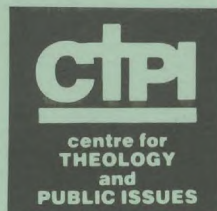University of Edinburgh

DISCUSSION PAPER 4

A RATIONALE
FOR
RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

by DR CHRIS ARTHUR

Paper given at Working Consultation
organised by University of Edinburgh
Media and Theological Education
Research Project, September 1988

DISCUSSION

PAPERS

CtPI
centre for
THEOLOGY
and
PUBLIC ISSUES

**CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND PUBLIC ISSUES, NEW COLLEGE,
MOUND PLACE, EDINBURGH, EH1 2LU**

DISCUSSION PAPER 4

A RATIONALE
FOR
RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

by DR CHRIS ARTHUR

Paper given at Working Consultation
organised by University of Edinburgh
Media and Theological Education
Research Project, September 1988

A RATIONALE FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

A paper given at a Working Consultation
Organised by the University of Edinburgh's
Media and Theological Education Research Project,
Pollock Halls, Edinburgh, September 20 1988

Chris Arthur   Summer 1988

1. THE FIRST CASUALTY

1.1   If I had to pick a _single_ book to add to theological reading lists in order to alert students to the importance of communication and media, I would choose _The First Casualty_, Phillip Knightley's masterly study of the war correspondent from the Crimea to Vietnam[1].

1.2   It is in no sense a theological work, religion is scarcely mentioned in it, but it illustrates in a very powerful way the importance of obeying that most basic of moral directives concerning communication, namely TO TELL THE TRUTH.   The significance of this fundamental imperative, and the consequences of ignoring it, are sometimes lost sight of, or simply taken for granted as being too self-evident to need attention.   Yet such truth-telling surely provides the foundation for any theology and for any acceptable rationale for religious communication.

1.3   Given the remit of this research project, it may seem perverse to begin by focusing attention on war.   My reasons for doing so are similar to those expressed by the author of a recent study of arctic peoples for focusing his attention on such a _geographical_ extreme.   'I write about the far North', Hugh Brody explains in _Living Arctic,_ 'in the belief that we can best discover who we are by going to what we think of as the margins of our world'[2].

1.4   War provides a margin against which we can measure certain fundamental standards of communication practice and media ethics.   It is a far north of human experience in whose bloody climate we can see growing to educative extremes certain aberrations of communication; aberrations whose everyday occurrence may appear deceptively harmless in the gentler climes which normally prevail.   As Michael Traber has suggested, war can be seen as the ultimate failure of communication[3].   Going to the media margins marked out by war and looking at some dimensions of the failures which occur there will, I hope, help us to learn something about ourselves as communicating beings and provide some

pointers to the sort of behaviour which any rationale for religious communication must take care to proscribe.

1.5 Such is the centrality of communication in human affairs that it is sometimes compared to water. Just as the individual cannot live without water, so society cannot live without communication. Communication might, indeed, be seen as an environing ocean which surrounds and sustains the various communities in which we live. If the world's rivers and seas become polluted all life will eventually suffer, so, likewise, if our communication is in some way poisoned, we can expect a similarly wide-ranging effect. Religious communication, it seems to me, must be centrally concerned with media ecology, with keeping the waters of communication pure. *The First Casualty* provides a salutary warning of what can happen when the communicative ecosystem on which we all depend is ruptured by the caustic poisons of deception.

2.   ALTERNATIVE REALITIES

2.1 Commenting on the work of Roger Fenton, one of the first war photographers, Knightley remarks that his pictures of the Crimean War established an axiom which still holds good today, namely:

> although in most cases the camera does not
> lie directly, it can lie brilliantly by omission[4].

Fenton's pictures showed a comfortable, efficiently organised war with well-dressed officers and men. The disease, equipment-shortages and appalling lack of facilities for the sick and wounded simply did not find their way into the photographs he took. In the valley where the Charge of the Light Brigade had taken place, and where many of the fatalities still lay unburied at the time of his visit, Fenton did not even bother to unpack his camera[5]. Such omissions establish a gulf between actual conflict and reports of it. The mediated versions of war's savagery tend to offer a partial and inaccurate picture.

2.2   To sustain such cosmetic perspectives, such alternative, mediated
realities, involves careful selection in what is pictured and written.
Of course every medium of communication will inevitably impose its own
limitations. In the same way that a black and white photograph cannot
but fail to do justice to a peacock's spectacular plumage, so every
medium is bound to leave something out. It is not such automatic,
implicit shortcomings which should concern us, however (though it _is_
important that we are aware of them[6]), but the deliberate and
avoidable ways in which communication may be used to convey an untrue
version of events. Umberto Eco once described semiotics as being the
study of every medium which can be used to lie[7]. A religious
perspective on communication must, I believe, have a similarly wide-
ranging remit in terms of the range of activities over which it seeks to
exert some influence.

2.3   Just as Fenton's photographs of captured forts in the Crimea were
taken _after_ the casualties had been removed[8], so in the First World
War, the artist Paul Nash complained that he was not allowed to put dead
men into his paintingss[9]. In the Second World War, the German
Propaganda Corps established a rule of never showing pictures of German
troops who had been killed in action[10], a strategy that the Allies too
seem to have operated as regards their own war dead. As Jeremy Isaacs
remarked in this year's Huw Wheldon memorial lecture, he saw a grand
total of five corpses in all of the contemporary newsreel which he
watched in doing background research for the series _The World at War_, a
television history of World War Two[11]. Phillip Jones Griffiths, one
of the few photographers to concentrate on portraying how the Vietnam
war affected Vietnamese civilians, had great difficulty finding an
outlet for his work in the United States. He was told that his pictures
were 'too harrowing' for the home market'[12].

2.4   Instances of lying about war could be endlessly continued across
every medium that has been used to report it. Accounts of battles which
never happened, incidents faked for the camera, invented atrocity
stories, authentic film shown with fabricated narrative, scenes of
appalling suffering and cruelty edited out.....the examples are

legion[13]. Each instance helps to reinforce Knightley's main thesis that in war truth is the first casualty. A key task of religious communication would seem to lie in preventing truth from becoming a casualty and providing a robust and effective antidote to any act of communication in which it does suffer such a fate. As such, religious communication is almost bound to come into conflict with political utterance, for as George Orwell put it, 'political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable'[14].

