The Dissertation Committee for Douglas Farber Cannon certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

SPEAKING OF FAITH:

PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE AMONG

RELIGION COMMUNICATORS IN THE UNITED STATES

Committee:

Dominic L. Lasorsa, Co-Supervisor

Ronald B. Anderson, Co-Supervisor

Paula M. Poindexter

Stephen D. Reese

Frank C. Richardson

Speaking of Faith:

Public Relations Practice Among

Religion Communicators in the United States

by

Douglas Farber Cannon, B.A.J.; M.A.

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Speaking of Faith:

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Religion Communicators in the United States

Douglas Farber Cannon, Ph.D.

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Supervisors: Dominic L. Lasorsa and Ronald B. Anderson

This study expands the body of knowledge relating to Excellence Public Relations Theory to a new area—religion communication. The project replicated portions of the survey research reported in Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). That research, done from 1991 to 2002, involved top communicators, employees and chief executives in 327 secular organizations across the United States, United Kingdom and Canada.

This project surveyed members of the Religion Communicators Council in 2006 and 2007. A second survey in 2008 sought responses to similar questions from faith group leaders who supervised respondents to the 2006-07 survey. Answers from religion communicators were compared to those of their supervisors and secular practitioners in earlier studies.

Comparisons showed that religion communicators in this study were a distinct subgroup of U.S. public relations practitioners. RCC members worked primarily as communication technicians, not managers. That made them different from practitioners in the 327 secular organizations studied by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Furthermore, religion communicators and their supervisors did not always agree with the way four models in Excellence Theory described different approaches to public relations. Religion communicators also did not know what their supervisors expected from them or their departments. Communicators overestimated their supervisors' support for the press agentry/publicity and public information models of public relations. Communicators underestimated support for the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models. Likewise, communicators rated their contributions to the work of their faith groups lower than their supervisors did. Faith group leaders said they wanted communicators to be managers more than technicians. Top executives were looking for expert prescribers and problem-solving facilitators. Religion communicators weren't filling those roles.

This study looked for—but did not find—evidence of a common dynamic in Excellence and Church-Sect Theory. The two-way symmetrical public relations model mirrors the social interaction that turns sects into churches and contributes to membership gain or loss in the U.S. religion environment of 2008. But the faith groups of religion communicators did not influence the way they answered survey questions about various public relations models. Consequently, no link between communication practices and membership change was shown.

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CHAPTER 1
America's Dynamic Religious Environment

Religious faith is interwoven into American culture (Dillon & Wick, 2007). Eighty-three percent of American adults said in 2008 that they were affiliated with some faith group, the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reported. Seventy-eight percent identified themselves as Christians. Five percent practiced other religions (Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, etc.). Seventeen percent said they were not affiliated with any faith group or did not know their religion (Miller, 2008a).

Religious beliefs in the United States influence political orientation and activism. The more important faith was to Religious Landscape Survey respondents, the more likely they were to express conservative political views, especially on social issues. American Christians who regularly attended church—especially Mormons and conservative Christians—generally supported Republicans. Americans who never went to church generally supported Democrats. But so did black Christians, Jews, Buddhists, most Muslims and some mainline Protestants. Politically conservative Christians—usually called "evangelicals" in news reports—often saw the Bible as a literal guide to right and wrong. They used the Bible to interpret unfolding national and international events. These biblical interpretations drove their efforts to combat social evils and promote reforms consistent with their faith and view of morality. Their goal was to save America from God's wrath because of social sins. As a result, evangelical Protestants—often joined by conservative Roman Catholics—battled gay marriage and abortion rights. Other evangelicals campaigned to include intelligent design in public school textbooks as an alternative view of creation to evolution (Miller, 2008b, Lakoff, 2004, 2007; Twitchell, 2007).

Such faith-related actions often make headlines in U.S. news outlets. So do faith-related statements by politicians and decisions by government agencies involving religious issues. For example, while campaigning for president in 2000, George W. Bush pronounced Jesus his favorite philosopher. As president, Bush later said that America was on a crusade to battle evil in the world. He said, “If you’re not with us, you’re against us” (Lakoff, 2007, p. 189). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled over the past decade on the propriety of displaying the Ten Commandments in courthouses, putting up nativity scenes on public squares before Christmas and praying at high school football games (Lakoff, 2007; Twitchell, 2007).

The religious environment in the United States is dynamic and diverse. Because of population growth, the total number of Americans affiliated with religious groups has gone up each year. But every major U.S. faith group is simultaneously gaining and losing adherents, according to the 2008 Religious Landscape Survey. Forty-four percent of adults said they had moved from the faith group in which they were reared to a new spiritual home. Protestant Christians, historically the largest U.S. faith group, had shrunk from more than 60% of the adult population in the 1960s to 51% in 2008. Within the Protestant camp, declining membership among once-dominant mainline denominations (Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, Methodists and Presbyterians) accounted for much of the loss. The proportion of the population identifying itself with mainline groups had declined to 18% in 2008 from 33% in the

1960s. Protestants identifying with evangelical denominations had grown from 16% to 26% over the same period. Historically black Protestant groups went from 9% in the 1960s to 7 % in 2008. The Roman Catholic Church had the largest membership of any U.S. faith group in 2008. The Roman Catholic portion of the population has held around 25% for decades. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church was the biggest membership loser of any faith group in the 2008 survey. An influx of immigrants—primarily from Latin America—offset losses to other faith groups or no group (Miller, 2008a; Roof & McKinney, 1987; Twitchell, 2007).

Within this dynamic social environment religion communicators help U.S. faith groups build and maintain relationships with various religious and secular publics. U.S. Christian churches—especially mainline Protestant denominations—have relied on advertising and public relations practices to reach target populations, deliver organizational messages and promote causes since the late 19th century (Curtis, 2001; Moore, 1994; Reisner, 1913; Stelzler, 1908). Communication executives of several U.S. mainline Protestant denominations formed the nation's oldest public relations professional association in November 1929 (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000). The Religious Publicity Council's original purpose was to promote publication of religion news in major U.S. newspapers (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979). That group continues today—with an expanded purpose and membership—as the interfaith Religion Communicators Council. The council's longevity is evidence of the persistent connection between public relations and organized religion in the United States.

But that connection might be hindering the spread of U.S. religious movements.

In fact, if religion communicators are following the dominant concept of modern public relations practice—known as Excellence Theory (Botan & Hazelton, 2006; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, 2006)—they may be unwittingly contributing to the membership churn in the American religion marketplace. Excellence Theory maintains that the best organizations establish two-way symmetrical relationships with key publics. Those two-way relationships allow social groups to influence the organization as much as it influences the publics. But if faith groups modify their practices to embrace temporal values, they will lose vitality, members and social influence, according to Church-Sect Theory. That is an area of religion sociology developed over the past 80 years to explain denominational development—especially in the United States (Finke & Stark, 2005; Niebuhr, 1929; Stark & Finke, 2000; Swatos, 1998; Troeltsch, 1931; Weber, 1922/1993).

Church-Sect Theory classifies mainline Protestant denominations as the most churchlike religious groups in the United States (Carroll & Roof, 1993: Finke & Stark, 2005; Johnson, 1963; McKinney, 1998; Michaelsen & Roof, 1986; Niebuhr. 1929; Roof & McKinney, 1987). That means these church groups have made the most accommodations to the values of secular society. As predicted by Church-Sect Theory, those denominations have been losing members and social influence for the past century (Finke & Stark, 2005; Miller, 2008a; Roof & McKinney, 1987; Twitchell, 2007; Wuthnow, 1988).

Since mainline denominations have the longest history of using public relations, those communication practices might be connected—if they promote accommodation to secular social values—to the decline of those groups. If that is the case, public relations practitioners serving mainline denominations—especially men and women belonging to the Religion Communicators Council—might face an ethical quandary. The council's Guidelines for Ethical Conduct, originally adopted in 1955 and last revised in 2006, call members to "be a responsible advocate for the faith group for which I work" (Guidelines for ethical conduct, 2006). Promoting public relations practices that hurt a faith group's public witness would appear to violate the "responsible advocate" standard. Nevertheless, the two-way symmetrical approach to public relations, the capstone of Excellence Theory, might be doing just that.

This research examined how religion communicators in the United States practiced public relations. By replicating survey research done by Glen Broom, David Dozier, James Grunig and their colleagues between 1982 and 2002, this study expanded scholarship on roles that communicators play within organizations and extended Excellence Public Relations Theory into an unexplored specialty. One aim was to identify what models of public relations from Excellence Theory that religion communicators followed. Furthermore, this project explored the interaction between Excellence Theory and Church-Sect Theory.

This project surveyed members of the Religion Communicators Council and the top executive of their organization. The goal was to see:

+ How religion communicators in the United States practice public relations in today's dynamic religious environment.
+ Whether religion communicators approach public relations differently from secular practitioners.
+ What faith group leaders expect from communication and their public relations officers.

+ If communicators for mainline Protestant denominations approach public relations differently from practitioners representing other U.S. faith groups.
+ If religion communication practices—especially those of mainline Protestant denominations—might contribute to the membership churn in the dynamic U.S. religion market.

Chapter 2 offers a historical and conceptual overview of religion communication in the United States. That discussion includes a review of research in secular organizations on roles that communicators play. A recurring question is whether religion communicators are flacks, hacks, managers or technicians. Chapter 3 looks at public relations practices and theories more broadly. This chapter traces the field's conceptual development from propaganda, promotion and persuasion to information, relationships and mutual influence. Those developments lay the foundation for Excellence Theory. Chapter 4 presents Church-Sect Theory as one way to understand the dynamic U.S. religion marketplace and the decline of mainline Protestant denominations. Chapter 5 explains the survey and statistical methods used to explore questions about religion communication practices. Chapter 6 presents the survey results. Chapter 7 discusses implications of those findings.

Little research has examined the interaction of religion and mass media (Buddenbaum, 2001) or how faith groups use communication to manage relationships (Tilson, 2001, 2004, 2006). This study is one attempt to begin filling that void.

CHAPTER 2
Religion Communicators: Flacks, Hacks, Managers or Technicians?

U.S. Christian churches—both local congregations and denominations—have used mass media publicity and advertising for promotion since the late 19th century (Curtis, 2001; Moore, 1994; Reisner, 1913; Stelzler, 1908). During much of that time, religion communicators—particularly members of the Religion Communicators Council and its predecessors—have debated the proper approach to fashioning mass media messages. Should their mission be to inform (educate) or transform (persuade/influence) people in the audiences they want to reach? Should religion communicators operate as promoters, advocates, mediators or flacks? Or should they operate as in-house journalists, public information providers or hacks (Cutlip & Center, 1952, 1958, 1964, 1971, 1978; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985, 1994, 2000; De Vries, 1976; Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979; Stoody, 1959; Wilbur, 1969, 1982)?

The flack-vs.-hack debate illustrates a key conceptual division among religion communicators. In this chapter, *Flack*, a term associated with publicists, press agents and other so-called "spin doctors," represents the promotional or persuasion approach to public relations. The press agentry/publicity and two-way asymmetrical models of public relations (see Chapter 3) developed by Grunig and Hunt (1984) describe different aspects of this approach. *Hack*, a person hired to do routine writing, represents the journalistic approach to public relations. Grunig and Hunt's public information model exemplifies that approach (see Chapter 3).

The flack-vs.-hack division points to one area of study among religion communicators: What roles do they play for their faith communities? Since 1979, scholars have examined a similar question concerning secular public relations practitioners (Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1992; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Broom & Smith, 1979). That research has identified a slightly different division of tasks: manager and technician.

This chapter reviews information about public relations roles in both religious and secular settings. Section I looks at how members of the Religion Communicators Council have addressed the flack-vs.-hack idea since 1929. Section II reviews public relations roles research.

Section I: Flacks vs. Hacks

Many texts have linked religious activities throughout history to what we now call public relations practices. For example, Peter G. Osgood, a long-time public relations executive, described John the Baptist as an advance man for Jesus of Nazareth (Wilcox & Cameron, 2005). Paul's New Testament letters to early Christians have been likened to a modern public relations campaign (Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007; Wilcox & Cameron, 2005). Some Arab public relations scholars have called the Islamic prophet Mohammed (A.D. 570-632) the first public relations practitioner in their culture. He used divine pronouncements (suras) to shape social action (Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007). In 1095 Pope Urban II reportedly employed communication techniques still common today to recruit thousands of Christians to fight Muslims in the Holy Crusades (Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007; Wilcox & Cameron, 2005). Promotional tactics by the Archbishop of Canterbury mobilized English nobles in 1215 to stand against the king. These efforts eventually pressured King John to accept the Magna Carta (Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007). In 1622 Pope Gregory XV established the Congregation for Propagating the Faith to counter the Protestant Reformation. The congregation generated writings to persuade people to accept the faith and doctrines taught by the Roman Catholic Church. Those publications were called propaganda (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000; Jowett and O'Donnell, 1999; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007; Seitel, 2001; Sproule, 1997).

Presbyterian pastor Charles Stelzle appears to have written the first modern book in the United States on church media use, *Principles of Successful Church Advertising*, in 1908 (Moore, 1994; Reisner, 1913). By the time Edward L. Bernays wrote the first book on public relations in 1923 (Cutlip, 1994; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007), at least two other books on church media use had been published: *Church Publicity* by Methodist pastor Christian F. Reisner in 1913 and *Handbook of Church Advertising* by Methodist pastor Francis H. Case in 1921. These early church writers cited the value of advertising and publicity—terms used interchangeably—in boosting church attendance, increasing giving and reaching people for Christ (Case, 1921; Campaign for church advertising and publicity, 1916; Reisner, 1913; Stelzler, 1908). "We are mixing faith with business," Case wrote. "… They must mix if civilization is to endure" (Quicke, 1994, p. 396).

Bernays acknowledged these early 20th century church publicity efforts in his 1928 work, *Propaganda*.

> Many churches have made paid advertising and organized propaganda part of their regular activities. They have developed church advertising committees, which make use of newspapers and the billboard, as well as of the pamphlet. Many denominations maintain their own periodicals. The Methodist Board of Publication and Information systematically gives announcements and releases to the press and the magazines. (Bernays, 1928, p. 150)

As radio developed during the 1920s, Protestant churches quickly realized the medium's promotional potential. Sixty-three of the 600 stations operating in 1925 were licensed to churches (Quicke, 1994). But not all Christian leaders agreed that churches should advertise or be using mass media. Many preachers and theologians associated media use with World War I propaganda efforts and classified promotional messages as manipulative tools of the devil (the source of evil in this world) (Pritchett & Pritchett, 1999).

Within this context, communication executives of several U.S. mainline Protestant denominations met in Washington in 1929 to form the Religious Publicity Council—forerunner of today's Religion Communicators Council (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979). The council is the nation's oldest public relations professional association (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000). The group's original purpose was to promote publication of religion news in major U.S. newspapers (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979).

Public Relations Pioneers Influence Debate

Two public relations pioneers influenced the debate within both the council and U.S. faith circles about the proper approach to religion communication. They were Ivy Ledbetter Lee and Edward L. Bernays. Lee joined with Colonel George F. Parker, an old-time political operative and press agent, in 1904 to open nation's third publicity bureau. Bernays established a competing public relations agency in 1919 (Cutlip, 1994; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007). Lee and Bernays approached public relations differently. Lee was a hack. Bernays was a flack.

Mass communication historians generally have cited Lee as the "father of public relations." But Bernays spent most of his life trying to earn that designation (Cutlip, 1994; Ewen, 1998; Olasky, 1987; Tye, 1998). He regularly issued fact sheets claiming to be the father of modern public relations (Cutlip, 1994). By outliving his contemporaries (Lee died in 1934), Bernays was eventually able to capture the "father of public relations" title (Cutlip, 1994; Tye, 1998). The headline on his March 10, 1995, obituary in *The New York Times* read, "Edward Bernays, 'Father of Public Relations' and Leader in Opinion Making, Dies at 103" ("Edward Bernays, 'Father of Public Relations' and Leader in Opinion Making, Dies at 103," 1995).

But the official Religious Public Relations Council history, published in 1979 to mark the group's golden anniversary, recognizes Lee, the "son of a Georgia (Methodist) minister," as the father of public relations (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 5). The council history never mentions Bernays. Furthermore, the organizational history claims an indirect link to Lee through Parker, his first partner. From 1913 to 1919 Parker served as secretary for press and publicity for the Committee of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church and was known to many of the council's founders (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979). Parker died in New York in 1928, the year before RCC was founded, at age 80 (Cutlip, 1994; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000).

Lee, a publicist (hack), saw his role as telling the stories of his clients (usually corporations) through publicity, a communication function. Often called "earned media" today, publicity describes the dissemination of planned messages through selected mass media outlets without payment. The objective is to further the interests of the person or organization supplying the information (Cannon, 1995).

As a preacher's kid, Lee was an attractive father figure for religion communicators to identify with. He grew up hearing his father, a Methodist, proclaim a liberal Protestant gospel: Man could create heaven on earth by establishing a new, cooperative social order. That social gospel influenced the advice Lee gave corporate leaders about working for the public's good (Olasky, 1987).

Lee maintained an interest in religion and theological questions throughout his career. He promoted modernism in Christianity and personally printed and paid for national distribution of Harry Emerson Fosdick's sermon series, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" He used publicity to spread Fosdick's beliefs. He persuaded business tycoon John D. Rockefeller to give $26 million for construction of a new church to house Fosdick's ministry. Fosdick had resigned under fire from his previous church (Olasky, 1987).

Nevertheless, Lee, an 1898 Princeton University graduate who did later graduate studies at Columbia University, made no effort to outline a coherent philosophy for his work. He told a 1927 public transit commission hearing that he had never found a satisfactory term to describe what he did. He considered his activities an art, not a science. Lee reportedly told Bernays that the things Lee did in publicity work would die with him (Cutlip, 1994).

Bernays Takes Different Approach

Bernays took a decidedly different and more systematic approach to his work. He described himself as a "counsel on public relations" (flack), not a publicist. For him the work involved much more than communication. He was an "applied social scientist" (Ewen, 1998, p. 10) who studied "the public mind" with "the aid of practical and psychological tests and surveys" (Bernays, 1923, pp. 52, 53). He maintained that public relations counselors contributed to business success by using knowledge of "sociology, psychology, social psychology and economics" (Ewen, 1998, p. 10) to understand human motivation, influence public opinion and manipulate mass human behavior. Counselors did that through planned actions as well as communications. Bernays said his job was not to create positive images for his clients. He tried to fashion and project a credible rendition of reality (Ewen, 1998).

Bernays systematically outlined the flack philosophy in his first book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923). In it he introduced the two-way concept of communication in public relations (as opposed to the one-way publicity approach), called public relations a management function and described the public relations counsel as a mediator between clients and target publics. The public relations counsel, in Bernays' view, moved beyond the hack to the flack by planning special events that made news on their own. Bernays' approach did not rely on news releases to generate coverage. Sixty-seven years later, Bernays told scholar Stewart Ewen that the counsel's job was to instruct clients to "interrupt … the continuity of life in some way to bring about the (media) response" (Ewen, 1998, p. 14).

Public discussion of *Crystallizing Public Opinion* brought both recognition and criticism to the public relations field (Cutlip, 1994).

> In a 1924 editorial, the *Chicago Tribune*, a conservative newspaper, urged that the business executive, when he was trying to obtain the public's cooperation, should as a priority extend complete cooperation to the public relations department of his organization. A year later, Abram Lipsky, in his book, *Man, the Puppet*, saw the public relations counsel only "as a new Pied Piper who was the old press agent in new guise." Yet by 1926, the

> *New York Herald* editorialized, "The old time press agent has gone and with the emergence of public relations counsel there was change not only of title but of methods." … Throughout most of this period, *Editor & Publisher* (a weekly newspaper trade magazine) remained a reconstructed foe of the new field. … E&P's fear was expressed earlier that year on July 27, 1939, when it wrote, "Perhaps some can explain to us why it is that certain publishers who would instantly discharge a reporter for 'making news' will accept the synthetic news creation of press agents." (Cutlip, 1994, pp. 179-180)

In *Propaganda* (1928) Bernays further detailed the public relations counsel's role and described individuals doing the work as "new propagandists." He defined propaganda as "an organized effort to spread a particular belief or doctrine" (p. 48), "the establishing of reciprocal understanding between individuals and groups" (p. 161) and "the transmission of opinions and ideas" (p. 162). He described propaganda positively as "the executive arm of the invisible government" managed by public relations practitioners (Bernays, 1928, p. 48). Their mission was to organize information for the public, narrow the field of choices to practical proportions and regiment the public mind. He maintained that such mass persuasion was consistent with good, democratic government (Bernays, 1928).

> The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is the logical result of the way our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society. (Bernays, 1928, p. 9)

The release of *Propaganda* set back, rather than advanced, the flack approach to public relations in both secular and faith communities. By openly discussing techniques of mass manipulation, the book embarrassed many in the public relations industry for decades to come (Ewen, 1998). Cutlip noted:

> His timing could not have been more unfortunate. In the 1920s, in the disillusionment that settled across America when the United States failed to achieve its lofty aims of World War I, propaganda became a whipping post for the critics and the cynics. The word propaganda was once a perfectly respectable word describing a church function. … America's era of the 1920s made propaganda an ugly, connotative word as writers and political leaders asserted that the United States had been suckered into the war by false propaganda of the British…. And on top of this, that same year, 1928, brought the start of the exposure of the nation's utilities, led by the notorious Samuel Insull, for their conduct of "an aggressive countrywide propaganda campaign…." (Cutlip, 1994, p. 183)

In that social climate *Propaganda* set off alarm bells in religious, political and academic circles. For example, The *Michigan Christian Advocate*, a weekly Methodist Episcopal Church newspaper, warned of a danger "in the discovery of the mass mind" that Bernays described (Cutlip, 1994; Olasky, 1987). In a 1934 letter to President Franklin Roosevelt, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter described Bernays and Lee as "professional poisoners of the public mind, exploiters of foolishness, fanaticism and self-interest." Sociologist E.T. Hiller said Bernays' efforts to manipulate opinion "constitute a financial burden, a perversion of intellectual candor, and a menace to political sanity" (Cutlip, 1994, p. 185; Olasky, 1987, p. 91).

