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**Audience Perception and Use of the New Media in Christian Pastoral
Communication in Southern Nigeria**

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Abstract

This study; examined the use of the new media in Christian pastoral communication. The explanatory mixed method formed the design of the study, while the population was on adults between 18 years and above, from the southern part of Nigeria. Using Australian calculator, a sample size of 453 respondents was arrived at Multistage; sampling technique was used to select respondents from the three existing geopolitical zones in the south. The study used two instruments namely: questionnaire and interview. It was revealed that, to a large extent, 68.9% of the sampled population uses the new media in assessing Christian pastoral messages.

Key words: New media, Christian pastoral communication.

Introduction

In recent times, following the advent of new media of communication, people, organizations and churches had tended to add to their means of reaching the general public and foster religious belief by focusing attention on the new media. The new media, therefore, serve, in most cases, as avenues through which Christian pastoral communication activities are realized. Most churches, including the Vatican, have websites and blogs that communicate Christian pastoral messages for the ease of access of the people.

This act of pastoral communication using the new media has raised questions in some quarters. For instance, Cheong (2010, p.1) noted that religious use associated with new media problematizes established faith rituals, and religious community building in both its conception and operationalization. Changes in the Church can also be conceived as intertwined with a range of other forms of social and political developments, such that new media acts as an agent and practice to challenge and transform the influence and authority of the Church". This kind of thinking might hinder exposure to the use of new media for pastoral communication, because of the perceived negative effect of these media to the Church.

However, there are scholars who think that the new media should be used for pastoral communication. One of these scholars is Nigli (2011, para. 1-2), who noted that "Communication using new media- internet, blogging, social networks — is integral to pastoral mission. Digital communication and social networking dominate youth activities today, making it imperative that future pastors be tech-savvy and use multi-media for effective evangelization. New media can help pastors communicate, especially to isolated communities — the aim being to link up all committed people creating a network for communication".

The question of whether to use or not to use the new media for pastoral communication is a serious issue because of the unique features of the new media. The interactive feature of the new media, for instance, has made it easier for communicators to receive instant feedback to messages communicated and questions asked. According to

Diri (2009, p. 177), the new media are "those methods and social practices of communication, representation and expression that have developed using digital, multimedia, networked computer and the ways that this machine is held transformed work in other media, like books, movies, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, telephone, etc".

Considering the arguments above, this study, therefore, sought to evaluate the use of the new media in the spread, of the gospel, what is otherwise known as Christian pastoral communication, with the view to examine how the Nigerian populace avail themselves of the benefit accruing from this unique platform of communication

Statement of the Problem

The issue of the use of the new media in Christian pastoral communication has always posed some challenges to' the Church. Some people are of the view that the new media should not be used for Christian pastoral purposes considering the challenges therein. For instance, faith based organizations (FBOs) are confronted with,-challenged and pressure relating to the adoption of new media technologies (Cukier & Middjeton, 2003; Cheong, Poon, Huang & Casas, 2009). More so the Church has generally shown lack of interest in the use of new information and communication technologies, an attitude which date back to the advent of cinema, which the Church saw as having the capability of corrupting the faithful (Ihejirika, 2008).

On the other hand, there are some people who think the new media is the right avenue for Christian pastoral communication. They opined that the new media hold great hope for the Church in connecting with many Christians across the world; and that it would serve as veritable opportunity for the Church to connect with the youths who are totally on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Skype and the host of other social media (Gray & Gautier, 2012; Nigli, 2012).

This discrepancy in views has in one way or another affected the way the new media have been used for Christian pastoral communication. While some might tilt to the use of the new media in Christian pastoral communication due to their perception of the

benefits therein, others might want to stay away from the growing influence of the new media or take their time to review the direction the new technology is tilting before accepting it as a media for Christian pastoral purposes. This difference in view is strongly related to the tenets of technological determinism theory which holds that the invention of a new technology can go a long way to influence social cum cultural order in the society, thereby subjecting this technology to different social cum cultural interpretations.

Literature Review

New Media Defined

According to Diri (2009, p. 177), the new media are "those methods and social practices of communication, representation and expression that have developed using digital, multimedia, networked computer and the way's that this machine is held transformed work in other media, like books, movies, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, telephone etc".