2.5   Of course there are all sorts of arguments about keeping up morale, confusing the enemy, or not wishing to shock, outrage, densensitize or alarm which can be used to justify _not_ accurately communicating the full horror of war, whether in a news report or in a film like Peter Watkins' _The War Game_[15].   The fact remains, though, that insisting, for whatever reasons, on a cosmetic perspective means that it is necessary for the camera, the reporter's pen, the war artist's brush, whatever medium is being used, to be silent or selective or to lie   - and the distinctions between these different modes of non-communication can become very blurred indeed.

2.6   It is instructive for anyone trying to map out the margins of communication which can be created by war, to consider some observations made by Hannah Arendt about the alternative realities constructed by the Nazi's communication policy. All official correspondence referring to the slaughter of the Jews, for example, was subject

> to rigid 'language rules'.....it is rare to find
> documents in which such bald words as 'extermination',
> 'liquidation', or 'killing' occur. The prescribed
> code names for killing were 'final solution',
> 'evacuation' and 'special treatment'[16].

Treblinka, Auschwitz, and other concentration camps were referred to as 'Charitable Foundations for Institutional Care'[17]. What actually happened in them was masked by a deliberately euphemistic vocabulary, in every word of which truth became a fatal casualty. Communication was fundamentally compromised and all the media it used, from the shower

signs which pointed the way to the gas chambers to the communiques between the senior bureaucrats involved, created a grotesquely untrue version of events, an alternative reality beneath which appalling inhumanity was perpetrated.

2.7 Not telling the truth, though often apparently innocuous, can have some disastrous consequences which affect message and medium, sender and receiver. The whole delicate continuum of communication may be put at risk once we stray too far from the groundrule of trying as best we can to be truthful[18]. George Steiner has suggested that perhaps the most basic medium of all, the very fabric of language itself, can actually become damaged if used to communicate in the terrible way exemplified by the Nazis[19]. The currency of evil can rend a massive tear in the fragile ecology which allows honest relationships to criss-cross and sustain the human community. Truth may be the first casualty, but if its wounds are fatal and it is allowed to perish then many other essential components of our humanity are likely to die alongside it: trust, love, compassion, pity and so on.

2.8 In a world where techniques of communication (and of deception[20]) are becoming ever more sophisticated and where the various mass media, television in particular, seem to dominate public life, it is imperative that the technology of mass communication and the political and commercial forces behind it do not lose touch with basic religious and moral values. For example, it seems to me to be a matter for profound disquiet that

> When Abby Mann's film 'Jugdgment at Nuremburg' was
> scheduled for transmission on American TV, the
> American Gas Association succeeded in having any
> mention of Nazi gas chambers removed from the script[21].

2.9 I am not suggesting that there is any single, 'true' picture of the world which may be arrived at via 'complete objectivity'. Obviously there are many ways in which to view and communicate about even the simplest scene (consider, after all, what James Joyce has done for that most mundane of circumstances, everyday life). At the same time,

however, <u>without</u> asserting that there is only one correct view of every situation, it seems uncontroversial (but important) to point out that some views are more truthful than others. 'Complete objectivity' is, of course, a fiction, but this does not excuse us from the effort of <u>trying</u> to be fair in whatever we picture, say or write.

3. FACES OF THE ENEMY

3.1 If I were allowed to recommend <u>two</u> books for inclusion on the communications/media section of the theological bibliography, my second choice would be Sam Keen's <u>Faces of the Enemy</u>, a fascinating study of the psychology of enmity[22]. Where Knightley concentrates on the war correspondent, attempting to report in the midst of conflict, Keen focuses more on the psychological factors, especially as they affect media and communication, which lead up to, and are in his mind largely responsible for, such conflict breaking out in the first place. <u>Faces of the Enemy</u> carefully documents the way in which we dehumanize other peoples in what we say about them and how we picture them. In the illustrations which Keen has gathered together, we see human beings portrayed as faceless automatons, savage barbarians, or as animals or monsters. Such images invite their audience to treat the people so caricatured as something less than human.

3.2 Harking back to the Confucian idea that if we named things correctly we could live in social harmony, Keen suggests that 'peace begins with the rectification of terms'[23]. Seeing the murderous potential of some of the terms used, both in the propagandist's art and in common parlance, the notion of a genesis for peace in communication has a definite plausibility. If religious communication is concerned with peace (as it is bound to be), then it must ensure that we do not impose an enemy's face upon innocent countenances.

4. TWO MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

4.1   I hope that by looking at these extreme situations which occur most obviously in time of war (or in what Keen terms the 'hostile imagination', which seems always to be with us) some basic requirements for religious communication will have begun to emerge, even before we attend to a closer definition of what is meant by this term. For many of the situations described by Knightley and Keen provide models of 'irreligious', 'godless', 'loveless' even 'demonic' communication, communication, no matter what adjective you choose to qualify it with, which would be resistant to any but the most questionable theological justification. Such models show, more clearly than an analysis of current media output could, just how serious the consequences can be when, as is all too often the case, our communication contains elements which fail to measure up to any decent standard.

4.2   A common element which emerges from communication in which other people are presented as less than human, is a complete failure to try to see things from their point of view. Interestingly, Hannah Arendt viewed this failure as the key to much of Adolf Eichmann's complicity in the Nazi's genocidal racial policies[24] Empathy, then, the ability and inclination to stand in someone else's shoes and see how the world looks from that perspective, would seem to emerge as one important minimum ingredient in religious communication[25]. Understanding by 'religious communication' no more at this stage than that which stands resolutely opposed to the appalling failures of communication which occur most obviously in time of war.

4.3   Some sort of right of reply, a space for a response, would seem to be another minimum requirement. Such provision for listening to what the other person has to say is invariably disallowed when truth is dispensed with and we allow dehumanizing images currency in our media. Of course empathy and listening are very much inter-related, both may, indeed, be seen as practical expressions of valuing other people sufficiently highly to want to listen to them and to ensure that such

listening is effective. It is encouraging to note, incidentally, that these minimum requirements find support in policy approved by the World Association for Christian Communication and the World Council of Churches[26]. Moreover, further substantial backing for the fundamentality of empathy and dialogue in communication come in the psychotherapist Carl Rogers' analysis of what qualifies as 'good' communication[27]. I would suggest that the churches need to view the promotion and practice of such 'good communication' as central to all their endeavours.