Those remarks reflect opinions about Bernays' flack approach to public relations when the Religious Publicity Council was born. The anti-*Propaganda* opinions may be one reason the council decided to use "publicity," rather than "public relations," in its original name.

Bernays' "applied social scientist" and "new propagandist" approach to public relations introduced an underlying issue that has haunted the continuing flack-vs.-hack debate in the Religion Communicators Council: the role of psychology in public relations practice. A nephew of Sigmund Freud, Bernays referred to his uncle constantly and alluded to the importance of psychoanalytic concepts to his public relations thinking (Cutlip, 1994; Ewen, 1998; Olasky, 1987, 1988; Tye, 1998). Bernays held the 1920 copyright on the first volume of Freud's work published in the United States (Freud, 1920). Bernays openly advocated using propaganda to direct public attention to specific topics in the marketplace of ideas and engineer consent (Bernays, 1928, 1955). As a result, Vance Packard (1957) blasted Bernays in *The Hidden Persuaders* as one of the "symbol manipulators" who were shaping public thought during the 1950s.

The Hidden Persuaders appeared the year the Soviet Union put Sputnik 1 into orbit and shook America's national confidence. The book, which topped *The New York Times* bestseller list for six straight weeks, gave one insight into why some people were suspicious of advertising and public relations practices during the post-McCarthy Cold War period.

Packard painted a pessimistic picture of mid-20th century American society. He said professional "symbol manipulators"—advertisers, public relations practitioners, political campaign planners and professional fundraisers—were using "mass psychoanalysis" to discover how to control American commercial, social and political decisions. These persuaders preyed on the hidden subconscious desires of unwary consumer-citizens through "depth" motivation research. That research allowed manipulators to herd members of the passive mass audience like sheep into buying things they did not need, worrying about manufactured concerns and voting for prepackaged political candidates. "The most serious offense many of the depth manipulators commit, it seems to me," Packard wrote, "is that they try to invade the privacy of our minds. It is this right to privacy in our minds—privacy to be either rational or irrational—that I believe we must strive to protect" (Packard, 1957, p. 266).

Dean of Church Public Relations Rejects Flack Approach

The association of public relations with "hidden persuaders," intentional audience manipulation and psychological research prompted some church communicators during the period to shy away from public relations as Bernays practiced it. For example, Ralph Stoody, "dean of church public relations" (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 38), wrote in his 1959 *Handbook of Church Public Relations*:

> Forget the pompous and complex approach to the subject. Among professionals in the general field may be those who aspire to be "propagandistic manipulators" or "engineers of consent," but this type of practitioner is extremely rare. In general, PR people seem sincerely committed to standards of truth and good taste and to objectives that are in accordance with public welfare. (Stoody, 1959, p. 10)

The references to propaganda and engineering consent were both explicit allusions to Bernays' published work: *Propaganda* (1928) and *The Engineering of Consent* (1955).

Stoody tried to set himself apart from Bernays and other "hidden persuaders" by defining religious public relations as "doing whatever contributes toward making a church deserve and receive the confidence and cooperation of increasing numbers of people—in still simpler form: making friends for Christ and his Church" (Stoody, 1959, p. 10). This definition, with its emphasis on doing (action) like Bernays rather than telling (reporting) like Lee, seems to put Stoody on the flack side of the RCC debate. But his daily work as head of Methodist Information, a denominational news bureau—“doing strictly publicity and promotional work” (Peterson, 1946, p. 8)—as well as the chapters in his handbook (“What makes news ‘news,’ “How to write news,” “Releases: How to prepare them,” etc.), show him to be a hack in practice.

Churches Struggle with Definition of Public Relations

Deciding how to define public relations and whether churches should use practices associated with it has been part of the flack-vs.-hack debate for more than 50 years. Scott Cutlip and Allen Center tracked changing perceptions of public relations among church leaders in various editions of their textbook, *Effective Public Relations*. Their widely used work, as well as Religion Communicator Council publications released during the same period, showed gradual changes since 1952 in how church leaders—especially at local and regional levels—regarded public relations.

Cutlip and Center (1952, 1958, 1964, 1971, 1978) have reported increasing support for systematic public relations among local church leaders over the years. Their writing was less clear concerning changing opinions at the denominational level. Cutlip and Center indicated a constant acceptance of public relations there. In the first edition of *Effective Public Relations*, Cutlip and Center wrote:

> Although an increasing number of church bodies are embracing the practice of public relations, there is still staunch sentiment among many clergy and lay leaders to shy clear of something as “modern” and “secular” as “public relations.” … Too many people confuse public relations with the ill-advised uses to which it is sometimes put. For this reason, many religious leaders back off from the adoption of modern public relations methods for the advancement

> of religion. This thinking, found mostly at the local level, is waning. The major religious bodies have large, strong PR staffs in their national headquarters. As public relations contributes to the work of the church in a spiritually sick, strife-torn, and starving world, it needs no apology. Though they pioneered in the art of communications in the early centuries of civilization, churches in the last century or so have lagged behind in adoption of modern methods. The current emphasis on the importance of PR in religious circles is, in part, an effort to catch up with the refinements and the emphasis in industry, labor, government, and education. (Cutlip & Center, 1952, p. 362)

The church could decide where to use publicity, Cutlip and Center continued. But it had no choice in the matter of public relationships with society. Everything about the church was open to public view: achievements, deficiencies, needs, purposes, attitudes and actions (Cutlip & Center, 1952).

The second, third and fourth editions (Cutlip & Center, 1958, 1964, 1971), although slightly rewritten, made the same points. The fifth edition (Cutlip & Center, 1978) was a bit more upbeat. “An increasing number of the 240 church bodies in the United States are embracing the practice of public relations,” it said (p. 483). Furthermore, Cutlip and Center noted:

> Churches are not immune to the power of public opinion. They must participate in public debates on more issues. Also, they must effectively communicate their position and their principles. The president of the World Council of Churches in North America told members of that body, “Our biggest problem is our image.” Said President Cynthia Wedel, “When people don’t understand what we are doing, they resent the money their churches put in. (Cutlip & Center, 1978, p. 484)

Nevertheless, the fifth edition repeated the 1952 wording about local church leaders shying away from public relations as something too modern or secular. Still, the 1978 treatment signaled increasing overall support for systematic two-way public relations.

Publications during this period from the Religion Public Relations Council (the

RCC name from 1963 to 1998) reflected similar statements about church public relations to what Cutlip and Center were saying. In RPRC's 1969 *Handbook on Church Public Relations*, Executive Secretary Marvin Wilbur wrote:

> Only a few years ago, many churches would have nothing to do with public relations. It was a rather dirty business. It was a "secular" matter about which it was not quite right for the church to be concerned. Or so they thought. (Wilbur, 1969, p. 1)

He noted that many top religious public relations practitioners now associated their work "with such churchly functions as evangelism (outreach), mission and education" (Wilbur, 1969, p. 1). Wilbur advocated a planned, two-way (flack) approach to church public relations.

In 1976, Charles De Vries, vice president for fraternal and public affairs at Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, associated public relations practices directly with local church ministry in Chapter 1 of the second handbook edition (renamed *Religious Public Relations Handbook*). Like Cutlip and Center, he pointed out that every group, including religious ones, could not escape having relationships with the public.

> Your relationships with your publics may be good, bad or indifferent, but you do have them. No group can decide to have or not have public relations. Paying attention to these relationships, planning carefully to mould them so that they support and sustain the congregation and its purposes, and acting on these plans—that is what public relations is all about. … The normal workings of a congregation and public relations functions are so intertwined that one could say such activity is part of the ongoing program. If so, you're practicing public relations. (De Vries, 1976, pp. 1-2)

Maintaining those relationships involved planned persuasion and communication in a "process of securing and maintaining understanding and support," De Vries said (p. 1).

Like Wilbur in the first edition, De Vries argued for a research-based, two-way (flack) approach to public relations.

In the council's third handbook edition, published in 1982, Wilbur repeated that many church leaders did not think their congregations needed public relations programs. Those leaders thought their churches were exempt from effective public relations rules or effective use of media. "Such thinking can't be further from the truth," Wilbur wrote. "… Mere possession of truth does not guarantee understanding or acceptance. If the church and synagogue are to stay vital forces, they must know how to interpret their message convincingly to the community" (Wilbur, 1982, p. 2). Wilbur defined public relations as "planned informing, seeking a desired understanding and action" (p. 1). He said public relations in the church involved two major functions: policymaking at the highest level and technical communication skills (Wilbur, 1982). Here Wilbur reflected contemporary academic research findings on manager and technician roles in public relations (Broom, 1982; Broom & Smith, 1979). Wilbur also combined the flack approach (policymaking) with the hack emphasis (technical communication skills).

Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985) expanded their discussion of religious public relations in their sixth edition and noted that churches were turning to marketing techniques to fill pews. Faith communities were researching audience desires, developing products and programs to meet those perceived needs, and promoting those offerings to target groups.

> Because of increased demands society is putting upon the nation's churches and the increased competition for commitment and dollars, spurred by radio and TV ministries, churches are employing practitioners in increasing numbers. Society's demands and church competition come in

> an era in which church membership has flattened out and church attendance has declined slightly, thus posing an additional challenge for the practitioners in the religious community. (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985, p. 545)

To meet the challenge, the sixth edition said, church practitioners were moving into broadcast programming and advertising to deliver their messages to target audiences (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985). Again, the sixth edition repeated the 1952 language about some local church leaders being suspicious of public relations. Nevertheless, the 1985 treatment showed growing support for systematic two-way (flack) public relations.

In the fourth RPRC handbook edition, published in 1988, Floyd Craig, a private public relations counsel who advised church groups, returned to De Vries' theme: Public relations was essential to ministry.

> Public relations for a congregation is about creating and maintaining a favorable impression. Of course, it is more than that, but it is a start! Indeed, public relations is the skill of "putting things together." It is the process of coordinating all communication methods and approaches together into a single planned effort to secure understanding and acceptance. (Craig, 1988, p. 2)

Craig continued the trend in RPRC handbooks of advocating a planned two-way (flack) approach to church public relations.

The seventh and eighth editions of Cutlip, Center and Broom's text (1994, 2000) reduced the space devoted to religious public relations and combined churches with other nonprofit organizations. Religion and spirituality appeared to be enjoying a revival in American society, the eighth edition said. Stories related to religion were constantly making news—sexual misconduct charges against Roman Catholic priests, scandals involving TV evangelists, deaths at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco.

> Organized religion has not escaped the vortex of change, crisis, and confrontation, so it has become top news. Whereas the church has long been comfortable using the media in the cause of religion, it is not experienced or comfortable in the spotlight of the evening news or tabloid expose. As a major force in society and social change, however, the church cannot avoid the spotlight. Increased media attention and a whole range of other relationship problems suggest an important and growing role for public relations in the church and synagogue. (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000, p. 550)

Religious public relations practitioners faced unique challenges for at least four reasons, the eighth edition said:

+ The intangible nature of many religious activities.
+ The sacred nature of many activities, which demands a dignified approach.
+ The problem of showing the practical worth of religious values.
+ The difficulty of finding which level to project ideas on so they will appeal to many (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000, p. 550).

The text in Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) implied that churches had recognized and accepted the need for public relations.

In the fifth RPRC handbook edition, published in 1995 and now called *How Shall They Hear? A Handbook for Religion Communicators*, Douglas Cannon, then United Methodist Media Services director for Texas and New Mexico, also integrated public relations into normal church operations. He connected public relations to Christian witness.

> In simple terms "public relations" refers to the way individuals or organizations handle their reputations. As such, we all have "public relations"—whether we think about it or not. Our reputations are based on what we do or don't do, what we say or don't say and what others say about us. A faith group's reputation is based on—in Christian terms—its witness, the way its members live out, act upon and proclaim what they believe. (Cannon, 1995, p. 2-2)

In the sixth handbook edition, published in 2000 by the renamed Religion Communicators Council, the discussion of public relations moved from the opening pages to Chapter 6 ("Marketing"). The chapter introduction called marketing "the process of effectively communicating information to target audiences” and noted that “many people associate marketing with selling or equate marketing interchangeably with advertising” (Bushkofsky, 2000, p. 86). The chapter defined public relations as a communication discipline that tells an organization’s story to different publics to foster goodwill and understanding (Bushkofsky, 2000). That definition, based simply on communication, presents public relations as a hack process. That is a major shift from the first five editions.

The seventh handbook edition, published in 2004 and re-titled *Speaking Faith: The Essential Handbook for Religion Communicators*, backtracked somewhat from the 2000 definitional change. The “Marketing” section was retitled “Strategic Communication” and moved to Chapter 12. Donn James Tilson, associate professor of public relations at the University of Miami, repeated the communication-based definition of public relations from the sixth edition. Then he added, “‘Publics’ are the audiences you target to receive messages about your faith community. The core of public relations work is relationship management” (Tilson, 2004, p. 85). He also said:

> Communication that establishes and maintains quality relationships between the faith group and its audiences also can be persuasive or promotional in nature. The desire to be both relational and promotional need not be mutually exclusive, and may, in fact, enhance one another. (Tilson, 2004, p. 83)

In that way Tilson tried to reconcile the flack and hack functions in church public relations.

Council Names Reflect Debate

The Religion Communicators Council’s various names since 1929 give more evidence of the continuing flack-vs.-hack debate. The organization has had four names during its life. They have reflected shifting opinions about how members described what they did. The name debate, especially following World War II, may have been one fruit of seeds planted during the flap over *Propaganda* in 1928.

The organization was chartered as the Religious Publicity Council. In 1929 advertising and publicity were often used interchangeably (Case, 1921; Reisner, 1913; Stelzler, 1908). The move to establish the council came after two national interdenominational conferences on religious publicity, the first in March 1927, the second in March 1929 (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979; *Manual*, 1930). The group's constitution said the council's purpose was "to bring together religious publicity representatives for interchange of ideas and experiences, for conference on common problems and for such cooperative effort as may develop" (*Manual*, 1930, p. 7). Membership was open "to those who are the officially appointed publicity representatives of religious organizations" (*Manual*, 1930, p. 7).

M.E. McIntosh, one of the organizers and editor in the calendar service department at the Board of Mission Cooperation for the Northern Baptist Convention, defined religious publicity as "any broadcast message, printed or spoken, that is about religions or religious organizations" (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 10). Of the 29 charter members, 19 had "publicity" in their titles. Four were editors, and the others were "executives" in evangelism, Christian education or missions. All were Protestant Christians (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979).

McIntosh appears to have launched the flack-vs.-hack debate in the council at the organizing meeting. “Publicity must be employed by religion,” he said, “because conditions have developed which make it the only possible means of obtaining an important audience.” Further, he advocated an approach to publicity work that would “systematize and make available to all, on lines parallel to those followed so successfully in the business schools and marketing departments of great universities, the psychology that must govern this field” (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 10). While the use of “publicity” echoed Lee, the references to psychology and universities appeared to put McIntosh in the Bernays flack camp. Besides emphasizing the use of psychology in planning public relations efforts, Bernays began teaching the first college course on public relations in 1922 at New York University (Cutlip, 1994; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000).

During the next 17 years, journalist-turned-seminary student Lemuel Petersen reported, Protestant churches worked effectively “to establish good relations with the public and to get effective publicity into all media of communication” (Petersen, 1946, p. 8). Stoody, for example, who directed a news service that generated multiple stories and photos each day, was providing “the Methodist church with probably the best publicity that any Protestant denomination is getting today,” said Petersen (1946, p. 8). While Stoody was doing “strictly publicity and promotional work” (the hack approach), Petersen continued, “some church organizations are actually operating in the broader area of public relations” (the flack approach) (p. 8). Those groups include the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America (forerunner of today’s National Council of Churches of

Christ in the U.S.A.) and the Northern Baptist Convention (today's American Baptist Church).

John Fortson, appointed the Federal Council's public relations director in 1940, had worked with Bernays as well as reported for several news organizations. His background combined flack and hack orientations. He wrote *How to Make Friends for Your Church: A Manual on Public Relations* in 1943 (Petersen, 1946).

In 1946 Stanley Stuber, director of public relations for the Northern Baptist Convention and 1946 president of the Religion Publicity Council, won the first public relations award in religion ever given by the American Public Relations Association. That was for his work as director of the United Church Canvass. The project was done by a coalition of one Jewish and 18 Protestant groups. The coalition launched a national advertising campaign, in cooperation with the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, to promote participation in and support for churches and synagogues (Petersen, 1946). By combining advertising with publicity, the United Church Canvass appeared to have taken a flack, rather than hack, approach. Advertising campaigns after World War II were usually based on market or psychological research (Packard, 1957).

Winfred Elson, a Lutheran publicity executive since 1921 and another Religious Publicity Council organizer, distinguished for Peterson differences between church publicity, promotion and public relations. Publicity, Elson said, sought to create a favorable feeling about a church with the general public. Promotion sought prayers, financial contributions and volunteer service from church members. Public relations involved strategic planning in light of public opinion to direct promotion and publicity (Peterson, 1946). Those distinctions seemed to indicate that public relations concepts were moving toward "flacking" among senior church practitioners after World War II.

In 1949 the Religious Publicity Council became the National Religious Publicity Council. That change reflected the expanding membership of more than 300 in places beyond New York City but not a change in purpose. Many members, however, were dissatisfied with the continuing use of "publicity" in the title. At the 1951 annual meeting a new name, National Protestant Council on Public Relations, was suggested, but no action was taken. In response to continuing criticism of the organizational name, the council executive committee took a straw vote on possible changes. "Publicity is not inclusive enough of the varied promotional activities the members carry on," one response said. Another said, "To me, 'publicity' means the working press, while 'public relations' means the promotional, talking, advertising 'rah-rah' boys" (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 11).

The lead article in the Autumn 1952 council newsletter discussed the relationship between public relations and evangelism. The piece advocated using every available medium to publish "good news" (Remember When, 1982, p. 6). The emphasis on communication, rather than planned actions, was a hack approach.

Both the council's 1956 and 1957 annual meetings debated name changes. The 1957 assembly voted to maintain the National Religious Publicity Council title and not to consider the subject again for at least five years. In 1962 the name was again on the national convention agenda. Members voted that year for a change but directed the board of governors to determine just what council members did and then propose an appropriate designation. A subsequent survey showed that a majority of the council's 600 members said their work was public relations administration. Therefore, the board recommended Religious Public Relations Council as the new name. It was adopted in 1963 (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979). The revised purposes for the renamed council were:

> … to maintain high standards of religious public relations and communications; to develop fellowship among those engaged in public relations and related work for religious organizations; to develop professional prestige for those working in religious public relations and communications; to present a united front and to speak with one voice on vital issues involving religious public relations and communication; to provide a clearinghouse for the exchange of ideas and the discussion of mutual problems, to pool information on media, contacts, new technology and research; to encourage young people to select as a career public relations and communications in the field of religion. (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 7)

The 1963 change did not end the name discussion. The membership still did not provide a united front or speak with one voice concerning religious public relations practice. One reason may have been a changing membership profile. Until 1961 the council membership had been exclusively Protestant Christian. Starting in 1961 the council began offering associate memberships to Roman Catholics and Jews. In 1970 the council opened full membership to people of all religious faiths (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979). Roman Catholics, for instance, brought different traditions of media use and perspectives on truth from Protestants into the organization (Jelen, 1996). The additional diversity may have influenced the flack-vs.-hack perspective and, in turn, the name debate.

Nevertheless, while many senior church executives in RPRC saw their work as "public relations" during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, a growing number of members seemed to consider themselves "religious journalists," based on comments in trade and council publications. These religious journalists saw themselves as watchdogs on the church rather than advocates or promoters.

For example, James Lee Young, a member of the RPRC board of governors and Denver chapter, demonstrated his hack orientation when he resigned in June 1982 as editor of the *Rocky Mountain Baptist Record* because of reported “censorship.” Superiors reportedly told him not to print information about plans for a “closed” session of the Colorado Baptist Convention executive committee and to clear all stories about the panel with its chair. Young, who had edited the convention-owned weekly for five years, said he left his post because he did not think Baptist leaders should be telling him what to do. He considered himself an independent journalist (RPRC People, 1982).

The Rev. James C. Suggs, founding president of RPRC’s Central Indiana Chapter in 1962, voiced disdain for “religious hucksterism” in the keynote address to the Indianapolis chapter’s silver anniversary celebration in 1987. “An old issue in religious communication that is nagging me (and at least some of you) is the important distinction between news and publicity. Sometimes our managers want us only to tell good news. But the advice we might give our managers is that ‘telling it as it is’ is good advice” (Integrity in religious public relations stressed, 1987, p. 3).

Members like Young and Suggs grew more and more dissatisfied with “public relations” in the council name. They even appeared to join other church leaders in looking down on the function.

Marvin C. Wilbur, RPRC executive secretary from 1959 to 1986, acknowledged to a trade magazine in 1986 that nonpractitioners in the religious community often had a poor image of public relations. He said he expected acceptance to grow over time as more church leaders realized the value of what public relations people did for the church (Brice, 1986).

Stories and headlines in the *RPRC Counselor*, the organization's quarterly newsletter, between 1979 and 1998 persistently referred "religious communicators," "religious communications and public relations" and "religion communication" as well as to "PR." As RPRC prepared to mark its golden anniversary during its 1979 national convention, Wilbur quoted a meeting organizer in an *RPRC Counselor* article as saying the council had been working in "religion communication for 50 years" (N.Y. Chapter hosts golden anniversary convention of RPRC, 1979, p. 1). Newsletter stories covered both flack and hack topics. Those topics included how to improve writing skills (hack), understanding human nature (flack), improving photography (hack), attitude research (flack), using video to tell stories (hack), meshing public relations and marketing (flack), dealing with reporters (hack), emergency planning (flack), postal regulations for publications (hack), use of market research (flack), improving news releases (hack), future public relations trends (flack), desktop publishing (hack), management skill development (flack) and how to conduct interviews (hack).

Newsletter pages between 1979 and 1998 showed that RPRC annual convention programs dealt with a wide range of topics, both flack and hack: future technological trends (hack—1979, 1981, 1983, 1993), ethics in journalism and public relations (flack—1988, 1998), church-state issues (flack—1987, 1989), social trends affecting religion or communication (flack—1980, 1984, 1995, 1997), media effects on public opinion (flack—1982, 1985, 1990, 1991, 1996) and improving communication practices (hack—1985, 1986, 1992, 1994). Professional development workshops at these meetings emphasized hack skills, such as writing, editing, publication design, computer use and video production. Major plenary speeches, usually given by public relations executives, academics, theologians, futurists or journalists, tended to cover flack topics, such as professionalism, management trends, keeping spiritually grounded, relationship building and dealing with controversies.