To Mcquail (2010, p. 136), the new media are "desperate sets of communication technologies that share certain features, apart from being new, made possible by digitalization and being widely available for personal use as communication devices". Although, Mcquail noted that it is not easy to define the term new media, but that whenever the explanation of new media is done, it would be imperative to look at those aspects that have to do with mass media as against the private communication that the internet provides. Mcquail noted that "attention should be paid mainly on the collective ensemble of activities that fall under the heading 'Internet', especially on the more public uses, including online news, advertising, broadcasting applications (including downloading of music, etc.), forum and discussion activities, the World Wide Web (WWW), information searches and certain community-forming potentials. We are less concerned with private e-mail, game-playing and many other more or less private services provided by way of the Internet" (Mcquail, 2010, p. 136).

In trying to bring to limelight the exact thing that is new about the new media, Mcquail identified two major concepts which are digitalization and convergence. He observed that digitalization is the process by which all texts (symbolic meaning in all encoded and recorded form) can be reduced to binary code and can share the same process of production, distribution and storage, while convergence is the conglomeration of all existing media forms in terms of their organisation, distribution, reception and regulation. The 'new electronic media' can be viewed initially as an addition to the existing spectrum rather than as a replacement. Finally, Mcquail noted that digitalization and convergence might have much more revolutionary consequences (Mcquail, 2010, p. 138).

New Media and Pastoral Communication

Issues relating to new media and Christian pastoral communication have raised concerns in different parts of the world among scholars. Different interest have been pursued, however, on how the new media can benefit Christian believers or how it is been used by Christians. To this end, different scholars have written several studies on the link between the new media and Christian pastoral communication. For instance, in a study conducted by Jim Rice in 2011 titled "New Media Project at Unitin Theological Seminary", it was revealed that the social; media have become an integral part of Quest Church, for both the church leaders and the congregants. The study noted that the' leaders of the church try to carry everyone along in the Church development; adding that many of those in church leadership, including the founding pastor - are proficient users of digital communication, the church as a body tends to be on the innovative end of the new media spectrum (Rice, 201 1).

The researcher noted that the church doesn't use new media just because everyone uses it in their personal lives. Rather, members of the church use it to communicate and connect with other members in helpful, efficient, and natural ways. Leaders and congregants experience the use of new media as beneficial to building and nurturing their community of faith, and so they use it. They noted that members should use the new

media wisely and not draw cold feet about it. The study noted that those who question the use of the new media are like those who ask a driver why she/he uses the roads; knowing full well that the road is the way to get to a given destination, which in this case, the destination is about getting closer to God and growing stronger in discipleship - not about being "better" at social media (Rice, 2011).

In a similar study conducted on "New Agenda Model of Communication in Work Communities" by Elisa Juholin in 2007, it was discovered that respondents concentrated mainly on mediated means of communication, such as intranet, newsletters, magazines and even the new media. The role of the new media was said to be very important in corporate communication; especially in this age of information society (Tuholin, 2007).

Furthermore, in 2009, a study titled "Weaving webs of faith: Examining Internet Use and Religious Communication among Chinese Protestant Transmigrants" was carried out by Pauline Hope Cheong and Jessie P.H. Poon. The study, which examined the relationship between new media use and international communication that addresses religiosity by transmigrants that are marginalized in dominant societal structures, observed that new media 'use' is broadened by users' appreciation of the media as a veritable form of communication. It noted that Chinese transmigrants not only re-interpreted the spiritual need of the Internet but engaged in innovative strategies that involve the intertwining of offline and online communicative modes. (Cheong and Poon, 2009, p.2).

The researchers observed that "interviews revealed that the Internet carries various affirmative and liberatory meanings for Chinese migrants. They have a largely positive approach to the Internet and use it for various religiously-related purposes. Respondents described how the Internet was appropriated for transnational communication as web-enabled applications were reinterpreted and adapted to meet faith goals within the social milieu undergirding their local religious and transnational relationships" (Cheong and Poon, 2009, p. 14).

Waliter C. Ihejirika in 2008, also conducted a study titled "In-line Religion": Innovative Pastoral Applications of the New Information and Communication

Technologies (KfICTS) By the Catholic Church in Nigeria"; which revealed that religion and the media seem to be ever more connected as society move further into the twenty-first century, adding that "ICT has led to the emergence of new forms of mass media culture different from the old media" (Ihejirika, 2008, p. 79). The study concluded that "Pentecostal churches, unlike the Catholic Church, are still ready to invest huge sums of money in setting up these new media technologies, Pentecostal websites are richer and more elegantly built than Catholic websites which just present the essential" (Ihejirika, 2008: 96).