4.4   A strong candidate for the most misleading media proverb of all time must surely be the saying: 'sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me'. Of course words cannot wound *directly*, but they are invariably behind the sticks and stones which do. It was words, after all, which were behind the appalling fate of Europe's Jews when the Nazi vocabulary seeped its poisons into the German spirit. Although today we may rarely hear anything so self-evidently evil, our careless use of words does little to ensure that such inhumanity will not be repeated. When some massive armaments deal has been clinched in Britain's favour, for example, the news is often reported entirely in terms of economic advantage. It seems less than honest to allow our words to hide what is being manufactured and what it will be used for. Words which lead us to see whole nations as 'the enemy', and which make us think of the creation of horrendous weapons in terms of job opportunities, may well illustrate the wider truth of another media proverb (which began its life as a Ministry of Defence jingle in the last war), namely: CARELESS TALK COSTS LIVES. When the sticks and stones of a vocabulary of hatred could render dumb the whole globe, it is imperative that whatever religious perspectives guide our outlook on the world, they make us look to our every utterance and ensure that we communicate with care.

4.5   Any rationale for religious communication which wants to guard against our going down the sort of paths mapped out by Knightley and Keen, must emphasise the need for caring communication. Careful talk, and the moral extends to any medium - careful photos, films, paintings,

broadcasts, which have a reverence for life. Portraying others as inferior to us, as monsters, faceless automatons, savage barbarians, or whatever other motif of hostility we care to mention, communication which displays neither empathy or right of reply, cannot be granted theological credence.

4.6   Abandoning truth seems inevitably to involve a sickening of communication. A central task for religious communication lies in trying to prevent such sickening from occurring and treating it whenever it does occur, no matter how much this may bring it into conflict with other interests[28]. Empathy and dialogue seem to be essential ingredients in that innoculation of our communicative practices which can prevent truth from becoming an early casualty. Of course, just because such characteristics may occur does not mean that the medium involved is religious, or that it will be true. If, however, such characteristics were altogether missing, it is hard to see how we could call such communication religious – regardless of whatever other features it might display.

5.   RELIGION AS WAKING FROM SLEEP

5.1 Empathy and the right of reply might be seen as constituting minimum methodological requirements for religious communication, that is, for communication in which the other person is valued and treated with respect, as a thou rather than an it. It must remain an ongoing concern of research projects like this to examine more closely what other features religious communication might display. Here there is only time to suggest what some of its most fundamental characteristics might be. Is there not, however, an urgent prior question to settle, long before any thought is given to the detailed nature of religious communicaiton? Might it not be objected that there is something highly paradoxical about suggesting that religion should concern itself with caring communication at all? For it remains a sad fact, amply borne out by history and by current affairs (in Iran, in Lebanon, in the

Punjab, in Northern Ireland) that the world's religions have often been deeply implicated in wars and violence, their communications practice following, indeed sometimes enhancing, the contours of aggression and hatred, rather than displaying even the bare minimum of caring interchange[29]. If truth is the first casualty, the hands of religion often seem deeply stained with its blood. How can we then propose as the minimum requirement of religious communication that it acts to protect truth from harm and that it insists on empathy and dialogue in all its communicative endeavours?

5.2 I do not want to embark on an analysis of the reasons for religion's frequent connectedness with violence, fascinating though such an investigation might be. A comment of Gurdjieff's throws some interesting, if obvious, light on what yet remains a puzzling paradox and points in the direction which I _do_ want to investigate here. Warfare, according to Gurdjieff, consists of thousands of sleeping people killing thousands of other sleeping people - if they woke up they wouldn't do it[30]. Although the religions of the world seem often to lead people into ever deeper nightmares of violence, I believe that this is more frequently an aberration, a failure to understand religious teachings or to apply them consistently to the conduct of life, than an accurate expression of the fundamental communicative thrust which lies at the heart of almost every variety of human religiousness. An important part of that communicative thrust has to do precisely with the sort of WAKING UP which Gurdjieff saw as vital to peace. This characteristic has profound implications for any communication which attempts to remain faithful to some form of religious inspiration.

5.3 Clearly, in trying to establish any guiding principles for religious communication, a lot will depend on how you DEFINE religion to begin with. Such definition is notoriously difficult, and rather than attempting it here I want instead simply to focus on WAKING UP (metaphorically understood, of course) as one thematic thread in this massive area of human experience which has some important consequences for communication and media.

5.4 The most obvious consequence for religious communication, if we view religion in terms of its involving a WAKING FROM SLEEP, is that in order to fulfill this role it must be shocking rather than soporific. Pierre Babin suggests that the only useful material for effective religious education is that which contains an element of shock value[31]. I would suggest that the force of his argument extends to much of religious communication too, demanding that it is startling and awakening, that it opens our eyes to certain fundamental truths about ourselves and the world we live in which may be obscured by everyday discourse.

5.5 If this sounds rather far removed from much of what we normally associate with religious broadcasting or religious literature, then perhaps, as Dennis Potter has suggested, much of these endeavours merely offer us 'little pellets of sweetness' that have very little to do with religion[32]. In just the same way that we tend to get cosmetic pictures of war emerging in reports of it, so we often tend to get cosmetic pictures of life emerging via the media (even - indeed often *especially* - in its religious output). Yet if it is to be successful when assessed according to this particular criterion, religious communication must act as John Crossan says the parables of Jesus act, to 'shatter the deep structure of our accepted world...remove our defences and make us vulnerable to God'[33]. Instead it often seems that TV, radio and the press encase that vulnerability in a veritable armour of indifference, courtesy of a thousand asinine games shows, fatuous comedies and endless commercials[34].

5.6 Alternative, mediated realities in which truth is a casualty often act as what might be termed 'spiritual spoporifics'. At their most extreme, they can help to implicate us in what Gurdjieff saw as war's terrible sleepwalking tragedy, where communication fails altogether and killing takes its place. But although it is in war that we can most clearly see how communication and media may help to blot out the sort of wakefulness which religious teachings endeavour to secure, it would be misguided to imagine that it is *only* during war that we sleepwalk

according to the contours of a mediated, alternative reality in which basic religious truths are lost sight of.

6. NEWSPEAK, NUKESPEAK AND WAKING UP

6.1 Alas, George Orwell's grim concept of 'newspeak', where language itself is brought under political control and is used to dim wakefulness about issues which might be embarrassing to Party ideology, is not confined to the realms of fiction[35]. Nor is its occurrence in history restricted to the Nazi's distorted vocabulary. More recently, for instance, the American military authorities resorted to something not unlike newspeak in their press briefings during the Vietnam war. Thus 'to deprive the enemy of the population resource' was used to describe the bombing of civilian villages, and 'circular error probability'[36] was used to account for accidental destruction, while the ecological devastation of vast tracts of land using defoliants was referrred to as 'an environmental adjustment'[37]. Such language would suggest that if truth is not already on the casualty list it is certainly under very heavy fire indeed.