The 1982 convention theme ("Objectivity vs. Advocacy") addressed the flack-vs.-hacks question head on, calling it an "internal conflict so familiar to RPRC members" (Friedly, 1982, p. 1). Several presentations dealt with (1) the conflict with management over what is truth and what is "PR" and (2) the conflict with other religious and secular public relations people over what are appropriate public relations methods (Friedly, 1982, p. 1).

The council's annual DeRose-Hinkhouse awards competition for members showed a strong hack influence. Of the contest's six classes for judging, only one dealt with public relations campaigns. The others were print (newspapers, magazines, newsletters), other print media (advertising, brochures, poster and fliers, books), writing (news writing, feature writing, editorial writing), audiovisual (audio tapes, filmstrips, videotapes, slide presentations, disks, motion pictures, exhibits) and broadcast (radio programs, radio commercials, TV programs, TV commercials, cable TV programs) (Twenty-Six Named DeRose/Hinkhouse Award Winners, 1981; Methodists, Lutherans, Brethren take top awards, 1984; Baptists top award winner list, 1987; Members cited in DeRose-Hinkhouse

Awards, 1995; And the Winners Are … DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards, 2005)

Nevertheless, during the 1980s, the council actively worked with other professional public relations organizations to promote a flack approach to the discipline. RPRC joined 10 other groups on the North American Public Relations Council in 1984 to draft a common code of public relations ethics (RPRC to help draft PR code of ethics, 1984). RPRC adopted that code in 1993 (Code of ethics supported, 1993). The code supplemented an eight-point statement of professional aims for Christian public relations personnel adopted in 1959 and revised in 1970 to remove explicit Christian references (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979). The professional aims said council members were "servants of God dedicated to the task of making my faith more widely and more favorably known." Their first priority was "to keep in mind the basic purpose of my faith and direct all my professional activities toward achieving that purpose" (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 32).

RPRC leaders advised the Public Relations Society of America on its 1982 "statement of public relations in today's world" and attended the secular group's national assembly (Eleven RPRCers at PRSA meeting, 1983; PRSA asks help of RPRC heads, 1983). *PR Reporter*, a weekly trade newsletter, praised the council's third *Religious Public Relations Handbook* in 1982 as a "primer" covering the fundamentals of public relations. As a result of the coverage, more than 30 secular organizations, including AT&T, Texaco and several universities, ordered copies (Handbook given newsletter's nod, 1982; New PR handbook given endorsement, 1982).

In 1984, *Public Relations News*, another weekly trade newsletter, named Wilbur, known as “Mr. RPRC” for his years of volunteer service as council executive secretary, one of the “40 Outstanding PR People in the World.” The newsletter recognized him as an expert in religious public relations who has been instrumental in developing purposes and professional aims for religious public relations personnel. The event marked the newsletter’s 40th anniversary (Wilbur one of world’s “top 40,” 1984). Besides his part-time work for RPRC, Wilbur served as assistant vice president for public relations for the United Presbyterian Foundation for 20 years.

In 1990 the council sponsored a satellite teleconference on congregational communications techniques. More than 400 people, mostly pastors, church secretaries and local church communications volunteers, watched the two-hour presentation at 18 downlink sites. Many called in to question the seven panelists. Those speakers covered seven topics—both flack and hack: planning and organizing local public relations efforts (flack), publication design (hack), media relations (hack), using computers to produce communication products (hack), person-to-person interaction (flack), special events planning (flack) and gaining access to broadcast and cable TV outlets (hack) (Public relations teleconference set for spring, 1989; Satellite teleconference showcases RPRC’s professionalism, both in P.R. and technology, 1990).

In 1983 the council revised its purpose statement, removing “to maintain high standards of religious public relations and communications” as its first goal and other statements about promoting a common voice on public relations issues and promoting the prestige of religious public relations. The new purposes were:

> … to build a better climate of understanding and greater acceptance of religious faith and to broaden support for the total religious community; to

> provide a clearinghouse for exchange of ideas and the discussion of mutual concerns among public relations and communications professionals in religion; to encourage excellence and accountability in religious public relations and communications; to provide continuing education opportunities, fellowship and mutual support for religious communicators; to foster active two-way communication between RPRC members and their publics; to recognize achievements of RPRC members and the secular media; to encourage individuals to select as a career public relations and communications in the field of religion. (New statement of purposes for RPRC adopted by 54th annual convention, 1983, p. 8)

The new purposes seemed to be directing the council toward a more strategic (flack) approach to public relations. The list of purposes emphasized promoting understanding and two-way communication. But some members still chafed at belonging to an organization with “public relations” in the title.

Shirley Struchen, 1997 council president, appointed a task group to study a name change (Struchen, 1998). A survey of members found that few still had “public relations” in their titles. At least a quarter of members were “directors of communications” (Name change, 1998). Consequently, the task group proposed changing the name to Religion Communicators Council.

The 1998 national meeting passed the change with only two dissenting votes. Douglas Cannon of San Antonio and Peter Hewitt of Philadelphia both argued that public relations was a broader, more inclusive term than communications. In fact, Cannon said, “Communication is one aspect of public relations.” But Dick Duerksen of Washington expressed the majority view. “I think communications is much broader and will be an asset to us.” (Members agree to change name, 1998). Thomas R. May, 1998 council president, later agreed. He wrote in his summer 1998 president’s message to members: “As the Religion Communicators Council we hope to more accurately reflect the work we do and the professional titles we individually hold. We also hope to broaden our membership potential to include many religious communicators who do not consider themselves to be working in the field of public relations" (May, 1998, p. 2).

The revised purpose for the council dropped all references to public relations, moved promoting understanding of faith to the end and increased emphasis on relationships within its diverse faith membership. Professional membership was open to "any person who devotes a major portion of his/her service in professional public relations or communications activity to any religious communion, organization or related activity" (Bylaws, 2005). The revised purposes are:

> … to provide an environment for the exchange of ideas and the discussion of mutual concerns among professional religion communicators, to encourage excellence and accountability among professional religion communicators, to provide continuing education opportunities and support for religion communicators, to recognize achievements of Religion Communicators Council members and secular media, to encourage individuals to become professional religion communicators, to build among Religion Communicator Council members an understanding and appreciation of diverse faith groups, to promote understanding and acceptance of religion, faith and faith communities. (Bylaws, 2005)

At the same 1998 meeting that changed the name, council members voted to explore joining the Universal Accreditation Board for public relations practitioners. Another initiative of the North American Public Relations Council, now made up of 12 professional organizations, the board was to award a credential indicating professional competence. The credential was to be recognized across the public relations industry (RCC joins the Universal Accreditation Board, 2001). RCC had first considered granting its own credential in 1985 but had not moved forward on that project (Board looking at career development possibilities, 1985-86). The RPRC board of governors endorsed the

NAPRC universal approach in October 1992 (Universal credential could help lift PR stature, 1993). The Universal Accreditation Board began operating in 1998. RCC officially joined in 2001 (RCC joins the Universal Accreditation Board, 2001).

As a result of joining the Universal Accreditation process, RCC needed to update its ethics documents. Fifteen percent of the questions on the Accreditation Board's Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations dealt with ethics and law. RCC was expected to have guidelines for its members similar to those of other organizations participating in the accreditation process. The RCC Board of Governors named a five-member task force in July 2005 to develop ethical standards to replace the 1970 professional aims and 1993 uniform code then in effect. The board presented the new, 22-point Guidelines for Ethical Conduct to the annual business meeting at the 2006 national convention. Members adopted the guidelines, which do not refer to "public relations" (Guidelines for ethical conduct, 2006).

Except for references in items about accreditation, almost all mentions of "public relations" disappeared from *Counselor* after 1998. Discussions of public relations were removed from the opening pages of council handbooks, where they had appeared in the first five editions. Those discussions moved to later chapters on marketing in the sixth edition (2000) and strategic communication in the seventh (2004).

Talk about the council name also stopped after 1998. Members appeared happy being called "religion communicators," which implied more hack than flack. Black (2002) found "communications" was the most common job title used among council members. But even with the new name, council membership numbers have not changed significantly. The 2006 count remained around 550, about what it was in 1998 (Directory, 2006).

The flack-vs.-hack debate surfaced briefly during a 2005-06 online discussion of the revised Guidelines for Ethical Conduct. The issue was how RCC should reconcile journalism vs. public relations understandings of truth in those revised guidelines. Ken Bedell, an RCC member from Nashville, Tenn., and former seminary professor, wrote:

> I think the journalism/public relations distinction is an important question for RCC members. … My guess is that most RCC members are in situations where they must figure out how to balance between demands to perform PR functions and expectations they should be journalists. To return to the example of UMR (*The United Methodist Reporter* edition in Central New York), the 1970s model encouraged the editor of the conference PR material to write journalistic signed articles for the national portion of the paper. I believe that this situation of religious organizations mixing PR with journalism is widespread. For example the *NCC Link* publication (from the National Council of Churches) is mostly PR, but it also includes material that gives the appearance of being a journalistically honest report on a situation or issue. I think that a code of ethics that is useful for RCC members facing ethical issues needs to address head on the PR/journalism issue. (K. Bedell, personal correspondence, August 1, 2005)

Section II: Scholars Study Practitioner Roles

Scholars have approached the flack-vs.-hack issue from a different perspective. Broom and Smith (1979) began that effort by studying roles public relations practitioners played in an organization. Broom (1982), Broom and Dozier (1986), Dozier (1992) and Dozier and Broom (1995) continued that work.

Broom and Smith (1979) initially developed and tested four conceptual models of public relations roles. They were based on management research into practitioner-client consulting relationships. Those roles, repeatedly referenced in later public relations literature, were:

+ Expert prescriber: The practitioner functions as an authority on both the public relations problem and solution. The practitioner researches and defines the problem, develops the solution and takes major responsibility for implementing the solution. The public relations practitioner, a recognized expert, works like a physician prescribing medicine for a sick patient.
+ Communication process facilitator: The practitioner serves as a liaison, interpreter and mediator between the organization and its publics. The emphasis is on maintaining a continuous flow of two-way communication. The practitioner is a collaborator with both management and the various publics.
+ Problem-solving facilitator: As a member of the management team, the practitioner works with others throughout the organization to define and solve problem. The communicator helps guide other managers and the organization through a rational problem-solving process. That may involve all parts of the organization in public relations planning and programming.
+ Communications technician: Practitioners provide clients with a specialized skill to carry out public relations functions. Rather than being part of the management team, communicators prepare and produce materials—as writers, editors, audiovisual producers and media relations specialists—for public relations efforts. Technicians are not usually involved in organizational decision making. They explain decisions made by others.

Broom and Smith (1979) did not expect to find pure examples of these roles. But they did hypothesize that public relations practitioners would adopt one as their dominant behavior pattern. Broom and Smith then did an experiment to test client satisfaction with public relations counselors enacting each role. Clients were most satisfied with the problem-solving facilitator and least satisfied with the communication process facilitator.

Broom (1982) developed seven questionnaire items to measure each of the four roles. For expert prescriber, they were:

+ I make the communication policy decisions.
+ I diagnose communications problems and explain them to others in the organization.
+ I plan and recommend courses of action for solving communication problems.
+ I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's communication programs.
+ Because of my experience and training, others consider me to be the organization's expert in solving communication problems.

+ I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication programs.
+ I am the organization's expert on diagnosing and solving communication problems.

For communications process facilitator the measures were:

+ I keep management informed of public reaction to organizational policies, procedures and/or actions.
+ I report public opinion survey results to keep management informed of the opinions of various publics.
+ I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.
+ I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues.
+ I conduct communication audits to identify communication problems between the organization and various publics.
+ I represent the organization at events and meetings.
+ I am the liaison, promoting two-way communication between management and our various publics.

For problem-solving facilitator the measures were:

+ In meetings with management, I point out the need to follow a systematic communications planning process.
+ I work with managers to increase their skills in solving and/or avoiding communication problems.
+ I encourage management participation when making the important communications decisions.
+ I keep management actively involved in every phase of the communication program.
+ I operate as a catalyst in management's decision making.
+ When working with managers on communication, I outline alternative approaches for solving problems.
+ I am the problem-solving process facilitator, helping management go through defining problems, setting objectives and planning programs in a systematic fashion.

For communication technician the measures were:

+ I write materials presenting information on issues important to the organization.
+ I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization.
+ I handle the technical aspects of producing communication materials.

+ I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.
+ I do photography and graphics for communication materials.
+ I maintain media contacts and place press releases.
+ I am the specialist in writing and producing communication materials.

Broom included those items in a 1979 survey of 815 Public Relations Society of America members. Mean scores for the four roles on a seven-point Likert scale (1=never do, 7=always do) were 5.41 for expert prescriber, 4.96 for problem-solving facilitator, 4.69 for communication technician and 4.68 for communication facilitator. After analyzing those results further, Broom determined that PRSA members saw themselves doing only two roles: communication technician and some mix of the other three. Furthermore, he discovered that men saw themselves primarily as expert prescribers and that women considered themselves primarily technicians. The seven items measuring the four roles all proved reliable. Cronbach alphas were 0.93 for expert prescriber, 0.90 for problem-solving facilitator, 0.84 for communication technician, and 0.79 for communication process facilitator. The four roles proved to have predictive validity in distinguishing practitioners on other variables. But high inter-item correlations among 1979 survey responses for expert prescriber, communication process facilitator and problem-solving facilitator suggested that those three roles were not empirically distinct. That led Broom to develop an umbrella label for those three roles: *public relations manager*.

Dozier (1983, 1984) used a grounded theoretical approach to roles research to reach the same conclusion about two major roles among public relations practitioners. His reanalysis of Broom's 1979 data determined that *public relations managers* carried out the tasks of the expert prescriber and problem-solving facilitator. *Public relations technicians* did what Broom and Smith (1979) described. Dozier also identified two minor roles: *media relations specialist* and *communication liaison*. Media relations specialists were technicians who specialized in work with outside journalists rather than internal communication. Communication liaisons were a subcategory of managers. Liaisons were senior advisers to decision-makers but not decision-makers themselves. Dozier speculated that communication liaisons were managers thwarted by organizational culture from participating in decision making. These two minor roles did not hold up in later factor analysis but were eventually confirmed in surveys developing Excellence Public Relations Theory (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Therefore in 1983, Dozier concluded that *manager* and *technician* were the most parsimonious way to look at public relations roles. Nevertheless, he argued that Broom's original four-part typology provided useful tools for dissecting the manager function. Broom (personal correspondence, June 12, 2006) made the same point. He said his original four roles could be reduced to manager and technician. But that approach masked many potential differences among the three manager functions.

Broom and Dozier (1986) resurveyed PRSA respondents from the 1979 sample. The goal was to see what, if anything, had changed. The new survey found that many technicians had moved into manager roles. Mean scores for the four roles on a seven-point Likert scale (1=never do, 7=always do) were 5.7 for expert prescriber, 5.4 for problem-solving facilitator, 4.7 for communication process facilitator and 4.4 for communication technician. The most dramatic increase was among practitioners playing problem-solving facilitator roles (from 16% to 50%).

As part of the team developing Excellence Public Relations Theory (see Chapter 3), Dozier incorporated roles research into that body of knowledge. For the initial book in the Excellence literature, Dozier (1992) summarized the scholarship on roles to that point. He laid out 15 propositions about public relations managers and technicians. He observed that unless a manager led a communication department, it could not contribute to strategic planning or organizational effectiveness. He said public relations managers would be involved in environmental scanning (ongoing research), strategic decision making, program planning and evaluation, and organizational decision making. They would run communication departments that practice primarily two-way asymmetrical or two-way symmetrical public relations in organizations with management open to the outside environment and not afraid of outside threats. Technicians would handle the day-to-day creative functions of a communication department. Technicians would most commonly dominate communication departments in non-excellent organizations (those not open to two-way relationships with publics).

Dozier and Broom (1995) did another survey of PRSA members in 1991 using Broom's (1982) 28 items for measuring roles. The goal was to compare public relations manager role enactment to results from 1979. Results confirmed that the manager-technician typology still accurately described practitioner functions. Sex was positively related to professional experience, and men generally had more experience than women. Professional experience was positively related to acting as a manager, job satisfaction and salary. Acting as a manager was positively related to participation in organizational management decision making. Nevertheless, after controlling for experience, men were only slightly more likely to act as managers in 1991 than women. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the 1991 were 0.94 for the manager scale and 0.74 for the technician scale. Factor analysis of the 1979 and 1991 data gave continued evidence of a *senior adviser* management subcategory (what Dozier, had originally called communication liaison) and a *media relations specialist* subcategory of technician.

Excellence researchers asked top communicators in 327 organizations (237 in the United States, 57 in Canada and 33 in the United Kingdom) what they did and what they thought their chief executives expected them to do. Three-hundred-sixteen communicators responded. Then scholars asked top executives in those 327 organizations what they expected from their public relations departments. Responses came from 292 chief executives. Excellence researchers used Dozier's four roles categories: *manager*, *senior adviser*, *media relations specialist* and *internal communication technician*. Excellence questionnaires used four items—drawn primarily from the original seven used since Broom (1982)—to measure each role. Top communicators were asked how well each item described the work they did. Senior organizational leaders were, in turn, asked how well each item described what they thought communicators should do. For manager the scale items were:

+ I am the organization's expert on diagnosing and solving communication problems.
+ I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's communication programs.
+ I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication programs.
+ I make the communication policy decisions.

For the senior adviser role the scale items were:

+ I am the senior counsel to top decision makers when communication issues are involved.

+ I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.
+ I represent the organization at events and meetings.
+ Although I don't make communication policy decisions, I provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendations and plans.

For the media relations specialist role the items were:

+ I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization.
+ I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues.
+ I maintain media contacts for my organization.
+ I am responsible for placing news releases.

For the communication technician role the items were:

+ I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization.
+ I write materials presenting information on issues important to the organization.
+ I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.
+ I do photography and graphics for communication materials.

Mean responses from communicators on an open-ended fractionation scale (100 is average for the activity) were 156.2 for manger tasks, 116.8 for senior adviser tasks, 121.1 for media relations specialist tasks and 72.1 for technician tasks. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the four four-item scales among communicators were 0.89 for manager, 0.54 for senior adviser, 0.87 for media relations specialist and 0.81 for internal communication technician. Means for the roles among senior leaders were 162.7 for manager tasks, 148.3 for senior adviser tasks, 132.2 for media relations tasks and 62.5 for technician tasks. Cronbach's alphas for the scales among top leaders were 0.61 for manager, 0.45 for senior adviser, 0.65 for media relations specialist and 0.84 for internal communication technician (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

One item in the senior adviser scale for communicators reduced overall reliability.

That item said communicators did not make policy decisions but offered suggestions. In surveys of top executives, alphas for the manager, senior adviser and media relations specialist scales were unacceptably low. Those results indicated that among top executives the scales were not measuring a single, unified construct (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Researchers factor-analyzed responses from communicators in the 316 surveys concerning manager and technician tasks. The goal was to see if such statistical analysis could empirically confirm roles categories developed conceptually by Broom and Smith (1979) and Dozier (1983, 1984). Results for the eight management items did not confirm the manager/senior adviser distinction. Seven of the eight items loaded on the manager factor. But results for the eight technician items did show empirical and conceptual distinctions between media relations specialists and internal communication technicians. Nevertheless, the two roles were closely related. Three measures from each four-item scale heavily cross-loaded. A third factor analysis of all 16 roles items again confirmed the manager-technician typology. Eight items loaded on the manager factor (Cronbach's alpha 0.91). They represented tasks assigned to expert prescriber, communication process facilitator and problem-solving facilitator in Broom (1982). Seven items loaded on the technician factor (Cronbach's alpha 0.87). One item about using journalistic skills to find newsworthy material for publicity loaded almost equally in both factors (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Low reliability coefficients in the results from top executives hinted that senior leaders conceptualized the communicator role differently from public relations practitioners. A factor analysis of the 16 items in the roles scale showed that senior leaders had a more fragmented view than communicators about what public relations practitioners should do. Five factors emerged from executive responses: *manager*, *technician, media relations specialist*, *senior manager* and *organizational representative*. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the first four factors—which did not exactly match factors from communicators—were 0.84 for technician, 0.80 for manager, 0.73 for media relations and 0.69 for senior manager. The fifth factor, organizational representative, included only one item. The manager role was a less defined amalgam of the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solver functions than the communicators understood. Top executives saw the technician roles as limited to internal communication tasks, such as writing, taking photographs and editing. Media relations—a technical role among communicators—was a separate, more important function for senior leaders. The senior adviser and organizational representative task groupings had no equivalent among responses from top communicators. Nevertheless, the overall manager/technician typology endured among senior leaders (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Perception differences between top communicators and chief executives were in line with Dozier (1992). He found high levels of role ambiguity among practitioners. The expectations of supervisors were sometimes at odds with professional expectations learned through formal education or work through professional associations. Nevertheless, Excellence survey results showed that managers headed public relations operations in all organizations deemed excellent. Technicians ran less excellent operations. Communication managers in general were more likely to be technical supervisors than strategic executives. If a woman were the top communication executive, she was more likely than a man to mix work as a manager and technician—even in excellent operations. As a result, women had fewer opportunities than men to develop their strategic expertise. To be considered a manager by senior leaders, top communicators needed to demonstrate administrative and strategic knowledge as well as technical communication skills. Chief executives in excellent organizations wanted their public relations department to participate in strategic decisions and use both symmetrical and asymmetrical two-way communication. Senior leaders often hired public relations executives because of their technical skill, especially in media relations. (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Responses from nonprofit organizations in the Excellence surveys were often significantly different from those given in corporations or government agencies. In nonprofits, top communicators were both technician and manager. They practiced press agentry and public information models as much as they did two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). These findings and the body of work about practitioner roles prompted these research questions:

RQ1: How do the roles that religion communicators play compare to those of secular practitioners?

RQ2: How do the roles that religion communicators play compare to what faith group leaders expect?