In 2009, a study entitled "The Internet Highway and Religious Communities: Mapping and Contesting Spaces in Religion-Online" was conducted by Pauline Hope Cheong, Jessie P.H. Poon, Shirlena Huang and Irene Casas. The study examined 'religion-online' with a multi-level study of the online representation and (re)-presentation of Protestant Christian organizations in Singapore, which have one of the highest Internet penetration rates in the world and also believers affiliated with all the major world religions.

Cheong, Poon, Huang and Casas (2009: 4) averred that "in many faith traditions, place holds both functional and theological significance, and neighborhood worship houses are associated with sacred spaces. Historically, an important mission of world religions has been to organize and extend their ministries geographically. More recently, however, the increasing mediation of some religious practices and experiences online not only challenge the assumptions of access, spatial reach and responsibilities of religious organizations, but they also raise new questions regarding what membership and community mean in neighborhood houses of worship".

Theoretical framework

This theory was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1962 and it helped to explain how innovation in modern technology helps to engineer some forms of change in society or in the ordering of things.

Baran and Davis (2006: 302) averred that "McLuhan's theory is actually a collection of lot's of intriguing ideas bound together by some common assumptions. The most central of these assumptions is that changes in communication technology inevitably produce changes in both cultural and social order... McLuhan seemed ready to accept whatever Changes were dictated by and inherent Jin communications technology... Technology inevitably causes specific changes in how people think, in how society is structured, and in the forms of culture that are created".

McQuail (2010: 103) itemized the basic assumption of this theory, when he opined that the theory fathoms:

1. Communication technology is fundamental to society. ;
2. Each technology has a bias to particular communication forms, contents and uses.
3. The sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences the direction and pace¹ of social change.
4. Communication revolutions lead to social revolutions.

The basic tenets of this theory is that the invention of new technology can alter the way society responds to events or; what they use to do in an old way. This theory is relevant to this study because it provides alternative approach for pastoral communicators to use modern technology (Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and 2go etc) to reach their target audience. This simply means that they would not have to use the traditional mass media only but adapt to new form of communication using the modern day technology, which in this case is the Internet.

Methodology

Given the nature of this study, the explanatory mixed method design was adopted. According to Creswel) (2002: 566), the explanatory mixed method design "consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and result provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection is needed to refine, extend or

explain the general picture". In gathering quantitative data which is the first approach in explanatory mixed method, the opinion of the general public, though survey design will be collected and analyzed. As for the qualitative method of data approach, some selected experts and clergy people were interviewed orally.

The population of this study focused on adults between 18 years and above, from the southern part of Nigeria. The choice of southern Nigeria for this study is informed by - the fact that its inhabitants are predominantly Christians. The population figure of southerners within the ages of 18 years and above, as provided by the National Population Commission, as at 2011 was estimated to be 51, 769 000 people. To determine the sample size of this study, therefore, the Australian Calculator was used. The calculator as provided by National Statistical Service (NSS, 2012) provides a simplified formula for calculating sample sizes. The sample size for this study then gave 453 respondents.

The sampling procedure that was used in this study is the clustering multi-stage sampling technique, which Osuala (2005: 134) averred that "it is a design where more than one stage of selection is used... Clusters are often, geographical areas such as local government wards or institutions, such as schools, hospitals and employee... A three-stage sample has three separate stages of selection, for example, selection from constituencies, then wards, and finally adults within selected wards." In line with this therefore, the stages of sampling technique are presented below:

Stage one: The southern part of Nigeria has already been sub-divided into the three existing geopolitical zones of the country (South-east, South-west and South-south geopolitical zones). From each of the political zones, two states were selected to represent the zones. In all, this gave a total of 6 states. The choice of these states was as a result of their strategic positions in the zones, their commercial inclinations, media concentration and new media presence.