6.2 Even when such cumbrous terminology is not used, media clichés can exert the same sort of deadening effect, dulling our consciousness of what is going on and paralysing our concern for others. Robert Fisk, Middle East correspondent for *The Times* and winner of last year's Valiant for Truth Media Award, has pointed out the way in which clichés give us a distorted view of things. As a small example, he cites the way in which, in the Western press, Syria is almost invariably tagged 'Soviet backed' and Kalashnikov 'Russian made', whilst Israel and M-16 are rarely if ever accompanied by 'American backed' or 'American made'[38]. The clichés which resound in news reports and headlines (in both sides of any conflict) are, Fisk believes, 'becoming a real danger to our task of understanding what is going on in the world'[39]. Religious communication needs to root out the dead metaphors and stultifying jargon which infect language and dull the understanding, and

provide in their place a shocking syntax of caring in which clichés find no voice, a vocabulary in which respect for others is unfailingly implicit.

6.3   Fisk's point about the way in which lazy, unreflective communication can mislead, is further developed in an interesting analysis of the language used by contemporary British media to report on nuclear weapons[40].   Its authors identify a similar avoidance of truth by utilizing a distancing, cosmetic, clichéd vocabulary.   Such 'nukespeak', as Paul Chilton dubs it[41], is filled with terms like 'deterrence theory', 'mutually assured destruction', 'Polaris', 'Trident', 'ground-launched cruise missile', and so on.   Such terms, by their mere familiarity, have grown dangerously cosy.   It is easy to forget that they refer to genocidal weaponry.   Nukespeak, according to Richard Keeble, constitutes a 'horrendous linguistic deformation'[42] because of the horrors which, through its vocabulary, are being eased into public acceptance and moral legitimacy.   This dangerously insidious process is largely being carried out through the uncritical communication which often tends to characterise the mass media, and so comes to affect interpersonal communication too.

6.4   There are many sorts of sleep which can afflict our communication and, if such communication is conducted via media of the massive potency of modern TV, radio and press, then we can expect the effects of such soporifics to be widespread.   Some varieties are relatively easy to spot as such, others are not.   Thus considerable vigilance must attend any religious communication that seeks to be wakeful and awakening.   Edward Said, for example, has suggested that the Western media tend to give a highly distorted picture of Islam[43].   His extensively substantiated charges must be a matter for serious attention.   Likewise, many have voiced concern at the invasive commercial perspectives which advertising seems to propagate, in which every problem is solved by purchase and where worth is assessed merely by possessions[44].   As Henry David Thorea once remarked, 'all moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep'[45].   If our religious communication is to be adequate to the promises and perils of our modern media potential, it is imperative that

it act to throw off the sleep which can so easily infect the way in
which we communicate. We can as little afford to poison our rivers and
seas as we can allow soporific, uncaring communication to course through
the veins of the various media we use.

6.5 In a book which suggests just how deep and pervasive the slumber
may be through which religious communication may have to break, Daniel
Boorstin has shown how, as he puts it,

> we have used our wealth, our literacy, our technology,
> and our progress, to create a thicket of unreality which
> stands between us and the facts of life[46]

In particular, he draws attention to the formative role which the media
plays in 'the new kind of synthetic novelty which has flooded our
experience'[47], namely the 'PSEUDO-EVENT'. 'The American citizen', he
concludes, 'lives in a world where fantasy is more real than
reality'[48]. Echoing Boorstin, the memorably named Jerry Mander has
argued that the United States has produced the first culture 'to have
substituted secondary, mediated versions of experience for direct
experience of the world'[49] a substitution in which the media plays a
crucial role. Mander believes that:

> As humans have moved into totally artificial
> environments, our direct knowledge of the planet has
> been snapped. Disconnected, like astronauts floating
> in space, we cannot know up from down or truth from
> fiction.[50]

Such a profound disorientation, is bound to have serious religious
implications. After all, as R.T. Brooks has suggested, a first step in
religious communication may simply be 'to make people more aware of the
facts and workings of the physical world' in order that they become
'more sensitive to its spiritual significance'[51]. But if we are
living in artificial environments, if we are surrounded by the
alternative realities created by media, such a step will be rendered
much more difficult. Brooks believes that 'we need to look at the
actual world as something to be contemplated with wonder'[52]. I would

suggest that until we do so religious communication is almost bound to
fail. The pseudo-events described by Boorstin, the artificial
environment of which Mander complains, the Faces of the Enemy which Keen
identifies and the various casualties of truth which Knightley brings to
our attention, all act to dull the shock of wonder which is central to a
religious outlook. When media are geared to such soporific ends we are
in profound need of a religious awakening to vivify our communication.

7. FIRST STEPS

7.1 One of the most frustrating aspects of modern mass media is perhaps
the sense of helplessness which tends to be engendered by the massive
amount of information we are now daily exposed to via the channels of
TV, radio and press. We are acquainted with injustice, tragedy and
catastrophe worldwide, but are often powerless to do anything about it.
I would not like to think that what I have said this afternoon would
have a similarly paralysing affect, making you feel that there is very
little the individual can do to counter-act the shortcomings which often
attend our use of media.   There is a great deal that can be done by
every individual to counteract the alternative realities which
uncritical, uncaring communication may result in. Writing in
his *Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language*, Gerhard Ebeling
argues that:

> Since language is so intimately associated with life,
> something of the necessary reverence for life should
> be carried over to the way we use language[53].

Those who complain that our language contains elements of 'nukespeak'
are surely moving on a course similar to that suggested by Ebeling when
they insist that rather than repeating the atomic catechism
unthinkingly, we should translate its terms into plain talk, so that
instead of '100% mortality rate', for example, we have 'everybody
dead'[54]. Likewise, instead of viewing another nation indiscriminately

as 'The Enemy', we might keep on our mantelshelves a photograph of an ordinary Russian or American, Iraqi or Iranian Family - to remind us that it is people like ourselves, and the way in which they communicate, which constitutes the human community of any nation. On a much larger scale, the proposals made for a New World Information and Communication Order by the International Commission on Communication Problems, contain many recommendations for reform which are undergirded by a fundamental reverence for every human being's right to free expression[55]. Sam Keen shows how we might begin to put into practice the sort of communicative ethic which Ebeling spells out, when he suggests that we should start to curb the hostile imagination and its morally somnulent vocabulary

> by a small but radical reclaiming of language, by
> ceasing to sanctify blind obedience to authority
> with the honorific 'duty', or call the willingness
> to kill an unknown enemy or die in the attempt
> 'courage', or baptize the spirit of revenge with
> the name of 'honor'[56].