CHAPTER 3
Public Relations and Excellence Studies

While religion communicators debated whether they were flacks or hacks, American businesses faced a changing society. The nation became increasingly urban and industrial in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Large corporations began to dominate the U.S. economy. Some corporate leaders, such as John D. Rockefeller, were seen as profit-driven robber barons. They did not care how their business decisions affected the public. That attitude prompted a public backlash. Muckraking journalists did investigative reports on business practices. Trust-busting public officials moved to limit the power of corporate tycoons. Public relations practices emerged in the late 19th century as ways to help businesses address the evolving social and economic scene and counter negative public perceptions (Cutlip, 1994; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007; Twitchell, 2000; Wilcox & Cameron, 2005).

This chapter traces public relations' development in the United States. The chapter reviews early practices, outlines how definitions of public relations evolved during the 20th century and how changing ideas about the field laid a foundation for Excellence Public Relations Theory.

Early Efforts Seek to Gain Press, Public Attention

Early examples of activities now seen as public relations practices grew out of the 19th century entertainment business. In the 1830, for instance, Matthew St. Clair Clark used newspaper stories and dime novels to make Davy Crockett into a national hero. Later press agents turned other personalities into national celebrities. Those included Buffalo Bill Cody, Will Bill Hickock, Wyatt Earp, Jesse James, Calamity Jane and

George Armstrong Custer. After the Civil War circus executive P.T. Barnum used promotion and press agentry to attract crowds. He staged special events to get his circus's name indiscriminately into the news. Those events were more opportunistic than systematic. They were developed more from creative imaginations than research and judged more on how much attention they got in newspapers than on how they affected people. The assumption was that if a special event could get enough attention or attract a big enough crowd, the sponsor had a good chance of selling whatever he or she was promoting. (Cutlip, 1994; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000; Grunig, 1992; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007; Twitchell, 2000; Wilcox & Cameron, 2005).

In 1888 the Mutual Life Insurance Company hired a newspaperman as a consultant to write articles about the firm for placement in various publications. The goal was to boost Mutual's public image. The next year the Westinghouse Corporation established the first in-house publicity department. The Association of American Railroads' *Yearbook of Railway Literature* first used "public relations" in the modern sense in 1897. In 1899 Yale University established a public relations and alumni office. The following year Harvard University hired the nation's first public relations firm to represent it. That firm, called the Publicity Bureau, was formed in Boston in 1900 (Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007).

Ivy Ledbetter Lee and George F. Parker, who opened the nation's third publicity bureau in 1904, tied public relations work closely to journalism (Cutlip, 1994; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007). A former newspaperman, Lee worked as a journalist in residence for his clients. He distributed information about them to the press and public

(Cutlip, 1994; Ewen, 1998; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007; Hutton, 1999).

The Parker and Lee firm pioneered use of the “press handout” (now called a news release). These handouts observed the conventions of the news business and packaged information about a client in ready-to-use news story form (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007). Lee issued a Declaration of Principles in 1906 that explained his approach to publicity. In it he publicly pledged to “present only topics of real interest, phrased so as to attract the attention of both editors and readers—never sensational, never libelous, always accurate, always trustworthy, always readable” (Ewen, 1998, p. 76). Editors could verify the facts he reported if they wished. In fact, Lee would help with that verification. He was adept at using factual statements to fashion positive public impressions of his clients (Cutlip, 1994; Ewen, 1998; Newsom, Turk & Krunkeberg, 2007; Olasky, 1987).

Lee believed he promoted business success for clients by delivering their messages with credibility to the public through newspapers and magazines. His professed goal was to inform, not manipulate (Cutlip & Center, 1952). Lee’s public information approach to communication was one-way: publicist to newspaper to reading public. He distributed stories that his clients wanted to tell, not necessarily ones that editors or readers were yearning to know (Cutlip, 1994; Ewen, 1998; Olasky, 1987).

First Public Relations Book Published

Formal public relations literature began in 1923 with Edward L. Bernays’ *Crystallizing Public Opinion*. That book presents a different approach to public relations from Lee’s and Barnum’s. Lee usually called himself an information provider or publicist

(Cutlip, 1994, Hutton, 1999). Barnum was a showman, promoter or humbugger (Twitchell, 2000). Bernays (1923), who opened a public relations firm in 1919 (Cutlip, 1994), described himself as a "counsel on public relations" (Bernays, 1923).

> He acts in this capacity as a consultant both in interpreting the public to his client and in helping to interpret his client to the public. He helps to mould the action of his client as well as to mould public opinion. (Bernays, 1923, p. 57).

Public relations counsels contributed to business success by using knowledge of sociology, psychology, social psychology and economics to understand human motivation, influence public opinion and manipulate mass human behavior. Their work required planned actions as well as communication. Bernays said his job was not to create positive images for his clients. His job was to fashion and project a credible rendition of reality (Ewen, 1998). Influencing public opinion was usually done through mass communication. Bernays believed that mass media messages delivered to the right publics had the power to influence human behavior (Bernays, 1923, 1928, 1955).

Written in response to Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922), *Crystallizing Public Opinion* presented the counsel on public relations as a "special pleader" (pp. 50, 56) in the court of public opinion. Bernays (1923) said information bombarded individuals in 1920s society on all sides. They lacked knowledge or experience to judge much of that information. Consequently, people often formed opinions "without a rational basis" (Bernays, 1923, p. 64). As part of Lippmann's "specialized class" of leaders (Lippmann, 1923, p. 195), the public relations counsel helped analyze information for the masses, determine truth and organize the information people received so they could process it more easily. "It is his capacity for crystallizing the obscure tendencies of the public mind before they have reached definite expression, which makes him so valuable," said Bernays (1923, p. 173).

Countering Lippmann's more pessimistic view of press agents (pp. 217-218), Bernays (1923) argued "that the popular impression of the counsel on public relations must be radically revised if an accurate picture of the profession is to be looked for" (pp. 55-56). Public relations counsels advised clients on actions to accomplish their objectives, warned clients about things that might harm their firms or society, and communicated those good actions to the public. Bernays (1955) termed this process of directing public attention to specific topics in the marketplace of ideas *engineering* public support and consent.

That work demanded the highest integrity, Bernays (1923) said. Therefore, he devoted the last two chapters of *Crystallizing Public Opinion* to setting forth ethical standards that public relations counselors should follow in guiding public behavior. Like Lee, Bernays emphasized that public relations counselors must always be credible, trustworthy sources for journalists and the public.

> It is because he acts as a purveyor of truthful, accurate and verifiable news to the press that the conscientious and successful counsel on public relations is looked upon with favor by journalists. And in the Code of Ethics recently adopted in Washington by a national editors' conference, his function is given acknowledgment. … Since news is the newspaper's backbone, it is obvious that an understanding of what news actually is must be an integral part of the equipment of the public relations counsel. For the public relations counsel must not only supply news—he must create it. (Bernays, 1923, pp. 182, 183)
>
> Truthful and accurate must be the material which the public relations counsel furnishes to the press and other mediums. In addition, it must have the elements of timeliness and interest which are required of all news—and it must not only have these elements in general, but it must suit the

> particular needs of each particular newspaper and, even more than that, it must suit the particular needs of the particular editor in whose department it is hoped that it will be published. … In brief, the material must come to the editorial desk as carefully prepared and as accurately verified as if the editor himself had assigned a special reporter to secure and write the facts. Only by presenting his news in such a form and in such a manner can the counsel on public relations hope to retain, in the case of the newspaper, the most valuable thing he possesses—the editor's faith and trust. But it must be borne in mind that only in certain cases is the public relations counsel the intermediary between the news and the press. The event he has counseled upon, the action he has created finds its own level of expression in mediums which reach the public. (Bernays, 1923, pp. 198, 199)

Bernays' 1923 conceptualization of public relations still describes the way many practitioners do their work eight decades later.

Definition of Public Relations Evolves

Bernays did not present a detailed definition of public relations in *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923) or *Propaganda* (1928). In the meantime, others began trying to fill the void. Harlow (1977) found 472 different definitions or metaphors for public relations in various sources that appeared from the 1920s through the 1960s. He also gathered definitions from 65 practitioners. Harlow noted that definitions in the 1920s and 1930s tended to focus on publicity and propaganda. During the 1940s and 1950s the definitions talked about guiding social conduct, engineering consent, motivating behavior and shaping public opinion. As public relations developed, the practice embraced more functions beyond publicity: influence on organization policy, advice to management on strategic actions, audience research, audience segmentation, systematic planning of actions and messages, ongoing activities (rather than disconnected one-time events), two-way interaction with target groups and evaluation of effects.

Based on his analysis of definitions, Harlow (1976) developed a composite description of public relations:

> Public relations is a distinctive management function that helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools. (Harlow, 1976, p. 34)

The evolution of public definitions continued through the end of the 20th century. In the 1980s the emphasis shifted again—from communication to relationships. In 1988 the Public Relations Society of America annual assembly defined public relations as helping an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other (*Public Relations: An Overview*, 1991). Hutton (1999) cited "managing strategic relationships" as the central organizing principle of modern public relations. Grunig (2006b) described public relations as a strategic management function regulating interdependency between organizations and constituencies, not just a collection of technical operations such as messaging, publicity and media relations.

Public Relations Theory-building Begins

For nearly 50 years public relations practitioners and educators concentrated on the functional. In the academic world public relations was seen as an applied technical area. Educators taught public relations techniques as means to organizational ends. The discipline's first academic journal, *Public Relations Review*, did not appear until 1975. A second, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, began publication in 1989 (Botan & Taylor, 2004).

Ferguson (1984) offered the first survey of public relations theory in a paper presented to the Association of Education in Journalism annual meeting in Gainsville, Florida. He analyzed *Public Relations Review* content from 1975 to 1984. He found only 4% of articles directly related to theory development (Sallot et al., 2003). Ferguson called for a shift in scholarship from a focus on functional topics to an examination of relationships as the primary unit of analysis (Botan & Taylor, 2004; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Over the next two decades, public relations theory development expanded rapidly (Botan & Hazelton, 2006). Botan and Hazelton (1989) compiled the first book on public relations theory. They posited that the social sciences provided an effective approach for public relations theory development. Scholarship from established social sciences, particularly sociology and psychology, could help advance public relations theory-building and practice.

Other scholars took different paths. Heath (2006a, 2006b), for instance, advocated a rhetorical approach to public relations, particularly issues management. Hazelton (2006) advanced a theory of public relations competence. It used components of technical and managerial knowledge, skill and motivations to predict how practitioners approached their work.

When Sallot et al. (2003) replicated and extended Ferguson's 1984 content analysis of public relations literature, they found that 20% of articles addressed theory development.

When Botan and Taylor (2004) assessed the state of the field, they noted a significant shift—starting in the 1980s—from the functional approach. Recent scholarship had adopted what they called a co-creational perspective. It concentrated on the relationship between organizations and publics and how communication changed those relationships. The emphasis was not on how communication achieved organizational goals. The focus was on how organizations and publics were partners in creating meaning.

Based on expanding co-creational scholarship, Botan and Hazelton (2006) changed their minds about relying strictly on social science techniques for building public relations theory. They acknowledged valuable theoretical perspectives from a broader range of disciplines, including rhetoric, business and the humanities.

Excellence Theory Dominates Recent Public Relations Scholarship

In assessing the scope of public relations scholarship, Botan and Taylor (2004) identified Excellence Theory (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995; Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002) as the leading approach. Botan and Hazelton (2006) said the Excellence work "has probably done more to develop public relations theory and scholarship than any other single school of thought" (p. 6). Excellence Theory provided the dominant paradigm for research from 1991 to 2006. In a nutshell, Excellence Theory says the best organizations consider public relations a management function. That function regulates interdependency between the organization and its constituencies. The top public relations executive has specialized knowledge in relationship building and is part of the senior management team. He or she determines what stakeholder groups are key to the organization's success and then develops communication strategies to foster and maintain long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with those constituencies. The communication strategies are based on research, tied to the organization's strategic goals and employ one of four models of public relations practice (see below). The preferred model is two-way symmetrical. In that model a public is just as likely to influence the organization as the organization is likely to influence the public (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, 2006). Botan and Hazelton (2006) called James Grunig, originator of the Excellence studies, "the most widely recognized public relations scholar" (p. 6).

Roots of the Excellence Theory go back to Grunig's doctoral research in Colombia in 1968-69. He wanted to know how farmers used information to make decisions.

> When I returned to the United States from Colombia in 1969, I was convinced that most of the failures in the communication programs of agriculture agencies in Colombia resulted not from the backwardness or resistance of farmers but because of the nature of communication programs that organizations developed to communicate with them. Organizations that I studied were more likely to give information than to seek information. They also were unlikely to listen to or engage in dialogue with their publics. (Gurnig, 2006b, p. 155)

That observation led to 40 years of scholarship on dynamics of organizational interactions with various stakeholders and target groups (Grunig, 2006b).

The evolution of Excellence Theory began with Grunig's situational theories of publics in 1966 (Grunig, 1966) and his organizational theory of public relations in 1976 (Grunig, 1976). The situational theory posited that people were more likely to seek information related to a decision they were making than to reinforce their attitudes. He used that theory to study how Colombian farmers used information (Grunig, 2006b).

The organizational theory built on the situational theory. But the second theory dealt with the interaction of organizations with individuals. The theory maintained that organizations were more likely to give information than to seek information. That one-way information flow resulted in ineffective communication (Grunig, 2006b).

Four Models of Public Relations Presented

Continuing work on the organizational theory led to Grunig's four models of public relations practice. He first presented them in 1984 in *Managing Public Relations* (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) as ideal types based on historic trends. In the same year Grunig began work on a project for the International Association of Business Communicators Foundation on "how, why and to what extent communication affects the achievement of organizational objectives" (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, p. ix). That 1984-to-1992 project later became known as the "Excellence" study. The initial product, titled *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* (Grunig, 1992), was a 666-page literature review on organizational communication. In it Grunig & Grunig (1992) included the four models as distinct ways of conceptualizing and conducting corporate communication. They described the models as follows:

+ Press agentry/publicity—one-way transmission of promotional information from an originating organization—primarily through mass media—to a generally undefined audience. Truth and accuracy are not factors. No audience research is involved. The event-based promotional activities of P.T. Barnum provide an example of this model in action.

+ Public information—one-way transmission of factual, newsworthy information from an organization to news media outlets. News releases reflect journalistic news values. The journalistic norms of truth and accuracy are accepted. No audience research is involved. The early work of Ivy Lee exemplifies this approach to public relations.

+ Two-way asymmetrical—An organization takes actions and disseminates specifically crafted messages based on audience research (two-way communication process) to achieve a specific goal. The focus is on persuading target groups to behave as the organization wants. Information collected on audiences is not used to modify the goals, policies or actions of the organization. Research simply guides message crafting. Campaigns designed by Edward L. Bernays follow this approach.

+ Two-way symmetrical—An organization determines actions that promote understanding and reduce conflicts with key publics based on audience research (two-way communication). Information collected on audiences influences what an organization does and says.

Grunig initially developed four questionnaire items in 1976 to measure activities relating to each model. He used those 16 items in a survey of 216 organizations in the Baltimore-Washington area. Public relations practitioners responded by indicating on a five-point Likert scale how well each statement described the way their organization conducted public relations. Grunig factor-analyzed responses to develop indices of symmetrical and asymmetrical practices. Grunig expanded measures to eight items per model for a 1984 study. Practitioners again responded on a five-point Likert scale to indicate how well each item described what their organization did. Grunig averaged responses to provide an index for each model. Six other studies between 1984 and 1986 by Grunig's colleagues and graduate students at the University of Maryland refined the questionnaire items and model indices. Average Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the four scales across the seven studies were 0.62 for press agentry/publicity, 0.53 for public information, 0.57 for two-way asymmetrical and 0.59 for two-way symmetrical (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

For Excellence study questionnaires, Grunig sought to boost index reliability closer to 0.80, a common goal for alphas in social science research. He reduced the scale for each model to four items that registered high inter-item correlations in the earlier research. He changed the response mode from a Likert scale to an open-ended fractionation scale. In that scale, zero equaled “does not describe”; 100 represented “average”; 50 represented “half the average”; 200 represented “twice the average”; and anything above 200 represented “as high as you want to go.” Results using the fractionation scale yielded reliability coefficients of 0.78 for press agentry/publicity, 0.60 for public information, 0.81 for two-way asymmetrical and 0.76 for two-way symmetrical (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

The resulting questionnaire items used across Excellence surveys to gauge press agentry/publicity practices were:

+ The purpose of public relations is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.
+ In public relations one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.
+ The success of a public relations program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.
+ For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.

Statements relating to the public information model were:

+ In public relations, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.
+ In public relations, accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.
+ Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of public relations.
+ Public relations is more a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.

Statements measuring the two-way asymmetrical model were:

+ After completing a public relations program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people’s attitude.
+ In public relations the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.

+ Before starting a public relations program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.
+ Before beginning a public relations program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.

Statements describing the two-way symmetrical model were:

+ The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the public the organization affects.
+ Before starting a public relations program, survey or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.
+ The purpose of public relations is to change attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.
+ Public relations should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.

Besides boosting reliability coefficients, the open-ended fractionation scale more accurately measured opinions about the four public relations models than a five-point Likert scale and increased options for statistical analysis, Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002) maintained. While both scales yielded ordinal data—and precise location on the scale varied by respondent—the fractionation method allowed a wider range of answers. Increasing scale range could positively influence correlations between items (Clason & Dormony, 2000). Furthermore, by introducing an apparent true zero, the scale could mimic ratio data. Such interval data could also affect reliability calculations (Jaccard & Wan, 1996). Treating ordinal data as interval data is commonly done in social science research using scales with five or more items. That practice usually does not alter research conclusions (Jaccard & Wan, 1996).

Grunig and Grunig (1992) acknowledged the consistently low reliability coefficient for the public information index in the foundational research. They attributed that to items describing information dissemination. That function was common to all models. Nevertheless, Excellence surveys continued to use that suspect four-item index (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Surveys Go to 327 Organizations

Grunig and his colleagues began surveying the 327 organizations in the Excellence study in 1991. The purposive sample included 168 corporations, 64 nonprofit organizations, 59 government agencies and 36 associations. Participating organizations came from the United States (*n*=237), Canada (*n*=57) and the United Kingdom (*n*=33). The stated research goal was to reach *analytical* rather than *statistical* generalizations. Scholars compared empirical findings to previously developed theory and models (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Top communicators in each organization received a 21-page paper-and-pencil questionnaire asking for 313 responses. Chief executives received a seven-page questionnaire asking for 96 responses. Up to 20 employees in each organization received a different seven-page questionnaire asking for 116 responses. Some organizations that originally agreed to participate in the surveys dropped out when they saw how long the survey instruments were. A few top communicators declined to participation when they saw the fractionation scale (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Excellence researchers relied on top communicators to help make sure chief executives and employees completed their questionnaires. Of the 327 organizations involved in the study, 316 returned communicator questionnaires, 292 returned chief executive surveys and 281 returned employee instruments. Survey results did not mention response fatigue or say how it might have affected completion rates (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Models Prove to be Normative, Positive

Grunig and Hunt (1984) originally presented the four models as normative concepts. The press agentry/publicity, public information and two-way asymmetricial models were based on historical analyses of how practitioners did or described public relations. The two-way symmetrical model presented how the authors thought public relations should be practiced. The authors ranked the models according to their interpretation of organizational excellence. The order of excellence moved from press agentry/publicity through public information and two-way asymmetrical to two-way symmetrical (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

Excellence survey results showed the four models were positive as well (Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Grunig originally contended that excellent public relations organizations would use only two-way models. He rejected persuasion as inherently unethical. But research in 327 organizations showed that excellent organizations practiced all four models of public relations, depending on the situation. All four approaches could contribute to organizational objectives. Furthermore, persuasion could be an element in the two-way dialogue between organizations and their publics. (Botan & Hazelton, 2006; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). “Symmetrical communication does not move relationships inexorably to consensus, equilibrium or harmony,” researchers noted. “Rather, it is the give-and-take of persuasion and collaboration that organizations and publics use when they must interact with each other”

(Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, p. 551). Nevertheless, Grunig and his colleagues have suggested that two-way symmetrical, two-way asymmetrical or a combination of the two approaches—dubbed the "mixed motives model"—would allow public relations to make the most effective contribution to an organizational (Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Two-way symmetrical public relations uses research to learn about and balance interests of an organization with its publics. "As a result," researchers said, "two-way symmetrical communication produces better long-term relationships with publics than do the other models of public relations" (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, p. 15). But Grunig acknowledged that publics sometimes were not willing to cooperate with organizations. Publics could behave in ways that destroyed relations with organizations or hurt society in general (Grunig, 2006b).

Three Dimensions Underlie Models

In continuing research since 1991, Grunig and his colleagues have identified three dimensions underlying the four positive models. Organizational communication is either (1) one-way or two-way (research based), (2) symmetrical or asymmetrical and (3) mediated or interpersonal (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Other scholars (Haung, 2004; Rhee, 2002; Sha, 1999, 2005) have considered the mediated and interpersonal dimensions independently. From research in Asia, Huang (2004) cited another dimension: social activity. She maintained that social connections were different from interpersonal communication.

Grunig and his associates have contended since 1992 that the two-way symmetrical model presented the only ethical way to practice public relations. In fact, Grunig has suggested that morality may be another distinctive dimension underlying the four models.

> If public relations is a process of cultivating relationships with publics, then the value of the profession should reflect a worldview that is likely to produce good relationships. I believe that the primary value of public relations is a simple one—a value I learned in the rural Midwest, this is embraced by most religions of the world, and whose absence has produced wars and civil unrest throughout human history. The value is concern for others as well as ourselves. It is reflected in what I call the symmetrical model of public relations, which suggests that public relations should strive to balance the interests of publics with the interests of the organization. (Grunig, 2006a)

The non-symmetrical models could be used to justify almost any cause, Grunig argued. That's because they do not address the morality of the issue, ideology or behavior being promoted. Symmetrical interaction, on the other hand, defines public relations as a process, not an outcome. The two-way relationship provides a forum for addressing issues about which people with different values may reach different conclusions. When such dialogue follows ethical rules—such as Habermas' (1984) concept of an ideal communication system—the outcome should be ethical (Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002)).

