

SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

EXCERPTS FROM COMMUNICATING FOR COMMUNITY (SEPTEMBER 1990)

Bishop Hubert Bucher, chairman of the Commission for Social Communications, introduced the “**Communicating for Community**” booklet as an aid in discussions for small groups in parishes and, for communication in the church as a whole. He said:

“What the Church proclaims is, significantly, called the Good **News**, the term around which all, modern media revolve. It is significant that the author of the Good News is referred to in St John’s Gospel as the **Word** made flesh (1:14).

“Like her founder, Jesus Christ, the Church is communication. In the business of communication since Pentecost (±33 AD), the apostles’ preaching about Christ the Redeemer and their letters to the young churches were collected to form the New Testament. This book, like none before, through a ceaseless process of copying by hand, became the first object of mass communication among an increasing number of people; so much so that for six hundred years Christians, Jews and Moslems were referred to simply as “the People of the Book” (Quran, 3rd surah).

“John XXIII pushed the Church into the world, calling for *aggiornamento* through the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and significantly, the second decree passed by the Council was on “Instruments of Social Communication” (*Inter Mirifica*: December 1963). In 1964, Paul VI entrusted the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications in Rome, with the task of promoting the Church’s involvement in cinema, radio, television and the press. Bishops’ Conferences followed throughout the world and established their own Commissions for Social Communications.

“Communications Sunday aims at conscientizing Catholics about the cardinal importance of Church involvement in the media. “A child who does not cry on its mother’s back will die in its blanket”, says the African proverb. Let us shout, therefore, “from the rooftops” (Mt 10:27), using the whole gamut of today’s media, to enhance communications within the Church, and between the Church and the people living today.”