This is something we can all do, and of course it is not only language, but all forms of communication which have an intimate connection with life and so deserve a careful reverence in their use.

7.2 It is also important to bear in mind the enormous positive potential of modern media. From LIVE AID to soap opera, from newspaper columns to blockbusting films; from radio phone-ins to telethons, from the _Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy_ to _Heart of the Matter_, the media can be used to inform us about what is happening in the world, to waken us into action, to create a sense of community, to enrich popular culture and to make us laugh. Though I have focused very largely on what can happen when communication goes wrong and media sours, it would be absurd and erroneous not to acknowledge the many benefits which the media bestow on the modern individual's life. I have assumed that such benefits are self-evident and sought to further the cause of good communication by warning of what happens when it fails, rather than applauding its many achievements.

7.3 Moreover, it is important to remind ourselves (to wake up to the fact) that however powerful and impersonal the mass media which surround us may seem, they do not exist as some sort of independent third party. On the contrary, every film, piece of propaganda or truthful reporting, every constitutive image and utterance on TV and radio, every newspaper story, has a moment of genesis in an individual human mind and is received by individual readers, viewers and listeners. That is why codes of conduct for fair reporting, impartial news coverage, for advertising which is 'legal, decent, honest and truthful', are doomed to failure unless they are accompanied by a personal sense of responsibility in every individual's approach to his or her own communicative activities. The fact that such individual genesis can, through modern technology, be magnified and disseminated so that an audience numbered in millions may be addressed and influenced, makes it particularly important that such a sense of responsibility is properly developed. Can such development take place without some concept of caring communication, which is in turn dependent on perceiving the world and other people with the sort of wonder and reverence which Brooks and Ebeling talk about?

7.4 Of course, in order to implement any of the recommendations which I have been suggesting, in order to build them into the fabric of what happens, rather than have then merely written about in academic papers or voiced at Working Consultations, we would need to gear our educational endeavours more explicitly to addressing communication as an important concern. I think a convincing case can easily be made for putting communication skills and media education pretty near the top of almost any curriculum, and certainly of any theological curriculum. After all, as Peter Meggs put it, not only is communication _the_ critical issue of our age because of the state of international relations, but it is, quite simply, 'the purpose of all life'[57]. The problem lies, not in demonstrating the importance of communication, but in convincing institutions to reform themselves accordingly.

7.5 There are already some promising developments at school level, though by and large they focus on media as such, rather than fostering

any kind of individual communicative responsibility which begins from
the premise that people are the most important medium of all.
Addressing the American scene, William Fore has suggested that media
education is

> just beginning to take hold in the public schools
> and is almost altogether missing in the churches.
> Yet teaching people to understand what the media are
> doing to them...could scarcely be more important to
> educators and church leaders[58].

The situation in Britain seems very similar. In Scotland, which has
such a good reputation for media education in the schools, it would be a
pity if the churches did not also exert themselves to make sure that
television is not the final victor in the battle for our souls which
Fore assures us is being waged[59]. Some encouraging work is of course
being done - the activities of the World Association for Christian
Communication and of the Centre for the Study of Communication and
Culture are particularly noteworthy, whilst the television awareness
training scheme, pioneered by the Media Awareness Research Centre in
America and now being run in this country by the Mothers' Union is a
first step towards more widespread media literacy. I would like to
think that a future development of the work of this project will be the
exploration of ways in which religious education in the schools might
address communications issues, for the sooner such issues can be raised
in an individual's education the better. At the same time as stressing
the educational dimension, however, it would be important to ensure that
communication did not merely become another subject on the syllabus.
It is an activity central to _every_ subject on the syllabus and one which
we would want to see widely _practiced_ not merely studied as a
specialised area.

7.6 Marshall McLuhan has suggested that in the future education will
become 'civil defence against media fallout'[60]. In the present
situation, with satellite TV about to become established, with computers
and video creating new contours in the media environment of every home,
with continual advances in communications technology, it would be easy

simply to take the view that things are in such a state of flux that any
recommendations made are likely to be rendered speedily redundant as the
technology changes. Alvin Toffler has even proposed the possibility of
direct mind-contact between individuals as the point towards which media
development is moving[61]. In such a situation I think it is important
for theologians, along with broadcasters, educationalists and anyone
involved in communication to keep abreast of new ideas - but also to
try to work out some fundamental ethic for communication which will not
change merely according to the changing technologies. We do not know
what message we shall eventually communicate to history, we can only
hope that it will not constitute the sort of fallout which requires
remedial education to handle.

7.7 As Wolfgang Bartholomaus observed, 'one cannot *not*
communicate'[62]. The trouble is, what is communicated in our
buildings, the way we dress, the investments we make, our choice of
action in scores of decisions made every day, often does not fit in
with the communicative ideals which an awakened and awakening religious
perspective might suggest. It is all very well counselling the need for
empathy and dialogue, and the saner sense of priorities they would
result in. But if the way we act does not also display these qualities
then our communication will be an affair of media only. The message
will go no deeper than the medium. The real challenge of religious
communication is that it calls for *transformation* rather than dealing
uninvolvedly in impersonal exchanges of mere information or ideas. It
seeks a situation where the message is embodied in every aspect of the
life of the communicator rather than merely in what he happens to say or
write or broadcast on TV. Perhaps we cannot legitimately use the mass
media for religious ends at all until we ourselves have become effective
personal media of whatever message we are seeking to communicate. As
John Bluck has remarked, the most powerful statements about faith

> are usually not the self-conscious attempts we make
> through the mass media.... We speak more clearly
> through the style of our church buildings and the use
> we put them to, in the way in which we invest our money,
> the modesty of our life-style, our choice of careers

and clothing, our presence among people who hurt most
and whose voices are least able to be heard[62].

7.8 It remains an important theological task to try to chart with care
and detail the waters of communication in which we all live and move and
have our being, marking in as clearly as we can prevailing winds,
currents, reefs, shallows and so on. Too often, religion seems merely
to be communicatively adrift and sometimes unaware of the messages it is
beaming out. This paper has been a crude attempt to take some basic
soundings and plot a course, but I hope that the endeavours of the media
and theological education project as a whole will make a more detailed
contribution towards deliberate and careful navigation in this area.