Research findings from 327 organizations hinted that public relations practitioners might serve as the ethical conscience of an organization. That's because they introduced values and problems of stakeholders—the concern for others as well as ourselves—into strategic management decision-making. That input might prompt senior managers to consider the moral dimensions of their decisions (Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). However, the 1984-to-1992 Excellence study did not explicitly study ethics. Grunig has done no empirical research to confirm his suggestion about the ethics of the symmetrical model (Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Huang (2004), Rhee (2002) and Sha (1999, 2005) all tried to measure ethical communication. The questions they asked dealt more with honesty and openness than moral reasoning behind the communication process.

Additional Elements of Excellence Scholarship

Besides seeing how the four models describe various public relations operations, Excellence research has examined six other organizational aspects: (1) status of the top communicator within the management structure and his/her relationship to other executives in the "dominant coalition," (2) expertise in the communication department, (3) contributions of the communication department to strategic planning and decision making, (4) functional roles that communicators routinely perform, (5) training and professional development of communicators, and (6) expectations of organizational leaders about what communicators should do and how they should contribute to organizational effectiveness. Surveys among public relations directors, employees and top managers in 327 organizations provided data for analysis at the program, functional, organization and societal levels (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, 2006).

Research findings showed that top communicators in those 327 secular organizations spent more of their time on management tasks, such as setting goals, preparing budgets and developing communication strategies, than technical tasks. Those technical tasks included producing publications, writing news releases or coordinating media coverage of an event. But these top communicators rated their departments better prepared to practice the public information and press agentry/publicity models than the two-way models. Those departments reported the lowest expertise for tasks associated with the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Excellence research identified knowledge as the key variable in determining if communication managers practiced two-way asymmetrical or symmetrical public relations (Dozier & Broom, 1995; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Formal education in public relations helped build this knowledge base but was not necessarily correlated to excellent practices. Continuing education, participation in professional associations and reading trade publications were (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Grunig (2006b) said he wanted his scholarship to institutionalize public relations as a "bridging activity" evaluated on how well it cultivated short- and long-term relationships that contributed to reaching organizational goals. "Eventually, I believe we will be able to show that the total value, the ROI [return on investment], of public relations develops through the intangible assets that relationships provide to organizations," he said (p. 166). "I now believe that the concept of relationship cultivation strategies is the heir to the models of public relations and the two-way symmetrical model" (p. 168).

The foregoing summary of public relations history and theory development led to the following six research questions concerning religion communicators:

RQ3: How much do religion communicators and faith group leaders agree on practices used to measure the four models of public relations in Excellence Theory?

RQ4: How well do religion communicators know what their supervisors think about practices in the four models of public relations?

RQ5: How does expertise of religion communicators to practice each model of public relations compare to their secular counterparts?

RQ6: How does the managerial and technical expertise of religion communications compare to the expertise of secular public relations practitioners?

RQ7: How do formal education, professional association membership and exposure to trade publications affect the way religion communicators practice public relations?

RQ8: How much do religion communicators and faith group leaders agree about contributions of communication to faith group operations?

CHAPTER 4
Church-Sect Theory

The first literature about Church-Sect Theory in the United States appeared in 1929, six year after Bernays' first book about public relations. Initial works on both topics addressed interactions between organizations and various groups in society. Early church-sect writings reflected the common view of sociologists that religion contributed to social problems. Modern society, the thinking went, would eventually overcome the influence of religious organizations through secularization. Church-Sect Theory was a way to explain the secularization process (Neibuhr, 1929; Stark & Finke, 2002; Troeltsch, 1931; Weber, 1922/1993). This chapter traces the development of Church-Sect Theory in Europe and the United States and points out some parallels with Excellence Public Relations Theory.

Religion Presents Social Problem

Philosophers and social scientists in the West have written since the Enlightenment about religion—or more precisely, the problem of primitive, irrational thinking that leads to religion. The received wisdom maintained that religion was harmful, dangerous and the product of weak minds. It appealed most to lower social classes. Religion served as a psychological painkiller for frustration, deprivation and suffering. Furthermore, religious pluralism was a threat to social order. By linking religion with irrationality, social scientists in the 19th and early 20th centuries brought religion into intellectual disrepute. Nevertheless, scholars contended that religion was not real. It was merely a mental state. It reflected a fundamental human need that social scientists would work to identify. As humans became more educated (rational), religion would fade away. That position has been called the secularization hypothesis (Stark & Finke, 2000).

Church-Sect Theory is one sociological approach for explaining the secularization process. The theory holds that the more a faith group accepts its social environment and embraces temporal values, the more it is a church. The more a faith group rejects the social environment, the more it is a sect. Faith groups may move in either direction along this acceptance-rejection continuum. Churches are inclusive, usually seeking as broad a membership as possible. Sects are exclusive, requiring specific qualities for membership (Finke & Stark, 2001, 2005; Johnson, 1963; Niebuhr, 1929; Stark & Bainbridge, 1979, 1980, 1985; Stark & Finke, 2000). Within this theoretical context, neither *church* nor *sect* connotes any value judgments about faith groups. The words should be considered neutral labels for two types of faith communities in society.

German sociologist Max Weber originated the church-sect line of thinking. Considering the range of religious behaviors he saw in Western Europe, Weber (1922/1993) proposed two typologies to categorize them: church-sect and asceticism-mysticism. He later developed four ideal types to provided "conceptual instruments for comparison with the measurement of reality" (Weber, 1949, p. 97). His critical differentiating variable for churches and sects was the way they recruited members. People were born into churches (established social institutions open to all). Membership requirements were loose. People decided to join sects (less formalized but more exclusive social groups built around common beliefs or faith experiences). Membership requirements were stricter. Ascetics and mystics also chose their lifestyles. Both rejected secular world values. Ascetics denied themselves worldly pleasures, followed a disciplined lifestyle and gained spiritual fulfillment through rational actions. Mystics contemplated the holy, showed little interest in the material world and received spiritual enlightenment through prayer and meditation.

Weber's student, Ernst Troeltsch (1931), a theologian, simplified the typology to church-sect-mysticism. He developed ideal types to describe the main categories of religious bodies he found in Christian Europe through the 18th century. Troeltsch, like Weber, generally considered churches inclusive and sects exclusive. The church was "able to receive the masses and adjust itself to the world, because, to a certain extent, it can afford to ignore the need for subjective holiness for the sake of the objective treasures of grace and of redemption" (Troeltsch, 1931, Vol. 2, p. 993). A sect, on the other hand, was "a voluntary society composed of strict and definite Christian believers bound to each other by the fact that all have experienced 'the new birth'" (Vol. 2, p. 993). Mysticism needed little formal organization and usually attracted individuals. Mysticism often led to emotional forms of vital piety (Troeltsch, 1931).

American theologian H. Richard Niebuhr (1929) further simplified the social typology to church-sect. Building on Weber and Troeltsch, Niebuhr used the church-sect dynamic to describe the evolution of denominations in America. Niebuhr (1929) described a church as "a natural social group akin to the family or the nation" (p. 17). Churches were inclusive, stable, often national in scope and characterized by gospel universalism. People were usually born into church membership. As inclusive groups, churches were closely allied with cultural values, national interests and economic priorities. Churches represented the morality of the respectable majority in society. Churches attached high importance to institutional forms of conduct (rituals and specific decision-making procedures), doctrines and sacraments administered through officially recognized clergy as actual (not symbolic) means of grace.

Sect members, on the other hand, intentionally had to join “a voluntary association” (Niebuhr, 1929, p. 17). Sects were exclusive and unstable social groups. Sects appealed to individuals, emphasized specific ethical behavior and often required a specific religious experience (such as a vision or conversion) as a prerequisite for membership. Sects emphasized individual spiritual experiences, the priesthood of all believers and sacraments as symbols of fellowship. Sects were always minorities and usually stood apart from the morality of the general society. Sects preferred isolation from general society, not compromise with the secular world (Niebuhr, 1929).

Social conditions, Niebuhr said, determined whether Christian believers formed a church or a sect.

> In Protestant history the sect has ever been the child of an outcast minority, taking its rise in the religious revolts of the poor, of those who were without effective representation in the church or state and who formed their conventicles of dissent in the only way open to them, on the democratic, associational pattern. (Niebuhr, 1929, p. 19)

Niebuhr said sects seldom lasted more than one generation. That’s because sects had to develop institutions to teach youngsters group beliefs.

> Rarely does a second generation hold the convictions it has inherited with a fervor equal to that of its fathers, who fashioned the convictions in the heat of conflict and at the risk of martyrdom. As generation succeeds generation, the isolation of the community from the world becomes more difficult. … Compromise begins, and the ethics of the sect approach the churchly type of morals. As with ethics, so also with doctrine, so also with the administration

of religion. … So the sect becomes a church. (Niebuhr, 1929, p. 20)

Members dissatisfied with their sect's accommodations to the world or who found that the evolving faith group no longer met their spiritual needs often left to form new sects. Over time, as these new sects tried to preserve themselves through succeeding generations, they, too, tended to become like the churches they once left (Niebuhr, 1929).

The continuous sect-church cycle often prompted reforms and increased mission outreach in Christendom, Niebuhr observed. As such, the dynamic itself was not evil. But one product was: denominationalism. Denominations represented the moral failure of Christianity, Niebuhr said. They signaled the surrender of churches to secular forces of class, politics and power as faith groups responded to social influences. Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists and Presbyterians—some of today's mainline Protestant denominations—had all succumbed to social forces of moral relativism as they dealt with such issues as immigration, slavery, poor-relief and civil war during U.S. history (Niebuhr, 1929).

Church-Sect Theory Evolves

Other American sociologists—for example, Howard Becker (1932), J. Milton Yinger (1946, 1970), Bryan Wilson (1959, 1973), Paul Gustafson (1967, 1973, 1975), Roland Robertson (1970) and William H. Swatos Jr. (1979, 1981)—have used the church-sect dynamic in their scholarship. Benton Johnson (1963) offered the first social science operational definitions of church and sect: "A church is a religious group that accepts the social environment in which it exists. A sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists" (p. 543). This definition allowed comparative empirical analysis of faith groups beyond the ideal types that Weber, Troeltsch and Niebuhr had advanced. The single variable put a group on a continuum from complete acceptance to complete rejection of its society. The definition left the exact dividing line between church and sect up to the researcher. The decision could be based on other variables being considered.

> The most striking fact about the American religious situation is that the vast majority of religious bodies seem to accept the dominant value system. … Most groups, therefore, should be placed toward the church end of the church-sect continuum. … Few would dispute that old-line Protestant denominations, such as the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, and the Episcopalians, stand very near the church end. Closely allied with these bodies are groups like the Baptists, the Disciples of Christ, the Evangelical United Brethren, and the Lutherans. These bodies, together with certain smaller denominations, are to be regarded as the most churchly of all American religious groups (Johnson, 1963, pp. 544-545).

New View of Religion Emerges

By the last half of the 20th century, some social scientists had begun to question the secularization hypothesis. A growing body of research from the 1950s through 1970s showed that religion as a social/cultural force was not going away. Stark (1983, 1985) was one of the first sociologists to reject the secularization hypothesis. He said religious behavior reflected rational, not irrational, choices. Stark and Bainbridge (1979, 1980, 1985) combined rational choice with Johnson's single-variable church-sect concept. They defined "religious movements" as "social movements that wish to cause or prevent change in a system of fact, belief, values, symbols, and practices concerned with providing supernaturally based general compensators" (Stark & Bainbridge, 1985, p. 23). "Compensators" are beliefs "that a reward will be obtained in the distant future or in some other context that cannot be immediately verified" (p. 6).

Stark (1983, 1985) broke new theoretical ground by evaluating rational religious choices in economic terms. He said people made religious choices after comparing costs of religious commodities (worship, volunteer service, financial donations) to the expected rewards (emotional well-being, fellowship, salvation from eternal damnation, everlasting life). Some rewards were not observable in this world. Believers took that reality into consideration when making choices (Stark & Finke, 2000).

Furthermore, Stark and other sociologists in his school held that all faith groups competed in a general religious economy. Each began in a specific, relatively stable market niche. To move into a larger niche, a church or sect needed to attract more members. It did that by reducing tension with the host economy (culture). Over time, extreme sects tended to shed qualities that separated them from society. Thus, sects evolved into denominational expressions of religion that generally embraced temporal norms (Finke & Stark, 2001, 2005; Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 2003; Stark & Bainbridge, 1980, 1985; Stark & Finke, 2000).

Finke and Stark (2001) and Stark and Finke (2000) noted that Niebuhr's church-sect dynamic moved in only one direction—from sect to church. Stark and Finke (2000) hypothesized that religious groups could move in either direction. Specifically, they said (p. 286):

> +In an unregulated religious economy, where the survival of all religious groups rests on market processes, growth will facilitate the efforts of clergy to move a group into lower or higher tension.
> +Initial shifts toward higher tension will primarily occur at the congregational level and will be reflected at the denominational level as a cumulative result of congregational shifts.
> +The church-to-sect process is far more likely to occur in relatively unregulated religious economies where the survival of all religious

> groups rests on market processes than in regulated economies featuring subsidized denominations.

Finke and Stark (2001) used a bell-curve continuum to illustrate the social demand for services in a general, unregulated religious economy like the one in United States. Each end of the curve represented extreme tension with society (highest at right, lowest at left). Demand for religious services rose toward the center. Such demand reached its peak at the midpoint.

> When applied to religious groups, this bell-shaped curve of religious demand helps explain the size of the market segment to which a group will appeal. When a group limits its appeal to either extreme of the continuum, it is confined to a small portion of the market. … As groups appeal to the center of the continuum, however, the size of the potential market rises. Thus, most Americans are members of a congregation that falls somewhere between the two extremes. (Finke & Stark, 2001, p. 177)

Research among United Methodists in California and Nevada supported Finke and Stark's view that religious groups could move in either direction on the social continuum.

> … [W]hen pastors of liberal denominations attempt to increase their congregation's tension with society, they experience an increase in organizational vitality. Conversely, when pastors of liberal denominations attempt to further reduce their congregations' tension with society, they continue to lose organizational vitality. … [W]hen religious groups move too far to either extreme, they are appealing to an increasingly smaller segment of the religious market. (Finke & Stark, 2001, p. 188)

Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger and Gorsuch (2003) noted that religious organizations were constantly changing. Faith communities affected society as well as reacted to it. "What empirically distinguishes churches and sects," they said, "is the degree to which their host cultures seek to control and minimize the influence of particular religious groups" (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 2003, p. 381). Rank and file church members appeared to notice this give and take with the secular culture. In other research among United Methodists, Cannon (2007) found that church members in Texas were concerned about worldly influences on their church. Texas United Methodists—all laypeople—listed "secularity/worldliness" as the second most import issue facing their mainline denomination in 2004. They thought their church was too involved in secular politics, was too worldly and did not take conservative moral positions.

'Liberal' Means Mainline Denominations

Stark and Finke (2001) used "liberal denomination" as an alternative label for "mainline." That was the term Niebuhr (1929) and Johnson (1963) used. Lakoff (2004, 2007) included mainline denominations in "progressive Christianity." Progressive Christian denominations see God as a "nurturant parent" offering grace and forgiveness to all who ask. That view of God differs from the one of conservative Christian denominations. They see God a "strict father" preparing to punish all sinners and demanding disciplined lifestyles from those saved through Christ. "In a nurturant form of religion, your spiritual experience has to do with your connection to other people and the world, and your spiritual practice has to do with your service to others and to the community" (Lakoff, 2004, p. 103).

Carroll and Roof (1993), McKinney (1998), Michaelsen and Roof (1986), and Roof and McKinney (1987) all agreed "mainline" was a vague term. They said "mainline" generally described a group of Protestant institutions with some common theological understandings, established organizational structures, ecumenical involvements, similar socioeconomic characteristics and parallel senses of historic religious status in the United States.

> By "mainline" denominations, we refer essentially to those groups—Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists (now United Church of Christ), United Methodists, Disciples of Christ, American Baptists, Lutherans and the Reformed Church in America—that have functioned as an unofficial religious and cultural establishment within America and within American Protestantism. The first three were the established colonial religions; the others were later additions. We also include as mainline several of the historic African American denominations that grew out of the Baptist and Methodist traditions. (Carroll & Roof, 1993, pp. 11-12)

The Association of Religious Data Archives at Pennsylvania State University listed 24 of the 188 faith groups in its online database (www.thearda.com) as "Mainline Protestant Denominations." The association did not specifically define "Mainline Protestant Denominations." But the list included those groups named by Carroll and Roof (1993).

The Religious Landscape Survey (Miller, 2008a, 2008b), sponsored by the Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life, cited the Religion Newswriters Association's definition of "mainline Protestant denominations" for the way it categorized faith groups:

> This term refers to a group of moderate-to-liberal Protestant denominations: the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Predominantly African-American Methodist denominations are also sometimes associated with this grouping: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the AME Zion Church and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The term "mainline" harks back to a time when this mostly white group was tied to the political and cultural establishment. Since the 1960s, membership in most mainline denominations has fallen precipitously, as has their influence. (Connolly, 2006, p.45)

Twitchell (2007) said only obscure doctrinal issues and "razor-thin" theological content separated mainline denominations (p, 113). “There is little if any product differentiation,” he said. (p. 148). Most 21st century religion consumers see mainline denominations as interchangeable. They offer “services so similar that only an expert, if blindfolded, could tell which was which,” Twitchell observed after visiting congregations representing various mainline groups (p. 181). Mainline congregations generally offered “lukewarm” worship experiences compared to “hot” sensations in more evangelical groups (p. 21).

> Old-line religions got stuck with old-time religion: forgiveness now, salvation later. … While their focus was on the world coming up, the real battle was in the here and now. The mainline denominations were providing a quiet place to go on Sunday with your consumption community surrounding you. But they were not delivering the sensation. They were not delivering excitement. They were not providing forgiveness now, salvation now. (Twitchell, 2007, p. 55)

While denominational membership was associated with social class at the start of the 20th century, that was no longer the case a century later. Social status was too fluid. Mainline Christians were generally older than the general population. Couples from mainline denominations averaged fewer than two births each. Consequently, they were not reproducing themselves (Twitchell, 2007).

Finke and Stark (2005), Roof and McKinney (1987) and Wuthnow (1988) all reported that the dynamic of growing upstart sects and declining mainline denominations had been part of the American religion scene since colonial times. Aggressive faith groups committed to vivid otherworldliness spread religion across North America. As faith groups replaced doctrines about an active supernatural realm with abstractions about goodness and virtue, accommodated social values, and ceased to make serious demands on followers, they ceased to prosper (Finke & Stark, 2005). As faith groups downplayed characteristics that distinguished adherents from the general society, members found switching churches or leaving altogether easier (Wuthnow, 1988). Increased competition from more vital faith groups often fostered doctrinal, philosophical or other divisions within mainline memberships. As a result, membership and participation in mainline denominations steadily declined during the 20th century (Stark & Finke, 2001, 2005; Roof & McKinney, 1987; Wuthnow, 1988).

If churches practice two-way symmetrical public relations, the capstone of Excellence Theory (see Chapter 3), their leaders—both communicators and top executives—should logically be trying to identify and accommodate values in secular society. Such accommodation would, according to Excellence Theory, help churches build better long-term relationships with various publics. Mainline Protestant denominations, according to Church-Sect Theory, have accommodated secular values. Mainline clergy leaders push to reduce tension with social values as one way to attract more worshipers, promote congregational growth (a sign of success within the faith group), boost their status within the community and denomination, and earn higher salaries (Stark & Finke, 2000). Such moves toward temporal values make mainline Protestant denominations the most churchlike faith groups on the church-sect continuum (Johnson, 1963). These points led to the following hypotheses:

H1: Communicators for U.S. mainline Protestant denominations are more likely to agree with survey statements describing two-way symmetrical public relations than communicators for other U.S. faith groups.

H2: Leaders of U.S. mainline Protestant denominations are more likely to agree with survey statements describing two-way symmetrical public relations than leaders of other U.S. faith groups.

Chapter 5
Methodology

This study used two surveys to gather data to answer the eight research questions and test the two hypotheses in the preceding three chapters. To repeat, the research questions were:

RQ1: How do the roles that religion communicators play compare to those of secular practitioners?
RQ2: How do the roles that religion communicators play compare to what faith group leaders expect?
RQ3: How much do religion communicators and faith group leaders agree on practices in the four models of public relations?
RQ4: How well do religion communicators know what their supervisors think about practices in the four models of public relations?
RQ5: How does expertise of religion communicators to practice each model of public relations compare to their secular counterparts?
RQ6: How does the managerial and technical expertise of religion communications compare to the expertise of secular public relations practitioners?
RQ7: How do formal education, professional association membership and exposure to trade publications affect the way religion communicators practice public relations?
RQ8: How much do religion communicators and faith group leaders agree about contributions of communication to faith group operations?

The hypotheses being tested were:

H1: Communicators for U.S. mainline Protestant denominations are more likely to agree with survey statements describing two-way symmetrical public relations than communicators for other U.S. faith groups.
H2: Leaders of U.S. mainline Protestant denominations are more likely to agree with survey statements describing two-way symmetrical public relations than leaders of other U.S. faith groups.

The surveys in this study were done in phases. Questionnaires replicated items used by Grunig and his colleagues in their research among 327 secular organizations (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002) and Broom (1982, 1986) in studies of public relations practitioners. The first survey collected responses in late 2006 and early 2007 from members of the Religion Communicators Council. The second questionnaire went in early 2008 to top executives of faith groups represented by religion communicators who responded to the first survey.

Phase 1: Survey of Religion Communicators

E-mail invitations with personalized salutations were sent to all 479 communicators with e-mail addresses on file in the Religion Communicators Council membership database as of October 1, 2006. No random sampling was involved. Messages asked RCC members to go to SurveyMonkey.com to complete a Web-based survey (Appendix A). Responses were collected from members online from October 1 through December 31, 2006. Five follow-up e-mail messages were sent—one every two weeks through mid December. Those reminders went only to non-respondents. Neither the original invitation nor the reminders offered any special response incentives (Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2000; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003).

Additional responses were accepted from members attending the April 2007 RCC National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville respondents had been part of the original sampling frame but had not taken part in the online survey. They completed a self-administered paper-and-pencil version of the questionnaire. Those answers were manually added to the database compiled by SurveyMonkey.com.