Stage two: In these states, in order to further manage the distribution of questionnaire, the state capitals were purposefully selected because it is an environment with high media presence, high socio-religious activities, and ease of accessibility of the

new media. In the state capitals, there are various wards that have been earmarked for political reasons; these wards guided the distribution of the research instrument (questionnaire). The wards that make-up the state capitals were collected from the Independent National Electoral Commission

Stage three: Considering the fact that there are six state capitals that make-up the study area, the sample size was divided by six in order to know how many questionnaires that will be apportioned to the various state capitals ($453/6 = 75.5$). This means that approximately, 76 copies of the questionnaire were apportioned to each of the selected states. The study conducted by Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) in 2010 indicated that the study of 10 households in each ward is appropriate for a study of this nature therefore, 10 copies of the questionnaire were distributed in some selected wards in the state Capitals. To arrive at the selected wards, all the wards that make-up the state capitals were numbered and kept in a container from where a random selection of 8 wards were selected ($76/10 = 7.6$; approximately 8 wards). Ten (10) copies of the questionnaire were distributed in seven of the selected wards, while six (6) copies of the questionnaire were distributed in the remaining one (1) ward that made the number of wards eight (8) per state capital. This one ward that would be given 6 copies of the questionnaire was based on the size of the wards as observed by the researcher based on the sizes of the 8 selected wards, (see appendix III for selected wards). The table below gives a picture of how the sampling was done.

Considering the fact that this study made use of explanatory research design that requires the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, the approaches above are meant to collect the quantitative data using questionnaire. However, to collect the qualitative data for the study, the study made provision for the interview of prominent clergymen; who make use of the new media in pastoral communication. These people were purposively selected for; the purpose of interview. These clergymen include: Christ Embassy (Pastor Chris Oriyakilome), Winners Chapel (Bishop David Oyedepo), Synagogue Church; of all Nations (Pastor T. B. Joshua), Rev. Fr E. Ede (Elele Ministry), Pastor Enoch Adeboye (Redeemed Christian Church of God) and Pastor David Ogbuelli

(Dominion City). Because of the difficulty in accessing these people, the researcher was able to interview their media officers based on the permission of the aforementioned Church leaders. These people were interviewed in line with how they make use of the new media for pastoral purposes.

This study used two instruments namely: questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire instrument had two sections: the demographic and psychographic sections. The demographic section was used to elicit information about the bio-data of the respondents while the psychographic section focused on the research questions. The questionnaire contains 18 questions constructed in simple sentences to avoid ambiguity. Close and open-ended questions were also used in order to give the respondents enough room to field hi responses to the questions, The interview, on the other hand, was framed into a 10 item interview guide.

Face validity technique was used to validate the research instruments. The instruments were given to the project supervisor and the doctoral thesis readers in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka for validity purposes. First it was tested if the questions in the questionnaire were related to the topic under consideration and whether they actually provided answers to the questions raised in the study. It was also tested for clarity and ambiguity. Their corrections were accepted and modifications made to the instruments.

In checking for the reliability of the instrument, a pre-test was conducted in one of the states to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument (questionnaire). A total of 20 respondents were drawn from the selected enumerated areas for this purpose. The reason was to determine whether the responses would be in line with the required result expected from the instrument. The pilot study was done after the questionnaire had been validated by the experts earlier mentioned.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The analysis as presented in this section is in two ways the quantitative and qualitative analysis. As stated earlier in this work, the qualitative analyses only provide more

explanation and interpretation for the understanding of the quantitative data. In analysing the quantitative aspect of the study, for which 453 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, it was observed that only 424 copies of the questionnaire returned usable. This means that 93.6% ($424/453 * 100/1$) of the copies of the questionnaire returned and were analysed, while 6.4% ($29/453 * 100/1$) of the copies of the questionnaire were lost in the field. Hence, the analyses of data were based on the returned and usable 424 (93.6%) copies of the questionnaire.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis in the quantitative data was found to have more female respondents than male in the number of respondents sampled. It means that there were more female respondents than male in the analyzed data. It was also found that most of the respondents were youths because they fell within the age bracket of 18-25. This is not to say that those outside this frame (18-25) are not important in the targeting for audience reach or segmentation; rather it shows that the youths are more likely to be more in tune with the new media than any other age grade. As for the academic qualification of respondents, it was revealed that out of the 424 respondents who fielded responses to the questionnaire, majority of them were B.Sc holders. Invariably, there were more graduates among those sampled meaning that the opinion of majority of the people will not be below expectation i.e. it would be a little bit elevated. The study also found that most of the respondents were self-employed and civil servants, meaning that they work for themselves and for the government. However there were more self-employed persons among those that fielded responses to the questionnaire.

