** represents a great resource for humanity as a whole and for every individual, and it can act as a stimulus to encounter and dialogue. But this development likewise represents a great opportunity for believers. No door can or should be closed to those who, in the name of the risen Christ, are committed to drawing near to others. To priests in particular the new media offer ever new and far-reaching pastoral possibilities, encouraging them to embody the universality of the Church's mission, to build a vast and real fellowship, and to testify in today's world to the new life which comes from hearing the Gospel of Jesus, the eternal Son who came among us for our salvation. At the same time, priests must always bear in mind that the ultimate fruitfulness of their ministry comes from Christ himself, encountered and listened to in prayer; proclaimed in preaching and lived witness; and known, loved and celebrated in the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation.

To my dear brother priests, then, I renew the invitation to make astute use of the unique possibilities offered by modern communications. May the Lord make all of you enthusiastic heralds of the Gospel in the **new "agorà"** which the **current media** are opening up.

With this confidence, I invoke upon you the protection of the Mother of God and of the Holy Curè of Ars and, with affection, I impart to each of you my Apostolic Blessing.
From the Vatican, 24 January 2010, Feast of Saint Francis de Sales.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

NOTE: Special words and themes are in **bold**.

Rev. Joseph G. Healey, M.M.
Maryknoll Society
P.O. Box 43058
00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel. 020-4442864
JGHealey@aol.com

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