7.9 I would like to end with two brief stories recounted by Idries Shah
in _Thinkers of the East_. Both help to stress important points about
religion and communication. In the first, a Muslim holy man is asked by
a student how he feels. The holy man replies: 'Like one who has risen
in the morning and does not know whether he will be dead in the
evening'. Puzzled to hear so apparently ordinary a reply coming from
one who was widely famed for his wisdom, his questioner complained
rather disappointedly that this was surely the situation of ALL men. To
which the holy man retorted, 'Yes - but how many of them really FEEL
it?'[64]. It is, I believe, an important test of the adequacy of
religious communication to ask whether or not it helps to keep us
mindful of such fundamental truths about the human situation, or if it
merely provides little pellets of distracting, soporific sweetness.

The second story again involves a question put to a holy man. How, the
sage was asked, did you reach your present heights of spiritual
attaintment? His answer, I think, deserves to have the last word:

> Through making the heart white in celestial
> contemplation, [he replied] not by making paper black with
> writing[65].

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1.   Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty, From the Crimea to Vietnam: the War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist and Myth Maker*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1975 (Paperback edition, Quartet Books, 1982).

Knightley quotes as epigraph to his study the words of US Senator Hiram Johnson (spoken in 1917) that 'The first casualty when war comes is truth'.

2.   Hugh Brody, *Living Artic, Hunters of the Canadian North*, London: Faber, 1987, p. xiii.

Brody's book is to be commended for displaying much of the empathy and right of reply which are identified in Section 4 as minimum requirements of religious communication. His remarks on photographs (p. xi) also contain some interesting media insights.

3.   Michael Traber, in John Bluck (ed), *Beyond Technology, Contexts for Christian Communication*, Geneva: WCC, 1984, p. 66.

4.   Knightley, op. cit., p. 15.

For a fuller discussion of some of the limitations of photography which Knightley's axiom is getting at, see Michael T. Isenberg, *War on Film, the American Cinema and World War I*, London & Toronto: Associated University Press, 1981, Chapter 4, 'The Myth of the 'Objective Camera': a Critique of Film Reality'.   At one point (p. 59) Isenberg remarks: 'The motion picture camera is a mechanistic tool which, no matter what the intentions of its operator, restricts and distorts reality as defined by the human eye and mind'.

5.   Ibid.

6.   According to Robert Liebert, for example, (in his article in *Religious Education*, Vol. 82 no. 2 (1987))the majority of viewers are unaware that television news bulletins owe their form to a series of editorial decisions, let alone to the intrinsic limitations of TV as a medium.   Many simply accept news as a straightforward documentary record which describes the most important events of the day.

7.   Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976, p.7.   As quoted in Robert C. Allen (ed), *Channels of Discourse, Television and Contemporary Criticism*, London: Methuen, 1987, p.24.

8.   Knightley, op.cit., p.15.

9.   Ibid., p.99.

10.   Ibid., p.226.

11.   Jeremy Isaacs, 'How to Make History', the 1988 Huw Wheldon memorial lecture, hosted by the Royal Television Society, London, and broadcast on Channel 4, 17.5.88.

12.   Knightley, op.cit, p.390.

13.   Many such examples are described in the course of Knightley's book and in Sam Keen's *Faces of the Enemy* (see note 22 below).   Milton Shulman describes reporters bribing artillery positions to open fire during the Indo-Pakistan War in his *The Ravenous Eye*, London: Cassell, 1973, p.254.

14.   George Orwell, *'Politics and the English Language'*, reprinted in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, Vol IV, 1945-1950, London: Secker & Warburg, 1968, p.139.

Knightley (op.cit., p.386) points to some of the ways in which governments try to make murder, if not 'respectable' at least palatable to those whom it calls upon to do it: 'all governments realise that to wage war successfully their troops must learn to dehumanise the enemy. The simplest way to achieve this is to inflame nationalistic or racist feelings, or both'. Keen's *Faces of the Enemy* (see note 22 below) contains many examples of how such inflamation can affect communication. Kevin Brownlow (in *The War, the West and the Wilderness*, London: Secker & Warburg 1979, p.60 comments of the First World War that: 'As the stories of rape and mutilation proliferated, the Germans became a race apart. The Kaiser might have been a cousin of King George, but he was sired by the devil as far as British propaganda was concerned. The Germans lost their status as Europeans; embodying the most terrifying traits of ancient savagery, they became Huns'. Inflamation via racism is given further attention in Richard Drinnon's *Facing West: the Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building*, Minneapolis: 1980.

15. On Peter Watkins' *The War Game* see Michael Tracey's 'Censored, the War Game Story', in Crispin Aubrey (ed) *Nukespeak, the Media and the Bomb*, London: Comedia, 1982. Kenneth Tynan, writing in the *Observer* commented that: 'in refusing to show it, the BBC is like a doctor witholding the truth from a patient who is suffering from a potentially fatal disease; silence may preclude panic, but it also precludes cure' (quoted in Tracey's essay). One might be forgiven for finding peculiar the BBC's choosing to preface a programme like *Tumbledown* with warnings about some shocking scenes of modern warfare, whereas programmes like, to cite Sir William Rees-Mogg's *bete noir, The A Team* go out without any suggestion that it may be portraying a wholly misleading picture of violence.

16. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, a Report on the Banality of Evil* (revised & enlarged edition), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983 (first published 1963), p. 85.

17. Ibid., p. 109.

It is worth noting that there still exist mediated 'alternative realities' which attempt to deny that six million Jews were slaughtered by the Nazis. For instance, *Holocaust News*, published by the Centre for Historical Review, suggests that 'the allegation that more than six million Jews were deliberately exterminated in gas chambers or otherwise, as part of a campaign of genocide is a preposterous propaganda fabrication which daily becomes threadbare.' (This undated issue of *Holocaust News* was supplied by the Anne Frank Centre in Amsterdam, whose touring exhibition *Anne Frank in the World*, seeks to counter precisely such vicious 'alternative realities'.)

18. On the difficulties of truth-telling, of 'seeing what is there' and 'telling it like it is', see my *Tigers: Some Reflections on Theological Education and Communication, Religious Education* forthcoming.

19. In *Language and Silence* (London: Faber, 1985, p. 69) Steiner writes: 'The possibility that the political inhumanity of the twentieth century and certain elements in the technological mass-society which has followed on the erosion of the European *bourgeois* values, have done injury to language is the underlying theme of this book'. The essays *'Silence and the Poet'* and *'The Hollow Miracle'* (both contained in *Language and Silence)* are particularly interesting in this respect, though Steiner admits (p. 15) that the 'prophecy of lasting liguistic decay and sterility' voiced in 'The Hollow Miracle' has 'proved erroneous'. The student of media will also find interesting Steiner's essay *'On Reading McLuhan'*, which is also contained in this volume.