The extent to which Nigerians use the new media for their pastoral needs

In analyzing this section, it was revealed that to a large extent, 68.9% of the sampled population use the internet in checking for pastoral messages. This means that the use of the Internet in accessing Christian pastoral communication is on the increase, considering the high awareness level among the people on the potentials of the new

media. This finding indicated that majority of southern Nigerian Christians use the new media for their pastoral needs.

The interview conducted, on the other hand, revealed that most southern Nigerians are making use of the new media for their pastoral needs. They noted that in the past, one would need to visit members in their homes and communicate whatever message that is needed. But that the situation is different now with the presence of the new media of communication. They observed that the new media had made it easier to communicate to large number of people; adding that pastors do send bulk SMS to members via the Internet on Sundays.

One of the respondents noted that there are "times we go out to minister the gospel to people, by the time we come back, we may not be able to reach them again except we use a particular platform because some of them would have gone back to their diverse places or travelled out of town. There is no ways you can reach them again except through a particular medium and that's where New Media comes in. So, it is really quite effective with regards to Church and I know that Nigerians appreciate the medium and are using it for their pastoral needs".

The respondents also noted that "during communion service for instance, Christian messages are usually streamed so that people can connect on whatever platform they are to such website when they are given the access. There are some of them that you need an access to log; in to be able to participate. But there are some that are open that anybody can just seat down in the house and connect, for instance Sour 31st night service is open to the whole world; you can just connect, that was not possible in the past. We have other social networks, like the Yookos. [Www.yookos.com](http://www.yookos.com) which is a social networking site- that enables people to connect with themselves. Almost like what Facebook does but somehow the platform is different because it is seen more as an organised place. On Facebook for instance, anybody comes there and puts anything he wants to do but if you go to Yookos is more organized. On that platform, you can relate with people, Pastors even use that platform to share whatever they are doing in their Churches, share their blogs you cart go there read and paste comments".

Presently (Christ Embassy) uses that platform to communicate with the whole world and pray at a particular time on certain days. That is a way that you can use the platform to influence lives. The church cannot be around the whole world at the same time except by the new media. "If he want for instance to be on TV, imagine how we will be walking through several T.V. stations, the logistics alone wouldn't have been there. But now through one platform via the internet, you can communicate everybody. People just sit down and they receive posts on their handsets and can just send trivet to their members, because it is cost effective. Imagine if you are to send SMS to millions of people around the world how much could it cost but now just because you have access to a data plan which you paid for, that covers it all. So whatever you're sending for instance, twitter, you are; not paying any additional fee for it, whatever you are posting on Yookos, there is no additional fee for it as you manage your internet access, "so, I think it is quite very effective and useful" one of the respondents remarked.;

This finding is totally in conformity with the study conducted by Jim Rice in 2011 titled "New Media Project) at Union Theological Seminary", which revealed that "Social media are an organic part of the life of Quest Church, for both leaders and congregants. Forms of media that are part of the daily lives of members are incorporated naturally by the church-as-community. Social media use isn't forced; leaders are intentional about not trying to be "cutting edge" or necessarily on top of the latest technological development. But since many in the church—in particular some of those in church leadership, including the founding pastors—are proficient users of .digital communication, the church as a body tends to be on the innovative end of the new media spectrum" (Rice, 2011: 5). In a similar vein, "the church doesn't use new media just because everyone uses it in their personal lives. Rather, as members of the church seek to communicate and connect with one another, social media are used exactly because they meet the need in helpful, efficient, and natural ways. Leaders and congregants experience the use of new media as beneficial to building and nurturing their community of faith, and so they use it" (Rice, 2011:5).

It is important to note that in 2009, Pauline Hope Cheong, Jessie P.H. Poon, Shirlena Huang and Irene Casas conducted a study entitled "The Internet Highway and Religious Communities: Mapping and Contesting Spaces in Religion-Online", which examined 'religion-online' with a multi-level study of the online representation and (re)-presentation of Protestant Christian organizations in Singapore, which have one of the highest Internet penetration rates in the world and also believers affiliated with all the major world religions. The study revealed that "churches use the multimodality of the Internet to assemble multiple forms of visible data and maps to extend geographic sensibilities of sacred space and create new social practices of communication".