The Web-based questionnaire asked 142 questions from the 313 in the original paper-and-pencil instrument used with top communicators in Excellence surveys (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). The online instrument was field-tested in September 2006. Five regional United Methodist communicators who did not belong to RCC completed the questionnaire. They all finished the survey in less than 30 minutes. None of the test subjects indicated any response fatigue with the instrument that was half the length of the original Excellence questionnaire. That lack of fatigue was consistent with findings from a meta-analysis of online surveys by Cook, Heath and Thompson (2000). They saw no relationship between online survey length and response rate. Instead, issue salience was a key factor driving online survey response rates. Questions in this survey appeared to be relevant to the United Methodists communicators.

The United Methodists commented on question wording, questionnaire instructions and SurveyMonkey usability. They pointed out places where they had questions about instructions or item wording and offered general impressions. Based on field-test results, some terms used in the original Excellence questionnaires were modified to fit the RCC audience. For example, “communication” was often substituted for “public relations” when referring to departments. Black (2002) had shown “communications” was the most common job title used among council members. Field testing confirmed that the United Methodists seemed to prefer “communication” to “public relations.” They understood “communication” to cover the public relations department functions covered in the original Excellence studies. That word choice was consistent with the long-running debate among RCC members about what to call their work.

Since this study appeared to be the first to probe what religion communicators did, the section on communicator roles included all 28 items developed by Broom (1982) as well as four developed later by Dozier (1984), not just the 16 items used in other

Excellence surveys. Furthermore, new questions were added about producing Web sites, e-mail newsletters, blogs and podcasts. Those communication delivery methods became common after much of the Excellence research was done. Those additional roles questions enriched the overall data set. But comparisons in this project between RCC members and public relations practitioners in earlier studies were limited to the 16-item Excellence index for role enactment.

Phase 2: Survey of Faith Group Leaders

A self-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaire (Appendix B) went by U.S. Mail in January 2008 to 87 faith group executives (bishops, general secretaries, executive directors, presidents, pastors, etc.). The mailing included a cover letter and postage-paid business-reply mail return envelope. Survey recipients headed organizations (judicatories, denominational agencies, religious orders, local congregations, professional associations of church-related agencies, colleges and universities, and health-and-welfare ministries) represented by the 185 Religion Communicators Council members who responded to the 2006-07 survey. All these senior managers were non-communicators. The sample excluded leaders of faith-related communication organizations (faith-group public relations offices, publications, news services, etc.), who were likely to be communicators themselves. Since many of those communication executives were RCC members, they could have responded to the first survey.

As with the first survey, the questionnaire replicated 73 of the 96 items from previous survey instruments used with top executives in Excellence studies of 327 organizations in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom (Grunig, Grunig &

Dozier, 2002). Most of the questions were similar to ones that religion communicators answered in the 2006-07 survey. “Communication” was again used in most places where earlier Excellence questionnaires used “public relations.”

All 87 leaders were sent a follow-up post card 10 days after the initial survey mailing. That post card encouraged leaders to complete and return the survey questionnaire. Leaders who did not respond by mid February 2008 received a second questionnaire, cover letter and business-reply mail return envelope.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked how the roles that religion communicators played compared to those of secular practitioners. This question probed how much religion communicators were or were not like their secular counterparts. For an answer, responses from religion communicators to 16 role measures were compared to composite means from Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Those composite means, reported as numbers between 0 and 200 from an open-ended fractionation scale, represented what practitioners in 316 secular organizations had said in earlier Excellence research. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) used four groups of four statements to define four roles: manager, senior adviser, media relations specialist and communication technician. Those categories represented roles developed by Dozier (1983, 1984) while reworking data from Broom (1982). Statements describing the manager role were:

+ I make communication policy decisions.
+ I diagnose communications problems and explain them to others in the organization.
+ I plan and recommend courses of action for solving communication problems.
+ Others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication programs.

Statements measuring the senior adviser role were:

+ I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.
+ Although I don't make communication policy decisions, I provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendations and plans.
+ I am the senior counsel to top decision makers when communication issues are involved.
+ I represent the organization at events and meetings.

Statements for the media relations specialist role were:

+ I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues.
+ I am responsible for placing news releases.
+ I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization.
+ I maintain media contacts for the organization.

Statements coving the technician role were:

+ I write materials presenting information on issues important to the organization.
+ I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization.
+ I do photography and graphics for communication materials.
+ I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.

Communicators in the secular studies indicated how often they performed each task on an open-ended fractionation scale. For them, 100 represented an "average" task; 50 represented "half the average"; 200 represented "twice the average"; 0 represented "does not describe"; and anything above 200 represented "as high as you want to go." SurveyMonkey.com could not accommodate a similar fractionation scale for the online survey of RCC members. SurveyMonkey.com could handle a five-point Likert scale. J.E. Grunig (personal correspondence, June 5, 2006) said that a five-point Likert scale would work fine and still allow approximate comparisons to overall Excellence findings.

Therefore, RCC members responded (1) never do, (2) seldom do, (3) sometimes do, (4) often do and (5) always do.

Means were calculated for responses by RCC members to each of the 16 statements. Composite means for the two groups were also calculated for each of the four roles. To facilitate comparisons with Excellence baseline data, RCC mean responses were converted from the Likert scale to numbers approximating those on the fractionation scale in Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Excellence baseline data could have been converted from the fractionation to the Likert scale as well. Either change would introduce slight data distortions. But moving from the wider fractionation scale to the more limited Likert scale appeared to increase those distortions. Since the goal was to compare approximate locations on the two ordinal scales (Sission & Stocker, 1989), the decision was made to preserve the integrity of the baseline data and risk minor distortions in the RCC results. In the conversion, 1 on the RCC scale equaled 0 ("does not describe") on the fractionation scale. Each 0.1 above 1 in a mean on the five-point Likert scale equaled five points on the fractionation scale. For example: 1.5=25, 2=50 ("half the average"), 2.5=75, 3=100 ("average"), 3.5=125, 4=150, 4.5=175 and 5=200 ("twice the average").

Independent samples *t* tests of means were run (Sission & Stocker, 1989). They checked for the statistically significant differences in mean responses between the two groups. Effect size was considered as well. Differences in means of 0.2 pooled standard deviations were considered small, 0.5 *SD* medium and 0.8 *SD* large (Cohen, 1992). In addition, Cronbach's alphas were computed for each role scale. Alphas from the RCC study were compared to those reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002).

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked how roles that religion communicators performed compared to what their supervisors expected. To find an answer, responses were compared from RCC members and faith group leaders on 24 role measures. These measures came from Broom and Dozier (1986). The authors used six statements to define four roles conceptualized in Broom (1982): expert prescriber, communication process facilitator, problem-solving facilitator and technician. In addition, Broom and Dozier (1986) asked communicators to pick their primary role from the four categories. Broom's categories were discussed but not measured in the later Excellence studies. Although those studies used some of the same measure statements, they examined four roles developed by Dozier (1983, 1984) and used in RQ1. Dozier (1983) concluded that manager and technician were the most parsimonious way to look at public relations roles. Nevertheless, he argued that Broom's original four-part typology provided useful tools for dissecting the manager function. Broom (personal correspondence, June 12, 2006) made the same point. He said reducing his measures may mask many potential differences among the roles. Furthermore, Dozier and Broom (1995) reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.94 for the 18-item manager scale and 0.74 for the six-item technician scale. That is why Broom's original model was used to answer RQ2.

To define the expert prescriber, these six statements were used:

+ I make communication policy decisions.
+ Because of my experience and training, others consider me to be the organization's expert in solving communication problems.
+ I diagnose communications problems and explain them to others in the organization.

+ I plan and recommend courses of action for solving communication problems.
+ Others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication programs.
+ I take responsibility for the success or failure of the organization's communication programs.

These six statements described the communication process facilitator:

+ I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.
+ I represent the organization at events and meetings.
+ I keep management informed of public reaction to organizational policies, procedures and/or actions.
+ I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues.
+ I report public opinion survey results to keep management informed of the opinions of various publics.
+ I conduct communication audits to identify communication problems between the organization and various publics.

These six statements defined the problem-solving facilitator:

+ In meetings with management, I point out the need to follow a systematic communications planning process.
+ I encourage management participation when making the important communication decisions.
+ I keep management actively involved in every phase of the communication program.
+ I operate as a catalyst in management's decision making.
+ When working with managers on communication, I outline alternative approaches for solving problems.
+ I work with managers to increase their skills in solving and/or avoiding communication problems.

These six statements characterized the technician:

+ I write materials presenting information on issues important to the organization.
+ I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization.
+ I do photography and graphics for communication materials.
+ I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.
+ I handle technical aspects of producing communication materials.
+ I maintain media contacts for the organization.

Responses to the 24 measures were (1) never do, (2) seldom do, (3) sometimes do, (4) often do and (5) always do. Means were calculated for responses by RCC members and faith group leaders to each of the 24 statements. Composite means for the two groups were also calculated for each role. Independent samples *t* tests of means were run. They checked for statistically significant differences in mean responses from communicators and leaders. Effect size was considered as well. Differences in means of 0.2 pooled standard deviations were considered small, 0.5 *SD* medium and 0.8 *SD* large (Cohen, 1992). Pearson's correlations were computed. They checked how closely mean responses from communicators and leaders to the six statements about each role were associated. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for each scale were determined.

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked how much religion communicators and faith group leaders agreed about practices described in the four models of public relations (Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). To answer that question, a comparison of means was used. RCC members and faith group leaders both responded to 16 statements about the four public relations models. Both groups gave answers on a five-point Likert scale. Responses were (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.

Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) provided four statements to measure each model. For the press-agentry/publicity model, questionnaires asked how much communicators and senior executives agreed with following statements:

+ The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.

+ In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.
+ The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.
+ For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.

To see support for the public information model, the survey asked about agreement with these statements:

+ In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.
+ In communication, accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.
+ Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication.
+ Communication is more a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.

These four statements gauged support for two-way asymmetrical public relations practices:

+ After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitude.
+ In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.
+ Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.
+ Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.

To assess two-way symmetrical public relations practices, the survey asked about agreement with these four statements:

+ The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the public the organization affects.
+ Before starting a communication program, survey or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.
+ The purpose of communication is to change attitudes and behaviors of

management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.

+ Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.

Means were calculated for responses to each of the 16 statements by RCC members and their faith group leaders. Composite group means were calculated for each model. The four composite group means were further combined into a total mean for communicators and for leaders. Means higher than 3.50 were judged to show agreement. Those from 2.51 to 3.49 were taken to show neither agreement nor disagreement (generally neutral opinions). Those below 2.50 were rated as showing disagreement.

Independent samples *t* tests of means were run. They checked for statistically significant differences in mean responses from communicators and leaders. In addition, Pearson's correlations were computed. They checked how closely mean responses to the 16 statements from the two groups were associated. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were computed for each model scale. Alphas from the RCC study were compared to those reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002).

Research Question 4

RQ4 asked how well RCC members knew what their supervisors thought about public relations practices in the four models of public relations. To investigate that, a comparison of means was used. RCC members were asked to predict how their supervisors would respond to the 16 statements about the four public relations models used in RQ3. Those predictions were on a five-point Likert scale. Responses were (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.

Means were calculated for how RCC members predicted their senior leaders would answer the 16 statements and compared to what faith group executives actually said. Composite means were calculated for predictions about each model. Means higher than 3.50 were judged to show agreement. Those from 2.51 to 3.49 were taken to show neither agreement nor disagreement (generally neutral opinions). Those below 2.50 were rated as showing disagreement.

Independent samples *t* tests of means were run. They checked for statistically significant differences in what communicators predicted and what leaders actually said. Effect size was considered. Differences in means of 0.2 pooled standard deviations were considered small, 0.5 *SD* medium and 0.8 *SD* large (Cohen, 1992). In addition, Pearson's correlations were computed. They checked how closely mean responses to the 16 statements from the two groups were associated.

Research Question 5

RQ5 asked how the expertise of RCC members to practice each public relations model compared to that of secular practitioners. To probe that, survey responses from RCC members were compared to those by communicators in Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) used four statements to measure expertise necessary to practice each model. For the press agentry/publicity model, those statements were:

+ Persuade reporters to publicize your organization.
+ Get your organization's name into the media.
+ Keep bad publicity out of the media.
+ Get maximum publicity from a staged event.

These statements described expertise needed to practice the public information model:

+ Provide objective information about your organization.

+ Understand news values of journalists.
+ Prepare news stories reporters will use.
+ Perform as a journalist inside the organization.

For the two-way asymmetrical model, these statements represented necessary expertise:

+ Get publics to behave as your organization wants.
+ Use attitude theory in a campaign.
+ Manipulate publics scientifically.
+ Persuade a public your organization is right on an issue.

The four expertise statements for the two-way symmetrical model were:

+ Determine how publics react to the organization.
+ Negotiate with an activist group.
+ Use theories of conflict resolution.
+ Help management understand the opinions of particular publics.

Communicators in the secular studies indicated expertise levels in their departments for each task on an open-ended fractionation scale. For them, 100 represented an "average" expertise; 50 represented "half the average"; 200 represented "twice the average"; 0 represented "does not describe"; and anything above 200 represented "as high as you want to go." Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) then reported the results as transformed means (square roots of the fractionation number). As in RQ1, SurveyMonkey.com could not provide a similar fractionation scale for the online survey of RCC members. SurveyMonkey.com could handle a five-point Likert scale. Grunig (personal correspondence, June 5, 2006) said that a five-point Likert scale would work fine and still allow approximate comparisons to overall Excellence findings. Therefore, RCC members described expertise levels for their departments as (1) none, (2) some, (3) average, (4) good and (5) tops in the field.

Means were calculated for responses by RCC members to each of the 16 statements. Composite means were calculated for each of the four scales. To allow approximate comparisons with baseline Excellence data, results from Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) were squared back into fractionation numbers between 0 and 200. As in RQ1, RCC mean responses were converted from the Likert scale to numbers approximating those on the fractionation scale. In that conversion, 1 on the RCC scale equaled 0 (does not describe) on the fractionation scale. Each 0.1 above 1 in a mean on the five-point Likert scale equaled five points on the fractionation scale. Consequently, 1.5=25, 2=50 (half the average), 2.5=75, 3=100 (average), 3.5=125, 4=150, 4.5=175 and 5=200 (twice the average).

Independent samples *t* tests of means were run (Sission & Stocker, 1989). They checked for the statistically significant differences in mean responses between religion and secular communicators. Pearson's correlations were computed. They checked how closely mean responses to the 16 statements from the two groups were associated. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were determined for each model scale. Alphas from the RCC study were compared to those reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002).

Research Question 6

RQ6 asked how the managerial and technical knowledge and skills of religion communicators compared to those of their secular counterparts. To answer that question, survey responses from RCC members were compared to those from communicators in Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) on 16 items. Eight of those asked about the expertise level available in the communication department for carrying out management functions.

The other eight asked about expertise in the department for accomplishing technical communication functions. The eight management functions were:

+ Manage people.
+ Conduct evaluation research.
+ Develop goals and objectives for your department.
+ Prepare a department budget.
+ Perform environmental scanning.
+ Develop strategies for solving communication problems.
+ Manage the organization’s response to issues.
+ Use research to segment publics.

The eight technical communication tasks were:

+ Coordinate press coverage or arrange media coverage of an event.
+ Produce publications.
+ Write an advertisement.
+ Take photographs.
+ Write speeches.
+ Produce audio/visuals (graphics, slide shows, videos, radio spots).
+ Write news releases and feature articles.
+ Create and manage a speakers bureau.

Communicators in the secular studies indicated expertise levels for their departments on an open-ended fractionation scale. For them, 100 represented an “average” expertise; 50 represented “half the average”; 200 represented “twice the average”; 0 represented “does not describe”; and anything above 200 represented “as high as you want to go.” As in RQ1 and RQ5, SurveyMonkey.com could not provide a similar fractionation scale for the online survey of RCC members. SurveyMonkey.com could handle a five-point Likert scale. Grunig (personal correspondence, June 5, 2006) said that a five-point Likert scale would work fine and still allow approximate comparisons to overall Excellence findings. Therefore, RCC members responded (1) none, (2) some, (3) average, (4) good and (5) tops in the field.

Means were calculated for responses by RCC members to each of the 16 statements. Composite means for the two groups were also calculated for each of the two scales. To facilitate comparisons with Excellence baseline data, RCC mean responses were converted from the Likert scale to numbers approximating those on the fractionation scale in Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). In that conversion, 1 on the RCC scale equaled 0 (does not describe) on the fractionation scale. Each 0.1 above 1 in a mean on the five-point Likert scale equaled five points on the fractionation scale. Consequently, 1.5=25, 2=50 (half the average), 2.5=75, 3=100 (average), 3.5=125, 4=150, 4.5=175 and 5=200 (twice the average).

Independent samples *t* tests of means were run (Sission & Stocker, 1989). They checked for the statistically significant differences in mean responses between the two groups. Pearson's correlations were computed. They checked how closely mean responses to the 16 statements were associated. In addition, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were determined for each scale. Alphas from the RCC study were compared to those reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002).

Research Question 7

RQ7 asked how formal education, participation in professional associations and reading of trade publications affected the way RCC members practiced public relations. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) considered formal education, professional association memberships and familiarity with trade publications all indicators of public relations knowledge. Four cross tabulations looked for answers to RQ 7. The first checked the relationship between highest level of education in any field and responses to the 16 items about public relations practice used in RQ 3 and the 16 statements about communication expertise used in RQ 5. The levels of education were no college, some college, a bachelor's degree, some graduate courses, a master's degree and a doctoral degree.

The second cross tabulation looked for relationships between those 32 statements and the highest level of training respondents had received in communication, journalism, public relations or marketing. The training levels were no formal training in communication, journalism, advertising, public relations or marketing; some continuing education courses; some undergraduate-level college courses; a bachelor's degree; some graduate-level courses; a master's degree; a doctoral degree.

The third cross tabulation considered connections between the 32 statements and responses about reading communication trade periodicals. Respondents could select "none," pick from a list of 15 titles or name additional publications under "other." Listed publication titles were *Communication World*, *Public Relations Journal*, *Public Relations Tactics*, *Public Relations Strategist*, *Public Relations Review*, *International Public Relations Review*, *PR Reporter*, *PR News*, *O'Dwyer's Newsletter*, *Communications Briefings*, *PR Week*, *Regan Report*, *Editor & Publisher*, *Advertising Age* and *Ad Week*.

The fourth cross tabulation checked for relationships between the 32 statements and membership in professional communication or public relations associations. Respondents could select from a list of eight organizations, pick "none" or specify another group. Listed groups were Religion Communicators Council, Public Relations Society of America, International Association of Business Communicators, Women in Communication, a fellowship related to their faith group, Society of Professional

Journalists, Radio-Television News Directors and Society of News Design.

Chi square tests were run to determine the statistical significance of all relationships.

Research Question 8

RQ8 asked how much religion communicators and faith group leaders agreed about contributions of the communication department to faith group operations. To answer that question, a comparison of means was used. RCC members and faith group leaders both responded to statements about communication department contributions to:

+ Strategic planning.
+ Response to major social issues.
+ Major initiatives.
+ Routine operations.
+ Regularly conducted and routine research activities.
+ Specific research activities conducted to answer specific questions.
+ Formal approaches to gathering information for use in decision making other than research.
+ Informal approaches to gathering information.
+ Contacts with knowledgeable people outside the organization.
+ Judgments based on experience.

Both groups responded on a five-point scale. Responses were (1) no contribution, (2) minor contribution, (3) average contribution, (4) major contribution and (5) extremely strong contribution. Means higher than 3.5 indicate major contributions. Means from 2.51 to 3.49 show average contributions. Those lower than 2.50 signal minor contributions.

Independent samples *t* tests of means were run. They checked for the statistically significant differences in mean responses between the two groups. Pearson's correlations were computed. They checked how closely mean responses to the 10 statements were associated. In addition, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were determined for each scale.

Hypothesis 1

H1 said that communicators for mainline Protestant denominations would more likely agree with survey items describing two-way symmetrical public relations than practitioners for other U.S. faith groups. This proposition reflected how dynamics of Church-Sect Theory might logically interact with Excellence Public Relations Theory at the individual level of analysis. Mainline denominations were the most churchlike groups on the church-sect continuum (Carroll & Roof, 1993; Finke & Stark, 2001, 2005; Johnson, 1963; Michaelsen & Roof, 1986; Niebuhr, 1929; Roof, 1998; Roof & McKinney, 1987; Stark & Bainbridge, 1979, 1980, 1985; Stark & Finke, 2000). Mainline denominations were, therefore, more likely than other U.S. faith groups to seek to accommodate secular social values. In such an organizational milieu, communicators might be more likely than those from less churchlike groups to advocate two-way symmetrical public relations. That approach allowed social groups to influence the denomination as much as it influenced those groups. That mutual accommodation corresponded to the primary behavior of a church in Church-Sect Theory.

A comparison of means was used to test H1. Religious affiliation of communicators was recoded from specific faith groups to "mainline" and "other." Respondents from the American Baptist Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ and United Methodist Church were put into the mainline category.

Scholars have consistently recognized those Protestant denominations as "mainline" for at least 80 years (Carroll & Roof, 1993; Finke & Stark, 2001, 2005; Johnson, 1963; Michaelsen & Roof, 1986; Miller, 2008a, 2008b; Niebuhr, 1929; Roof, 1998; Roof & McKinney, 1987; Stark & Bainbridge, 1979, 1980, 1985; Stark & Finke, 2000; Twitchell, 2000; 2007). In addition, the Association of Religion Data Archives (www.thearda) and the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (Miller, 2008a, 2008b) classified these seven denominations as mainline. The association did not define "mainline Protestant denominations" but maintained data about these seven groups under that label. The Religious Landscape Survey, sponsored by the Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life, cited the Religion Newswriters Association's definition of "mainline Protestant denominations" for the way it categorized faith groups:

> This term refers to a group of moderate-to-liberal Protestant denominations: the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Predominantly African-American Methodist denominations are also sometimes associated with this grouping: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the AME Zion Church and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The term "mainline" harks back to a time when this mostly white group was tied to the political and cultural establishment. Since the 1960s, membership in most mainline denominations has fallen precipitously, as has their influence. (Connolly, 2006, p. 45)

RCC members responded to the 16 statements about public relations practices used in RQ 3 on a five-point Likert scale. Possible answers were (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.