20. On the increasing sophistication of techniques of deception see, for example, Paul Lester's *'Faking Images in Photo-journalism'*, *Media Development*, Vol. 35 no. 1 (1988), pp. 41-42. Some further interesting material is to be found in *Media*

Development, Vol. 33 no. 3 (1986), in a special issue devoted to the subject of 'Lies and Lying'.

21. Colin Morris, _God in a Box,_ Christian Strategy in the Television Age, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984, p. 87.

In similar vein, a more light-hearted, though still worrying, incident is recorded by John Atkinson in _The Media,_ a Christian View, London: Epworth Press, 1979, p. 63. It involved an incident where the BBC's early evening magazine series 'Nationwide' featured a report on the cosmetics industry and its products. The somewhat jocular style of reporting was meant to get a serious point across. Mascara was described as 'soot and bones', eyeshadow as 'rust and jelly' and foundation as 'whale's innards'. Although such descriptions are, in many cases reasonably accurate (and certainly closer to the truth than the language used to advertise such products), the UK Toilet Preparations Federation complained to the BBC, whose Programmes Complaints Commission admonished Nationwide for going too far.

22. Sam Keen, _Faces of the Enemy,_ Reflections of the Hostile Imagination: the Psychology of Enmity, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.

23. Ibid., p. 96.

24. Hannah Arendt, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

25. In advising on a communications policy in which empathy plays an important part, it is important to bear in mind Allan Bloom's critique of some aspects of such 'openness', contained in his _The Closing of the American Mind_ (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987). Some remarks which may help to defend empathy against such criticisms are contained in Chapter 6 of my _In the Hall of Mirrors,_ Some Problems of Commitment in a Religiously Plural World, Oxford: A. R. Mowbray, 1986.

26. _Christian Principles of Communication,_ undated booklet published by the World Associatiuon for Christian Communication, paragraph 3. For WCC endorsement of empathy see John Bluck (ed), op. cit., p. 88.

27. Carl R. Rogers, 'Dealing with Breakdowns in Communication - Interpersonal and Intergroup' in _On Becoming a Person,_ a Therapist's View of Psychotherapy, London: Constable, 1967, pp. 330-337.

28. It is important to remember that there is a very real sense in which religion is subversive and destructive. Michael Novak, for example, defines religion as 'a conversion from the ordinary, given, secure world to a world of nothingness, terror and risk' (_Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove,_ New York: Harper & Row, 1978, pp. 11-12). Though many might disagree with such a definition (though Novak also points to religion's 'strange healing joy' (ibid)), there seems little doubt that religion _is_ disruptive of many ordinary certainties and critical of many models of identity thought to be adequate, or even admirable, by society at large and presented as such in the media. As Sallie McFague has put it with regard to the Christian tradition, 'every major reformation within the church has been sparked by the insight that the essence of Christianity does not support conventional standards' ('_The Christian Paradigm_', in Peter C, Hodgson & Robert H. King, _Christian Theology, an Introduction to its Traditions and Tasks,_ London: SPCK, 1978, p. 332.

29. Many examples could be cited, I will confine myself to one short news item which appeared in _The Guardian_ on 14.5.85 and seems to illustrate something of religion's potential for hostility: 'A High Court judge in New Delhi yesterday dismissed a petition calling for a ban on the Koran, after protests about the case in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The petition, filed by two Hindu Indians in Calcutta High Court, provoked violent demonstrations in Bangladesh and a furious reaction from the Pakistan Government. Crowds also took to the streets in Srinagar, capital of India's mainly Muslim northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, throwing stones at traffic and shops. THe suit said that the Koran should be banned because it preached hatred and violence and was inimical to the country's majority religion, Hinduism'.

30. Quoted in P. D. Ouspensky, 'The Life of Sleeping Men', _Parabola,_ Vol. 7 no. 1 (1982), p. 77.

THe idea of religion as waking from sleep is further developed in my '_Waking from Sleep as a Metaphor for the Religious Dynamic_', the Gifford Research Fellowship Lectures for 1986, St. Andrews: Department of Adult Education & Extra-Mural Studies, 1986.

31. Pierre Babin (ed), _The Audio-Visual Man, the Media and Religious Education,_ Ohio: Pflaum, 1970, pp. 155 &159 viz: 'A document is apt for religious education to the extent that it expresses a deep human situation which forces one to question the meaning of his life.....A document that has no shock value is of little use'. I have developed the idea of some sort of 'shock value' being integral to religious education in my '_Some Arguments for "Uncomfortable" Religious Education_', in _The Month,_ Vol. CCXLIX, no. 1443 (Second New Series, Vol. 21 no. 3), pp. 605-609. James Baldwin has suggested that art too must involve some sort of shock (or 'disturbing the peace' as he puts it), see his '_Mass Culture and the Creative Artist_', in _Daedalus,_ Vol. 89 no. 2 (1960), pp. 373-376.

32. Dennis Potter in discussion on BBC 1, 25.8.87, following a screening of his *Brimstone and Treacle*. Potter makes some further elucidating comments along the same lines in an interview with Mary Craig in *The Listener*, 13.5.76, p.613.

In terms of Haribhadra's famous story of the man in the well, Potter's comment might be seen as underlining our tendency to be distracted by the sweet taste of honey! An English translation of this classic religious story is given in Wm. Theodore de Bary (ed) *The Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol.1, New York: Columbia University Press, pp.53-55. The story is paraphrased in my *'Some Arguments for the Use of Stories in Religious Education'*, *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol.10 no.3 (1988), pp.125-126.

33. John Dominic Crossan, *The Dark Interval, Towards a Theology of Story*, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1975, p.122.

34. Edward Robinson, in *The Language of Mystery* (London: SCM, 1986, p.81), identifies what he terms 'Aquired Immunity to Mystery Syndrome' and reminds us that it is not just the TV camera or jornalist's pen which can create alternative realities that may encase our 'vulnerability to God'. Art too (or, rather, bad art) can also act in this way: 'Bad art does not just fail to tell the truth; it substitutes a lie. When Christ is portrayed as a characterless figure of sentimental benevolence surrounded by cudly lambs in a romantic landscape, what effect does such a representation have on the prayers, let alone the theology, of those for whom he is a focus of worship?' (p.62). The language of mystery is, alas, sometimes stifled by religion. As Luis Bunuel has remarked: 'Mystery is the basic element of all works of art. It is generally lacking on the screen. Writers, directors, and producers take good care in avoiding anything that may upset us. They keep the marvellous window on the liberating world of poetry shut. They prefer stories which repeat for the umpteenth time the same drama, which help us forget the hard hours of our daily work. And all this, of course, carefully watched over by traditional morals, government and international censorship, religion, good taste, white humour and other flat dicteria of reality' (in *Film Makers on Film Making*, edited by Harry M Geduld, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967, p.180. As Adrzej Wajda put it, 'it is the task of cinema to overcome the barriers of the commonplace' (ibid., p.240). Such 'waking from sleep', as we shall see in the section 5, is fundamental to religion too.