The problems hindering the use of the new media in communicating Christian pastoral messages

The analysis conducted in this respect revealed that majority of the respondents, i.e. (70%) and (79.5 %) indicated, to a large extent, that illiteracy and high cost of accessing the internet hinder the successful use of the new media in pastoral communication respectively. It was also found that majority of the respondents (43.6 %) opined to a little extent: that inadequate power supply hinders the successful use of the new media in pastoral communication; adding that majority of the respondents (42.2%) opined to a large extent that low pastoral desires on the part of the people hinders the successful use of the new media in pastoral communication. From this analysis, it is obvious that illiteracy and high cost of surfing the Internet are the major hindrances to new media usage in pastoral communication.

The interview conducted, on the other hand, indicated that all the people interviewed agreed that there are challenges confronting the successful use of the new media for pastoral communication. One of the respondents noted that one of the problems of the new media usages for pastoral communication is the challenge of Ignorance. "People do not know much on how the New Media can assist them. Some people do not even realize that they need the Internet. They are ignorant of even what goes on there. They may not even have an email address. They may not have any Internet presence; they

just hear the word Internet but are not properly schooled and educated on what the internet is". Another problem indicated by the respondents is that most of the Internet accessing facilities provided by the network providers in Nigeria are not very fast like the ones obtainable abroad. One of the respondents rioted that "the Internet services we receive here in Nigeria are band widths that are not very fast. So you find a lot of people-when they want to get their Internet service providers, they relate with people from outside maybe using a VISAT set-up that can improve it. In places like Canada, their Internets are so fast. Is like when you click On something, it takes you there so fast as though you're opening a folder on your desktop, that's how fast it is, but here you click and wait for a page to open. Maybe you have quite a lot of things you want to do, so it looks as if you are wasting time".

These problems are not the same with the kind of problems Bother researchers have pointed out in relation to the new media and pastoral communication. For instance, in 2009, a study entitled "The Internet Highway and Religious Communities: Mapping and Contesting Spaces in Religion-Online" was conducted by Pauline Hope Cheong, Jessie P.H. Poon, Shirlena Huang and Irene Casas, which revealed that "recently, the increasing mediation of some religious practices and experiences online riot only challenge the assumptions of access, spatial reach and responsibilities of religious organizations, but they also raise new questions regarding what membership and community mean in neighborhood houses of worship" (Cheong, Poon, Huang and Casas, 2009:4).

This means that while other studies see the problem created as related to the kind of virtual community created by the use of new media as a result of high usage, this study see the problems from the point of illiteracy and ignorance on the part of the people and high cost of accessing the net in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study concludes that since findings on the use of the new media for Christian pastoral communication indicated that over 60% of Christians in southern Nigeria are

already using the new media for their pastoral communication. Given this scenario, the new media becomes a safe harbor and a welcome development for pastoral communication. Churches not akin to this form of communication in this digital age are only a step behind, because facts have already revealed that people want and do use the new media for Christian messages.

Although, there are challenges affecting the current usage of the new media but they can be taken away with conscious effort. Some of these challenges include illiteracy and high cost of accessing the internet, inadequate power supply and low pastoral desires on the part of the people. Among these challenges, illiteracy and high cost of surfing the Internet were seen as the major hindrances to new media usage in pastoral communication. Other challenges; are ignorance and the slow nature of band width allocated for network services (Internet) in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Churches and ministries should realize that times are fast changing and that most people have changed their means of accessing information and majority now uses the new media of communication. Efforts, therefore, should be made by Churches and ministries to create their own websites and blogs and even virtual communities where they can connect their members and send them gospel messages. This is one of the ways churches can maximize the potentials of the new media in pastoral communication.

Churches and ministries should make sure that the content they post on their WebPages and cable network are constantly improved, repackaged, replaced and edited to give spice and variety to readers who access them. When people find out that the same message they saw in their previous visit is what is still on the wall or content of cable television, they will not be moved to visit it again. This constant touch and re-touch of content will help improve and promote pastoral communication using the new media of communication.

Churches and ministries should make sure they improve on the aesthetics quality of their WebPages and content as a way to attract people to the websites and the content

therein. Most people do not like a poorly designed website and can only be attracted when the quality of design is rich.

The people should see pastoral communication using the new media as a new trend or forms of communication squarely packaged for their benefit and pre-dispose their minds to embrace it by using the same new media outfit to access information on pastoral communication.

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