Means were calculated for responses to each of the 16 statements by mainline and non-mainline communicators. Composite means for the two groups were also calculated for each model (average of means for each four-statement scale) and all 16 measures as a whole. Means higher than 3.50 were judged to show agreement. Those from 2.51 to 3.49 were taken to show neither agreement nor disagreement (generally neutral opinions). Those below 2.50 were rated as showing disagreement. Independent samples *t* tests of means were run. They checked for the statistically significant differences in mean responses from the mainline and non-mainline groups. Effect size was considered as well. Differences in means of 0.2 pooled standard deviations were considered small, 0.5 *SD* medium and 0.8 *SD* large (Cohen, 1992). In addition, Pearson's correlations were computed. They checked how closely mean responses to the 16 statements from the two groups were associated.

Hypothesis 2

H2 proposed the same interaction of church-sect and Excellence dynamics as H1—only among faith group leaders. H2 said leaders of mainline denominations would be more likely to agree with survey statements about two-way symmetrical public relations than leaders of other faith groups. The rationale for H2 was similar to H1. Mainline denominations were considered the most churchlike on the church-sect continuum. That meant they should be more likely than other U.S. faith groups to seek to accommodate secular social values. Finke and Stark (2001) and Stark and Finke (2000) showed that mainline Protestant clergy members sometimes did lead their congregations to reduce tensions with secular society. Pastors believed they would attract more members by avoiding absolute moral teachings, emphasizing tolerance concerning conflicting moral positions, and encouraging openness to all participants and opinions. In that way pastors expected to increase their congregation's community influence and their personal reputations inside and outside the church. Mainline leaders—most of whom are clergy members—should, therefore, be more likely to agree with statements about two-way symmetrical public relations than the other corporate communication approaches.

A comparison of means was used to test H2. As with communicators, religious affiliation of leaders was recoded from specific faith groups to "mainline" and "other." Respondents from the American Baptist Church, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Methodist Church were put into the mainline category. That grouping matched what was done with RCC members. Faith group leaders responded to the same 16 statements about the four public relations models as RCC members. Leaders used the same five-point Likert scale as communicators. Possible answers were (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.

As in H1, means were calculated for responses to each of the 16 statements by mainline and non-mainline leaders. Composite means for the two groups were also calculated for each model (average of means for each four-statement scale) and for all 16 measures as a whole. Means higher than 3.50 were judged to show agreement. Those from 2.51 to 3.49 were taken to show neither agreement nor disagreement (generally neutral opinions). Those below 2.50 were rated as showing disagreement. Independent samples *t* tests of means were run. They checked for the statistically significant differences in mean responses from the mainline and non-mainline groups stated in H2. Effect size was considered as well. Differences in pooled means of 0.2 standard deviations were considered small, 0.5 *SD* medium and 0.8 *SD* large (Cohen, 1992). In addition, Pearson's correlations were computed. Those correlations checked how closely mean responses to the 16 statements from the two groups were associated.

CHAPTER 6
Results

One-hundred-seventy of 479 Religion Communicator Council members responded to the initial online survey between October 1 and December 31, 2006. Initial response rate was 35%. Twenty-three of the initial 479 e-mail invitations were undeliverable. Fifteen more RCC members from the original list responded to a paper-and-pencil version of the questionnaire in April 2007 during the organization's annual convention. Those additions brought the final response number to 185 and response rate to 39%.

Researchers have found that mode of survey administration influences response rate. Online surveys generally had lower response rates than mail surveys. A meta-analysis by Cook, Heath and Thompson (2000) reported a mean response rate for 56 online surveys of 39.6%. Subsequent studies of online survey methodology reported response rates from 13% to 43% (Cobanogulo, Warde, Moreo, 2001; Fraze, Hardin, Brashears, Haygood & Smith, 2003; Kwan & Radler, 2002; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003; Sax, Gilmartin & Bryant, 2003; Sills & Song, 2002).

Only 117 RCC members (24%) reached the end of the questionnaire and responded to most of the 142 questionnaire items. Accordingly, response totals were higher for items at the beginning of the online questionnaire than at the end. Field testing had not indicated that questionnaire length might discourage respondents from completing the online survey. High break-off rates were not a problem in earlier online studies (Cobanogulo, Warde, Moreo, 2001; Kwan & Radler, 2002; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003; Sax, Gilmartin & Bryant, 2003). The paper-and-pencil questionnaire did not show the same break-off rate. Respondents answered almost all the questions on the paper version.

Ninety-five RCC respondents (51% of 185) represented mainline Protestant denominations. The breakdown was 39 Methodists, 29 Lutherans, 12 Episcopalians, 8 Presbyterians, 3 American Baptists, 3 Disciples of Christ and 1 United Church of Christ. Sixty-eight RCC members (37%) identified themselves with other faith groups—both Christian and non-Christian. Among the other Christians were 18 Roman Catholics, 13 Southern Baptists, 6 Christian Scientists, 3 Seventh-day Adventists, 2 members of the Church of Christ, and individuals from Mormon, Moravian, Mennonite, Quaker, and various non-denominational groups. Non-Christians included nine Baha'is, two Hindus, two Unitarians, a Muslim and a Jew. Twenty-three (12%) did not specify a faith group.

Nearly 20% of RCC respondents worked for national-level faith organizations, such as denominational agencies or organizational headquarters. Another 21% worked for regional judicatories, such as synods, dioceses, conferences or state conventions. Nine percent served local entities, usually individual congregations or temples. Thirty-four percent had jobs with other faith-related agencies. Those included children's or retirement homes, colleges, religious publications or special organizations, such as religious orders, men's fellowships and anti-hunger agencies. Fifteen percent did not indicate where they worked.

Two-thirds of respondents (65%) said they reported directly to the chief executive. Thirty-six percent said they were members of the senior management executive team ("dominant coalition"). The most common position titles were "director"

(46%), “vice president” (8%), “manager” (8%), “coordinator” (7%) and “specialist” (7%). Forty-six percent of survey respondents had “communications” in their job designations. “Public information” or “media relations” were the second most popular designations at 10%. “Public relations” was used in 7% of titles. “Marketing” and “editor” each accounted for 5% of titles. No other title category was listed higher than 3%.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents said their organization had five or fewer people on the communication staff. Twenty-six percent said they were the only communication staff person in their organization.

Sixty-nine percent of RCC respondents were women. Median age for communicators was 49. Ages ranged from 23 to 92.

Respondents in 2006-07 had worked in communications jobs between 1 and 50 years. The median experience level was 20 years. Their religion communication experience ranged from 1 to 40 years. The median was 10 years.

Ninety-four percent of RCC respondents said they were college graduates. Forty-seven percent had graduate degrees. Seventy-three percent said they had at least some academic training in communication, journalism or public relations. The other 23% reported no college-level work in those disciplines.

Responses from Faith Group Leaders

In the second survey, 29 of the 87 faith group leaders contacted in January 2008 returned paper questionnaires by mail by May 31. Those replies represent a response rate of 33%. Item completion was consistently high. Few respondents skipped any of the 73 items.

Seventeen (59%) of the faith group leaders represented mainline Protestant denominations—11 Methodists, 3 Lutherans, 2 Episcopalians and 1 American Baptist. The other 12 (41%) came from six Christian denominations—Mennonite, Moravian, Reformed Church in America, Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist and Southern Baptist.

Forty-one percent of leaders headed regional judicatories. Twenty-four percent led faith-related organizations, such as religious orders, ecumenical associations, service agencies or seminaries. Seventeen percent ran denominational agencies, and another 17% were denominational chief executives. Their most common titles were “bishop” or “general secretary” (41%), “president” or “chief executive officer” (28%) and “executive director” (21%).

Fifteen of the 29 leaders (52%) were men. Ages ranged from 43 to 74. Median age was 59.5.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked how the roles religion communicators played compared to those of secular practitioners. Table 1 shows that RCC members are significantly different from secular communicators in how much they carry out technician ($p<.05$) and manager tasks ($p<.001$). RCC members were much more likely than secular communicators to work as technicians. Secular practitioners were much more likely than religion communicators to function as managers. Effect size in this small population was moderate for technician role differences (d=.5) and small for the manager role (d=.25). Differences between religion and secular communicators for the media relations and senior adviser roles—while present—were not significant at the p<.05 level.

Both religion and secular communicators said they took responsibility for the success or failure of communication programs (a manager measure). But secular practitioners put more emphasis on manager tasks (M=117 RCC, M=156 secular). Those included solving communication problems, being accountable for the success or failure of communication efforts and making policy decisions. RCC members filled more of their days writing, editing, producing publications and taking pictures (all technician tasks) than did secular practitioners (M=123 RCC, M=72 secular). Secular communicators registered other low mean scores for one senior-adviser and one media-relations task that did not reflect manager-level influence:

+ I don't make communication policy but provide suggestions (M=125 RCC, M=77 secular).
+ I am responsible for placing news releases (M=118 RCC, M=81 secular).

Religion communicators showed wide differences from secular practitioners on whether they were senior counselors to top management (M=104 RCC, M=160 secular) and whether they created opportunities for management to hear views from publics (M=87 RCC, M=118 secular). Those differences might signal a lower status in the organization than secular respondents had.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for scales in the RCC sample mirrored results reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) for three of four roles: media relations specialist (0.85 for RCC members, 0.87 for secular communicators), manager

TABLE 1

Comparison of approximate means from RCC members to raw means on fractionation scale from 316 secular organizations for measures of role enactment by top communicators

Technician Role (*t* = +2.81, *df* = 6, *p* = .03*)	RCC *n*=115	Secular[a]
I write communication materials	139	87
I edit the writing of others for grammar and spelling	137	89
I produce brochures, pamphlets and other materials	127	83
I do photos and graphics for communication materials	90	30
Means for Technician Role	123	72
Cronbach's alpha	.61	.81
Media Relations Specialist Role (*t* = +0.61, *df* = 6, *p* =.56)		
I keep others informed of media coverage	136	143
I use my journalistic skills to find newsworthy material	135	145
I maintain media contacts for my organization	133	115
I am responsible for placing news releases	118	81
Means for Media Specialist Role	131	121
Cronbach's alpha	.85	.87
Senior Adviser Role (*t* = -0.26, *df* = 6, *p* =.80)		
I represent my organization at events and meetings	133	115
I don't make communication policy but provide suggestions	125	77
I am senior counsel to top decision makers	104	160
I create opportunities for management to hear publics	87	118
Means for Senior Adviser Role	112	118
Cronbach's alpha	.50	.54
Manager Role (*t* = -5.52, *df* = 6, *p* =.001**)		
I take responsibility for communication program success/failure	131	162
I'm considered the expert at solving communication problems	119	162
Others hold me accountable for communication programs	116	155
I make communication policy decisions	103	145
Means for Manager Role	117	156
Cronbach's alpha	.84	.89

Note: Responses from RCC members were converted from (1) Never do, (2) Seldom do, (3) Sometimes do, (4) Often do, (5) Always do to an open-ended fractionation system to approximate responses reported by Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002). On that scale, 100 represented "average for a typical item"; 50 represented "half the average"; 200 represented "twice the average"; 0 represented "does not describe"; and anything above 200 represented "as high as you want to go."

[a] Data from Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002), pp. 234-235

*p<.05, **p<.001

(0.84 for RCC members, 0.89 for secular communicators) and senior adviser (0.50 for RCC members, 0.54 for secular communicators). The RCC results recorded a lower alpha than Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) reported for the technician scale (0.61 for RCC members, 0.81 for secular communicators). That lower alpha suggests that the four items may not have measured the technician concept as well among RCC members as among secular communicators. Eliminating the item about writing materials that present important information could boost the alpha in this study to 0.64. That item had the lowest inter-item correlation of the four (0.223). The other three had moderately high inter-item correlations (>.40). Dropping other items, therefore, would reduce the alpha further. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) did not discuss item covariance for their technician scale. Therefore, additional comparisons with their more reliable findings were not possible.

In both Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) and this study, alphas for the senior adviser role did not meet the 0.60 minimum usually seen in social science literature for scales with few items (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008). Consequently, the reliability of the senior adviser scale in both studies is questionable. In the RCC results, two items reduced the senior adviser alpha. One said, "I represent the organization at events and meetings" (inter-item correlation 0.162). The other said: "Although I don't make communication policy decisions, I provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendations and plans" (inter-item correlation 0.198). Eliminating either item from the scale in this study would not boost the alpha to 0.60. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) reported that the second item about not making policies but offering suggestions had also reduced their senior adviser alpha. Nevertheless, they continued to use all four senior adviser items in their research.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked how the roles religion communicators played compared to what their supervisors expected them to play. Table 2 shows differences between the groups. RCC members and faith group leaders gave significantly different answers about the expert prescriber and problem-solving facilitator roles. Differences on the communication process facilitator and technician roles were not significant at the $p<.05$ level.

Top executives showed their strongest support for communicators being expert prescribers (M=3.43 RCC, M=4.03 leaders). Leaders expected communicators to recommend courses of action, take responsibility for diagnosing and solving communication problems, make communication policy decisions, and be accountable for the success or failure of communication efforts. Communicators said they sometimes did those things. Effect size was small to moderate for this statistical difference (d=.37).

Faith group executives also expected communicators to help solve problems facing the organization (M=3.23 RCC, M=3.88 leaders). Leaders said communicators should point out the need for systematic communication planning, encourage management participation in communication decisions, keep leaders actively involved, improve communication skills of other managers and act as a catalyst for decision making. Communicators said they sometimes or seldom did these things. Effect size was moderate for these differences (d=.55). Interestingly, response patterns for RCC members

TABLE 2

Comparison of means for measures of role enactment by RCC members and faith group leaders

Roles and measures	RCC n=115	Leaders n=29	r RCC to leaders
Technician (t = +0.55, df = 10, p =.594)			r= .69
I write materials presenting information on issues important to the organization. **T**	3.79	3.72	
I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization. **T**	3.73	2.90	
I maintain media contacts for the organization. **MR**	3.68	4.14	
I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications. **T**	3.55	3.34	
I handle technical aspects of producing communication materials.	3.10	3.03	
I do photography and graphics for communication materials. **T**	2.80	2.57	
I am a specialist in writing and producing communication materials.	3.92		
Mean for first six measures of technician role	3.44	3.28	
Cronbach's alpha for technician role	.75	.89	
Communication process facilitator (t = -1.9, df = 10, p =.087)			r= .76
I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues. **MR**	3.71	4.10	
I represent the organization at events and meetings. **SA**	3.65	3.52	
I keep management informed of public reaction to organizational policies, procedures and/or actions.	3.51	4.31	
I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics. **SA**	2.74	3.41	
I report public opinion survey results to keep management informed of the opinions of various publics.	2.38	3.31	
I conduct communication audits to identify communication problems between the organization and various publics.	1.96	3.29	
I am a liaison, promoting two-way communication between management and our various publics.	3.34		
Mean for first 6 measures of process facilitator role	2.99	3.66	
Cronbach's alpha for communication process facilitator	.78	.79	
Problem-solving facilitator (t = -3.17, df = 10, p =.01**)			r= .83*
In meetings with management, I point out the need to follow a systematic communications planning process.	3.63	4.31	
I encourage management participation when making the important communication decisions.	3.59	4.31	
When working with managers on communication, I outline alternative approaches for solving problems.	3.37	3.66	
I keep management actively involved in every phase of the communication program.	3.15	3.78	
I work with managers to increase their skills in solving and/or avoiding communication problems.	2.85	3.79	
I operate as a catalyst in management's decision making.	2.81	3.45	
I am a problem-solving facilitator, helping management go through defining problems, setting objectives and planning programs in a systematic fashion.	2.80		
Mean for first 6 measures of problem-solving facilitator role	3.23	3.88	
Cronbach's alpha for problem-solving facilitator role	.86	.77	
Expert prescriber (t = -0.61, df = 10, p =.001***)			r= .79
I diagnose communications problems and explain them to others in the organization.	3.61	4.21	
I take responsibility for the success or failure of the organization's communication programs. **M**	3.61	4.24	
I plan and recommend courses of action for solving communication problems.	3.54	4.31	
Because of my experience and training, others consider me to be the organization's expert in solving communication problems.	3.39	3.83	
Others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication programs. **M**	3.32	3.76	
I make communication policy decisions. **M**	3.08	3.86	
I am the organization's expert on diagnosing and solving communication problems.	3.41		
Mean for first 6 measures of expert prescriber role	3.43	4.03	
Cronbach's alpha for expert prescriber	.90	.54	

Note: Responses were (1) Never do, (2) Seldom do, (3) Sometimes do, (4) Often do, (5) Always do.
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
T="Technician Role" measure in Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002), MR="Media Relations Specialist Role" measure in Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002), SA="Senior Adviser Role" measure in Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002), M="Manager Role" measure in Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002)

and faith group leaders on the problem-solving facilitator scale correlated significantly (r=.83, p<.05).

RCC members, on the other hand, concentrated almost equally on being technicians (M= 3.44) and expert prescribers (M=3.43). They put much less emphasis on facilitating the communication process (M=2.99) or solving communication problems (M= 3.23). RCC members said they mostly wrote, edited, monitored news media content and maintained media contacts. Of those tasks, top executives said they valued maintaining media contacts and media monitoring.

Leaders said they most expected communicators to do systematic communication planning, encourage management participation in important communication decisions and recommend courses of action for solving communication problems. Top executives did not expect communicators to spend much time taking pictures or editing materials written by others for grammar and spelling.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients (0.75 to 0.90) for all but one set of statements (expert prescriber among leaders) mirrored results for these scales reported by Broom (1982). Among faith group leaders, however, the six statements about expert prescribers did not appear to be measuring a single concept. That might mean executives did not see the six expert-prescriber tasks as part a unified role as clearly as communicators did. Only two of the six responses from faith group leaders had moderately high inter-item correlations (>.40). Those statements said that communicators should plan and recommend courses of action to solve communication problems (inter-item correlation 0.47) and that communicators should take responsibility for the success or failure of communication efforts (inter-item correlation 0.42). Dropping either of those would lower the alpha. But eliminating any of the other four items would not boost the alpha to more than 0.56. The low alpha raised questions about just what faith group leaders meant when they appeared to want their communicators to be expert prescribers.

Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) used 11 of the 24 measures in Table 2 in their analysis of manager, media-relations specialist, senior adviser and technician role enactment among communicators. Those items are noted in Table 2. RCC members and faith group leaders gave significantly different answers for the three manager ($p<.05$) and two media relations measures ($p<.01$) listed on Table 2. Faith group leaders emphasized the importance of those tasks more than did RCC members.

The manager measures were part of the expert-prescriber scale. They called for practitioners to take responsibility for communication programs, make communication policy and be accountable for the success or failure of communication efforts. Cronbach's alpha for those three items was 0.81 among RCC members and 0.54 among leaders. One media relations measure was in the technician scale. The other was in the communication process facilitator scale. These tasks called for communicators to maintain contacts with reporters and keep their organization informed about news reports relating to it. Cronbach's alpha among communicators for the two media relations items was 0.61 but among leaders was 0.13. Inter-item correlation was moderately high (0.43) among RCC respondents but very low (0.067) among faith group leaders. The low alphas for leaders again suggested that they did not see the manager and media relations tasks as part of clearly defined roles. Nevertheless, faith group executives considered these tasks important for communicators to perform.

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked how much RCC members and faith group leaders agreed about practices described in the four models of public relations (Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Columns 1 and 3 of Table 3 show generally consistent views on the 16 statements describing public relations practices (r=.99, p<.05). *T* tests of independent samples showed no differences at the p<.05 level of significance between religion communicators and faith group executives concerning any of the four models. Responses from the two groups correlated significantly for the two-way asymmetrical (r=.97, p<.05) and public information (r=.99, p<.05) models. Agreement approached significance for the two-way symmetrical model (r=.94, p=.055).

Communicators and leaders showed their widest disagreement over three statements. Two came from the press agentry/publicity model and concerned the importance of publicity:

+ The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization (M=2.20 RCC, M=2.86 leaders).
+ In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out (M=3.04 RCC, M=2.41 leaders).

The other came from the two-way symmetrical model and concerned communication as a mediation tool: "Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts" (M=3.43 RCC, M=2.41 leaders).

Low Cronbach's alpha coefficients in both groups for all four models raised suspicion about the reliability of the measurement scales in this study. Grunig and Grunig

TABLE 3

Means for responses by RCC members and faith group leaders for each measure of public relations models and correlations between groups

Model & measures	1 RCC members	2 Perceptions of leaders' views	3 Leaders' view	*r* RCC to leaders	*r* perception to leaders
2-way symmetrical model[a]				*r*= .94	*r*= .80
The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics the organization affects.	3.97	3.87	4.18		
Before starting a communication program, survey or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.	3.80	2.96	3.72		
Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.	3.43	2.97	2.81		
The purpose of communication is to change attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.	3.27	2.46	3.00		
Mean for 2-way symmetrical model	3.62	3.07	3.43		
2-way asymmetrical model[b]				*r*= .97*	*r*= .44
After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes.	3.97	3.21	3.86		
Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.	3.72	3.05	3.34		
Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.	3.57	2.95	3.07		
In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.	2.69	3.09	2.36		
Mean for 2-way asymmetrical model	3.49	3.08	3.16		
Press agentry/publicity model[c]				*r*= .78	*r*= -.39
In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.	3.04	3.40	2.41		
The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.	2.83	3.58	2.79		
For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.	2.76	3.46	2.57		
The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.	2.20	3.02	2.86		
Mean for press agentry/publicity model	2.71	3.37	2.66		
Public information model[d]				*r*= .99**	*r*= .76
In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.	2.94	2.92	3.00		
In communication accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.	2.78	3.63	2.79		
Communication is more a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.	2.43	2.69	2.39		
Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication.	1.94	2.26	1.93		
Mean for public information model	2.52	2.88	2.53		
Means for each sample and correlation of means for 4 models	3.09	3.18	2.95	*r*= .99*	*r*= -.73

Note: Responses were 1 "Strongly disagree," 2 "Disagree," 3 "Neither agree nor disagree," 4 "Agree," 5 "Strongly agree."

[a] *n*=116 for RCC members, 117 for Perceptions of leaders' views, 29 for Leaders' views.