35. For George Orwell's concept of 'Newspeak' see his famous novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Bernard Crick relates newspeak to the modern media situation in the edition of *Nineteen Eighty Four* published in 1984 by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, which contains his critical introduction and annotations. See, in particular pp.59-60.

36. Knightley, op.cit., p.421.

Barry Zorthian, head of the American civilian information apparatus in Saigon remarked in his book *Vietnam 10 Years Later*, 'One of our basic faults in Vietnam was that the communication of the war did not correspond to the reality of the war, and

the further you got away from Vietnam the worse that gap became'. Quoted in Derrik Mercer, Geoff Mungham & Kevin Williams, *The Fog of War, the Media on the Battlefield*, London: Heinemann, 1987, p.259.

37.   Keen, op.cit, p.87.

38.   Robert Fisk, *'Cliches are a "real danger" to truthful news reporting'*, in *Action* (World Association for Christian Communication Newsletter), Vol.123 (March 1988), p.8.

39.   Robert Fisk, *'Pejorative Words and Truth'*, an address given at the Arts Club, Dover Street, London, 14.12.87, on the occasion of Fisk being awarded the 1987 'Valiant for Truth Media Award'. This address is reprinted in the award booklet published by the Order of Christian Unity.

40.   Crispin Aubrey (ed), *Nukespeak, the Media and the Bomb*, London: Comedia, 1982.

41.   Ibid., p.95f.

42.   Richard Keeble, in Crispin Aubrey op.cit., p.123f.

43.   Edward Said, *Covering Islam, How the Media and the Experts Determine How we See the Rest of the World*, London: RKP, 1981. Said's thesis receives considerable support from the work of Muhammad Schleifer, see, for example, his *'Conflict Coverage in the Middle East'*, in *Media Credibility and Social Responsibility*, Proceedings of the 7th World Media Conference, Tokyo 1984.

44.   See, for example, Peg Slinger, *'Television Commercials: Mirror and Symbol of Societal Values'*, in *Religious Education*, Vol.78 (1983); Dorothee Solle, *'Thou Shalt Have no Other Jeans Before Me'*, in Jurgen Habermas (ed), *Observations on the Spiritual Situation of the Age*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984; *Media Development*, Vol.34 no.3 (1987) is a special issue devoted to advertising and social ethics, and *Media and Values* no.37 (1986) is devoted to advertising and the consumer economy. I have made some comments about the religious and educational significance of advertising in *'Breaking the Skin Barrier'*, *Times Educational Supplement*, 18.12.87. The so called 'Nestlé's Affair', described by William Fore in *Television and Religion* (see note 58 below), pp. 178-179, provides a particularly good example of the way in which commercial and religious values may come into conflict.

45.   Henry David Thoreau, *Walden,* London: Everyman edition, 1912, p. 78.

46.   Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image,* or *What Happened to the American Dream,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1961, p. 3.

47.   Ibid., p. 9

48.   Ibid., p. 37

Compare Malcolm Muggeridge's comments on the way in which media replaces reality with fantasy in *Christ and the Media* (the 1976 London Lectures in Contemporary Christianity), London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1977, p. 82.

49.   Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television,* Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980, p. 24

50.   Ibid., p. 351.

51.   R. T. Brooks, *Communicating Conviction,* London: Epworth Press, 1983, p. 44.

52   Ibid., p. 113.

53.   Gerhard Ebeling, *Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language,* London: Collins, 1973, p. 177.   As quoted in Brooks, op. cit., p. 31.

54.   Crispin Aubrey (ed) op. cit., p. 123f.

Given the many references in this paper to war and military affairs, one might be led to wonder what training forces chaplains are given in communication.   One can only hope that it is not similar to that of Ayscue, the fictional chaplain in Kingsley Amis' *The Anti-Death League*! 'Saying everything was all right really, however different it sometimes looked, earned Ayscue his living' (p. 35).

55.   International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (the MacBride Commission), *Many Voices, One World*, *Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New, More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order*, London: UNESCO, 1980

56.   Keen, op.cit., p.96

Keen's thesis that 'we will begin to end warfare not when we have better weapons, but when we speak truer words' (ibid. p.95) echoes Jacques Ellul's dictum that 'anyone wishing to save humanity today must first of all save the word' (*The Humiliation of the Word*, tr. Joyce Main Hanks, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985, p.vii). Thucydides provides a classic example of the way in which war can act against the sort of reclaiming of language which Keen proposes, when he writes of the revolution in Corcyra: 'To fit in with the change of events, words too, had to change their usual meanings. What used to be described as a thoughtless act of agression was now regarded as the courage one would expect to find in a party member' (*History of the Peloponnesian War* tr. Rex Warner, p.209.). The ideal recipe for what we might term 'the government of the tongue' (borrowing the title from Seamus Heaney's 1986 T.S. Eliot Memorial Lecture) is suggested by the epigraph to this paper.

57.   Peter Meggs in B. F. Jackson (ed), *Television, Radio, Film for Churchmen*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1969, p.71 & p.105.

58.   William, F Fore, *Television and Religion, the Shaping of Faith, Values and Culture*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987, p.167.

59.   Ibid., p.11.

60.   Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, London: Ark Edition, 1987, p.305.

61.   Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, London: Collins, 1980, p.369.

62.   Wolfgang Bartholomaus, 'Communication in the Church: Aspects of a Theological Theme', in Gregory Baum & Andrew Greely (eds), *Concilium* 1978 (issue theme: 'Communication in the Church').

63.   John Bluck, op.cit., pp. 41-42.

See my *'Preaching by Postmark'*, *Modern Churchman*, forthcoming, for a critique of a camapaign of Christian communication which seems to ignore the point made here by Bluck.

64.   Idries Shah, *Thinkers of the East, Studies in Experientialism*, London: Cape, 1971, p. 122.

Stories can often be good examples of empathy and dialogue in action.   For the empathetic potential of story, see my *'Phenomenology of Religion and the Art of Storytelling'*, in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 23 (1987), pp. 59-79.

65.   Ibid., p. 41.