[b] *n*=116 for RCC members, 114 for Perceptions of leaders' views, 29 for Leaders' views.

[c] *n*=117 for RCC members, 116 for Perceptions of leaders' views, 29 for Leaders' views.

[d] *n*=115 for RCC members, 114 for Perceptions of leaders' views, 29 for Leaders' views.

**p*<.05 ***p*<.01

(1992) had reported reliability coefficients for communicators of 0.76 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.81 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.60 for the public information model and 0.78 for the press agentry/publicity model. Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002) reported alphas for results among communicators in 316 Excellence studies of 0.72 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.70 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.56 for the public information model and 0.78 for the press agentry/publicity model. For their samples of chief executives, Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) had reported alphas of 0.65 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.59 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.70 for the press agentry/publicity model and 0.68 for the public information model.

In this study, alphas among religion communicators were 0.62 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.55 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.24 for the public information model and 0.54 for the press agentry/publicity model. Alphas for faith group leaders were 0.34 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.61 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.36 for the public information model and 0.71 for the press agentry/publicity model.

Alphas lower than 0.60 prompted questions about whether the responses were reliably measuring the same concept. Low inter-item correlations showed that RCC members did not agree that the four statements about the public information model (correlations for all items less than 0.30), the two-way asymmetrical model (correlations for two items less than 0.30) and the press agentry/publicity model (correlations for two items less than 0.40) were describing a specific way to practice public relations. Only the four statements about the two-way symmetrical model had acceptable (>.40) inter-item correlations (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008). Those results indicated that RCC members saw those statements going together. Responses from faith group leaders showed more pronounced disconnects among statements describing each model. For leaders, only the four statements about the press agentry/publicity model represented a unified description of public relations practice (all inter-item correlation greater than 0.40). Inter-item correlations for statements about the other three models were generally less than 0.40.

Because of the erratic ways religion communicators and faith group leaders connected the 16 statements, an exploratory principal axis factor analysis was run with varimax rotation. This factor analysis looked for new, unobserved statistical relationships among responses from RCC members and their leaders. The goal was to see how religion communicators or faith group leaders might group the 16 items describing the four models differently from the original factoring reported by Grunig and Grunig (1992). Such groupings might yield more reliable scales for the faith-community sample. Furthermore, factors might help explain whether religion communicators and leaders understood public relations functions differently from their secular counterparts.

Data from communicators generally satisfied assumptions about independent sampling, normality, linear relationships between variable pairs and variables being correlated at moderate rates. But for leaders the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy showed that data did not have enough items for factors.

Table 4 shows factor loadings for RCC members. The analysis identified four factors. These factors remixed 12 of the 16 measures and dropped four, three from the public information model and one from the press agentry/publicity model. The omitted measures were:

+ The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services (a measure of the press agentry/publicity model).
+ In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research (a measure of the public information model).
+ Communication is more a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics (a measure of the public information model).
+ Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication (a measure of the public information model).

After rotation, the four factors accounted for 37.04% of variance (13.43 in the first, 8.59 in the second, 7.85 in the third and 7.18 in the fourth).

Factor 1 showed a strong emphasis on advance research as a basis for planning communication efforts and follow-up research as a basis for evaluating results—particularly attitude changes. This factor focused on how an organization could learn about publics so it could successfully influence them. This research factor combined three two-way asymmetrical measures with one two-way symmetrical measure:

+ Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed (a two-way asymmetrical measure).
+ Before starting a communication program, survey or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other (a two-way symmetrical measure).
+ Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept (a two-way asymmetrical measure).
+ After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes (a two-way asymmetrical measure).

Factor 2 emphasized persuasion through publicity. The factor combined three

Table 4

Factor loading for RCC member responses to measures of public relations models

	Factor loading				
Measure	1	2	3	4	Communality
Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.	.85				.57
Before starting a communication program, survey or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.	.80				.58
Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.	.58				.40
After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes.	.43				.29
The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.		.68			.34
In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.		.58			.37
For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.		.48			.24
The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics the organization affects.			.62		.29
Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.			.60		.40
The purpose of communication is to change attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.			.40		.26
In communication accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.				.70	.41
In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.				.63	.47
Eigenvalues	2.15	1.37	1.26	1.15	
% of variance	13.43	8.59	7.85	7.18	

Note: Loadings <.40 are omitted

measures (two from press agentry/publicity with one from two-way asymmetrical). Organizations used communication to seek publicity. Publicity was the purpose of public relations. The goal of public relations was to get publics to behave the way the organization wants.

Factor 3 emphasized mutual influence and included key dynamics of Church-Sect Theory. The focus was on using communication to build mutual understanding, mediate conflicts between organizations and publics, and let publics influence the organization as much as it influences them. Factor 3 combined three measures from the two-way symmetrical model.

Factor 4 emphasized using media relations to get positive news coverage. The factor combined a measure from the public information model with one from the press agentry/publicity model. The focus was on getting accurate, positive information about the organization into the news and avoiding bad publicity.

The four factors did give additional insights into how RCC members understood public relations functions. Religion communicators did not link statements about public relations practices the way Excellence scholars did. That indicated RCC members did not always agree with the way each model described its approach to public relations. RCC members saw little need for tasks associated with the public information model. Religion communicators appeared to consider research (a key component of both two-way models) and publicity more tools of persuasion than relationship building. Nevertheless, RCC members did recognize three mutual-influence statements from the two-way symmetrical model as one approach to public relations.

But the four factors did not solve the scale problem. Only Factors 1 and 4 had truly acceptable reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha=0.75 for Factor 1, 0.71 for Factor 4). But with only two elements, Factor 4 would not provide a useable scale (Jaccard & Wan, 1996). Coefficients were 0.59 for both Factors 2 and 3—just below the 0.60 acceptable level (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008). Deleting items from either scale did not improve the alphas for Factor 2 or 3. Inter-item correlations ran at or just below the generally acceptable 0.40 level (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008). As a unit, therefore, these four factors did not provide any better basis for further data analysis of RQ 3 than the original models.

Research Question 4

RQ4 asked how well religion communicators could predict what their supervisors thought about public relations practices in the four models of public relations. Columns 2 and 3 of Table 3 show that RCC members were off the mark in most cases. Communicators generally underestimated leader support for the two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models and overestimated agreement with the press agentry/publicity and public information models. Predictions were significantly different from reality for the public information model ($t = +4.45$, $df = 6$, $p<.01$). The correlation of the 16 predictions by communicators to the 16 statements by leaders—while not significant at the $p<.05$ level—was negative ($r=-.73$). Correlation of predictions and what leaders said for the press agentry/publicity model were also negative ($r=-.39$, $p=$ns). Communicators thought faith group leaders would consider attendance at events the primary indicator of communication success, publicity the purpose of public relations and getting good news into the press the primary objective. Top executives generally disagreed with all those ideas.

Research Question 5

RQ5 asked how the expertise of RCC members to practice each public relations model compared to secular practitioners. Table 5 shows no significant expertise differences in mean responses at the $p<.05$ level between religion and secular communicators. In fact, reports of expertise needed to practice the two-way symmetrical ($r=.95$) and two-way asymmetrical ($r=.97$) models correlated solidly at the $p<.05$ level. Expertise to practice the public information model—which had the highest composite means for both groups—approached significance ($r=.93$, $p=.07$).

RCC members and secular practitioners both claimed their departments had the highest expertise to perform the journalistic tasks related to the public information model. Both groups saw their departments having average capabilities for publicity work. Both groups said their organizations were less prepared than an average department to handle the research-based interactive tasks associated with both two-way models. Raw mean numbers indicated that religion communicators rated their departments better prepared to handle most public information, two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical tasks than secular communicators judged their organizations to be.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for all scales in the RCC sample closely mirrored statistics reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Alphas were 0.76 for the RCC study and 0.75 for the secular results for the public information model, 0.84 for both groups for the press agentry/publicity model, 0.73 (RCC) and 0.75 (secular) for the

TABLE 5

Comparison of approximate means from RCC members to raw means on fractionation scale from secular practitioners for measures of departmental expertise to practice four models of public relations

Public information model *(t = +1.56, df = 6, p = .170; r=.93, p=ns)*	RCC [a]	Secular [b]
Understand the news values of journalists	158	143
Provide objective information about your organization	150	139
Perform as journalists inside your organization	136	116
Prepare news stories that reporters will use	132	123
Scale mean	144	130
Cronbach's alpha	.76	.75
Press agentry/publicity model *(t = -0.1, df = 6, p = .924; r=.81, p=ns)*		
Get your organization's name into the news	133	137
Persuade a reporter to publicize your organization	121	119
Get maximum publicity from a staged event	94	109
Keep bad publicity out of the media	91	80
Scale mean	110	111
Cronbach's alpha	.84	.84
Two-way symmetrical model *(t = +0.55, df = 6, p = 0.602; r=.95, p<.05)*		
Help management understand the opinions of particular publics	101	114
Determine how publics react to the organization	93	99
Negotiate with an activist group	83	50
Use theories of conflict resolution in dealing with publics	76	52
Scale mean	88	79
Cronbach's alpha	.73	.75
Two-way asymmetrical model *(t = +0.3, df = 6, p =.774; r=.97, p<.05)*		
Persuade a public that your organization is right on an issue	103	113
Get publics to behave as your organization wants	83	88
Use attitude theory in a campaign	63	35
Manipulate publics scientifically	42	25
Scale mean	73	65
Cronbach's alpha	.78	.70

Note: Responses from RCC members were converted from (1) Never do, (2) Seldom do, (3) Sometimes do, (4) Often do, (5) Always do to an open-ended fractionation system to approximate responses used by Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002). On that scale, 100 represented "average for a typical item"; 50 represented "half the average"; 200 represented "twice the average"; 0 represented "does not describe"; and anything above 200 represented "as high as you want to go." Transformed means reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) were converted to the original fractionation scale for comparison with RCC results.

[a] *n*=116

[b] Data from Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002), p. 337.

two-way symmetrical model, and 0.78 (RCC) and 0.70 (secular) for the two-way asymmetrical model.

Research Question 6

RQ6 asked how levels of communication managerial and technical expertise in departments where RCC members worked compared to those of their secular counterparts. Table 6 shows no significant difference between the groups for either scale at the $p<.05$ level. Response from both groups to all 16 statements ($r=.82$, $p<.001$) and the eight manager items ($r=.97$, $p<.001$) correlated solidly. Correlation of the eight technician responses ($r=.65$) was not significant at the $p<.05$ level. Nevertheless, raw mean numbers showed that religion communicators claimed their departments had average manager expertise and above-average technical expertise. Secular communicators claimed above average departmental expertise for both areas. The two groups ranked their departmental manager skills in the same order. Religion communicators rated their departmental expertise for taking pictures and writing ads higher than secular practitioners did.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the RCC sample generally corresponded to statistics reported by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Alphas for the manager scale were 0.83 for both groups. Alphas for the technician scale were 0.78 for the RCC study and 0.80 for the secular results.

Research Question 7

RQ 7 asked how formal education, memberships in professional associations and reading trade publications affected the way religion communicators practiced public

TABLE 6

Comparison of approximate means from RCC members for managerial and technical expertise to raw means on fractionation scale from 316 secular organizations

Expertise to enact manager roles	RCC [a]	Secular [b]
Develop goals and objectives for department	149	168
Prepare department budget	142	148
Develop strategies to solve communication problems	135	159
Manage organization's response to issues	119	147
Manage people	113	130
Conduct evaluation research	86	84
Use research to segment publics	73	80
Perform environmental scanning	48	65
Means for manager roles	108	123
Cronbach's alpha	.83	.83
Expertise to enact technician roles		
Produce publications	158	168
Write news releases and features	155	157
Take photographs	137	91
Produce audiovisual material	130	123
Write an advertisement	129	97
Coordinate press conference or event coverage	128	149
Write speeches	93	125
Create and manage a speakers bureau	66	80
Means for technician roles	125	124
Cronbach's alpha	.78	.80

Note: Responses from RCC members were converted from 1 "None," 2 "Some," 3 "Average," 4 "Good," 5 "Tops in field" to a open-ended fractionation system to approximate responses reported by Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002). On that scale, 100 represented "average"; 50 represented "half the average"; 200 represented "twice the average"; 0 represented "does not describe"; and anything above 200 represented "as high as you want to go."

[a] n=116

[b] Data from Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002), p. 227

For 16 expertise measures: r=.82 p<.001

For 8 manager expertise measures: r= .97 p<.001; t=-0.76, df=14, p=.46

For 8 technician expertise measures: r= .65 p=ns; t=+0.05, df=14, p=.46

relations. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) considered formal education, professional association memberships and familiarity with trade publications all indicators of public relations knowledge. Four cross tabulations were used to check these relationships of knowledge to practice. Chi-square tests of that analysis showed no consistently significant relationships at the *p*<.05 level between measures of knowledge and preferences for the four public relations models. Of the 288 cross tabulations done to investigate RQ 7, only 14 were statistically significant at the *p*<.05 level. Highest level of education was significantly associated with:

+ The two-way symmetrical public relations measure saying that the purpose of communication is to change management attitudes and behaviors as much as those of various publics. RCC with members with at least some graduate training (51% of the 109 responses) agreed with that statement. Those with master's and doctoral degrees were the most likely to agree (58% of those with master's degrees, 71% of those with doctorates) (*p*<.05).

+ The public information measure saying that communication is more a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate. RCC members with education beyond the bachelor's degree (94% of the 108 responses) were less likely to agree with that statement than others. Communicators with graduate school experience showed the least agreement with that statement (91% for those with some graduate training disagreed; 80% for those with master's degrees, and 71% for those with doctorates disagreed) than college graduates or those without degrees (*p*<.05).

Formal training in communication, journalism, advertising, public relations or marketing was significantly associated with:

+ The press agentry/publicity measure saying public relations essentially means publicity. RCC members with little or no formal education in communication were most likely to agree with this statement (45% of the 110 responses). Fifty-eight percent of those with no formal training, 20% of those with some continuing education or 50% of those with undergraduate coursework but not a major in a communication discipline agreed. More than a quarter of RCC members with graduate training agreed ($p<.05$).

+ The public information measure of expertise saying that the practitioner's office understood the news values of journalists. RCC members with at least a bachelor's degree in a communication discipline (65% of the 110 responses) were more likely to rate their expertise for this statement as better than average (35% for those with bachelor's degrees in communication, 31% for those with some graduate credit, 39% for those with a master's degree) or tops in the field (57% for those with bachelor's degrees, 39% for those with some graduate credit, 39% for those with master's degrees) ($p<.05$).

+ The two-way asymmetrical measure of expertise saying the practitioner's office could get publics to behave the way the organization wanted. RCC members with graduate training in a communication discipline (32% of the 114 responses) were more likely to rate their expertise for this statement as better than average (54% for those with some graduate training, 40% for those with a master's degree) ($p<.01$).

+ The two-way asymmetrical measure of expertise saying the practitioner's office could use attitude theories to plan a public relations campaign. RCC members with graduate experience in a communication discipline (32% of the 111 responses) were more likely to discount their knowledge of attitude theories (33% for those with some graduate training, 46% with master's degrees and all with doctorates saying "none") (p<.05).

+ The two-way symmetrical measure of expertise saying the practitioner's office could use conflict-resolutions theories. RCC members with at least a bachelor's degree in a communication discipline (65% of the 113 responses) were about as likely to say they had high expertise (27% with bachelor's degrees, 39% with some graduate education and 43% with master's degrees) as low expertise (45% with bachelor's degrees, 33% with some graduate education and 46% with master's degrees) (p<.05).

+ The two-way symmetrical measure of expertise saying the practitioner's office could help management understand public opinion. RCC members with at least a bachelor's degree in a communication discipline (65% of the 113 responses) rated their knowledge as better than average (43% of those with bachelor's degrees in a communication discipline, 69% of those with some graduate coursework and 48% of those with master's degrees) (p<.05).

Seven measures of public relations models showed significant associations with statements about public relations expertise:

+ Of RCC members who agreed with the press agentry/publicity measure saying that the purpose of communication was to get good publicity and avoid bad publicity (43% of 108 responses), 39% claimed their offices had average expertise for getting publicity. Another 26% said their offices had better than average expertise, and 4% rated their knowledge was tops in the field (p<.05).

+ Of RCC members who disagreed with the public information measure saying people in communication were too busy writing stories to do research (47% of 111 responses), 33% said their offices were better than average at preparing news stories that journalists would use. Another 29% rated their expertise tops in the field (p<.05).

+ Of RCC members who disagreed with the public information measure saying that clipping files were the only way to gauge public relations effectiveness (78% of 109 responses), 47% claimed their offices were better than average at providing information about their organizations to the public. Another 32% rated their expertise as tops in the field (p<.01).

+ Of RCC members who agreed with the two-way asymmetrical measure saying they should do research after a communication campaign to see how attitudes had changed (83% of 109 responses), most claimed they had little or no expertise to use attitude theories in such an effort (36% saying none, 23% saying less than average and 14% saying average) (p<.01).

+ Of RCC members who agreed with the two-way asymmetrical measure saying they should use advance research to determine how best to describe their organization and its policies (64% of 107 responses), most claimed they had little expertise for persuading publics that the organization was right (10% saying none, 29% saying less than average and 26% saying average) (p<.05).

+ Of RCC members who agreed with the two-way symmetrical measure saying that they should do research before a campaign to determine how well their organization and its publics understood each other (75% of 110 responses), nearly half rated their expertise for helping management understand opinions of publics as better than average (36% more than average, 11% tops in field) (p<.05).

Cross tabulations of the 16 measures for public relations models and the related 16 measures for public relations expertise with responses about reading trade publications and belonging to professional organizations showed no significant measures of relationship at the p<.05 level. No more than 12 respondents acknowledged reading any of 15 professional magazines in the survey questionnaire. One magazine had no readers, and three had only one. Forty-nine of the 185 respondents (26%) specifically said they read no trade publications.

The 185 RCC respondents generally did not belong to any other professional communication group besides the communication fellowship within their specific faith group. Sixty-four RCC members (35%) said they were members of a communication organization related to their particular faith group (i.e., Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian or United Methodist). But only 15 belonged to the Public Relations Society of America. Seven were members of Women in Communication. Six had joined the Society for Professional Journalists. Four were part of the International Association of Business Communicators. One belonged to the Radio-Television News Directors Association and the Society for News Design.

Research Question 8

RQ 8 asked how much RCC members and faith group leaders agreed about the contribution of the communication department to organizational operations. Table 7 shows a solid correlation (r=.97, p<.001) between the two groups concerning statements about contributions to strategic planning, issue management, major initiatives, routine operations and information gathering for management decision making. *T* tests of independent samples showed no differences at the p<.05 level of significance between religion communicators and faith group executives concerning communication department contributions. Communicators generally ranked their contributions to strategic planning and information gathering for decision making lower than their supervisors did. On only 1 of 10 measures (routine operations) did RCC members say their departments made major contributions to the organization. Communicators rated their contributions as "average" on five other indicators. Leaders, on the other hand, said those contributions on 6 of 10 measures were average or major for a department in the organization.

High Cronbach's alpha coefficients for both groups gave solid evidence that both 10-item scales were reliably measuring views about contributions. Alpha was 0.92 for the RCC sample and 0.84 for the leader sample.

TABLE 7

Means for responses by RCC members and faith group leaders about communication department contributions to strategic planning, issue management, major initiatives, routine operations and information gathering for management decision making

Task	RCC members[a]	Faith group leaders[b]
Routine operations	3.89	4.29
Response to major social issues	3.47	3.76
Major initiatives	3.46	3.62
Judgments based on experience	3.46	3.59
Strategic planning	3.39	3.66
Contacts with knowledgeable people outside the organization	3.38	3.62
Informal approaches to gathering information	3.15	3.48
Specific research conducted to answer specific questions	2.97	3.34
Formal approaches to gathering information for use in decision making other than research	2.78	3.21
Regularly conducted and routine research activities	2.78	3.00

Note: Responses were 1 "No contribution," 2 "Minor contribution," 3 "Average contribution," 4 "Major contribution," 5 "Extremely strong contribution."

r=.96 p<.001

t=-1.82, df=18, p=.085

[a] n=158, Cronbach's alpha 0.92

[b] n=29, Cronbach's alpha 0.84

Hypothesis 1

H1 said RCC members from mainline Protestant denominations would be more likely to agree with survey statements about two-way symmetrical public relations than communicators from other faith groups. Tables 8 and 9 show no support for this proposition. Based on Church-Sect Theory, the hypothesis predicted significant differences in responses from the mainline and non-mainline groups. But independent samples t tests of means showed differences at the p<.05 level for only two of the 16 measures. Those two statements on Table 9 related to the public relations role in dealing with coverage of news the organization would consider bad. One statement described a practice in the press agentry/publicity model: "In communication one mostly attempts to

TABLE 8

Means for responses by RCC members about measures of two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models of public relations

Models, measures, groups	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
2-way symmetrical model					
The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics the organization affects.					
Mainline (n=64)	3.86	.957			
Other (n=50)	4.10	.974	-1.321	112	.189
Before starting a communication program, survey or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.					
Mainline (n=64)	3.80	.839			
Other (n=48)	3.79	.967	.030	110	.976
Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.					
Mainline (n=64)	3.59	.971			
Other (n=48)	3.25	1.229	1.599	87.1	.113
The purpose of communication is to change attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.					
Mainline (n=64)	3.19	1.125			
Other (n=48)	3.33	1.117	.681	110	.497
Composite means for 2-way symmetrical model					
Mainline	3.61	.303			
Other	3.62	.4001	.03	6	.977
2-way asymmetrical model					
After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes.					
Mainline (n=64)	4.09	.771			
Other (n=49)	3.92	.950	1.713	111	.089
Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to deter-mine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.					
Mainline (n=64)	3.69	.871			
Other (n=48)	3.73	1.005	-.235	110	.815
Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.					
Mainline (n=63)	3.52	1.090			
Other (n=48)	3.63	1.024	-.497	109	.620
In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.					
Mainline (n=64)	2.56	1.111			
Other (n=49)	2.84	1.297	-1.209	111	.229
Composite means for 2-way asymmetrical model					
Mainline	3.47	.6489			
Other	3.51	.4501	-.1	6	.924

TABLE 9

Means for responses by RCC members about measures of press agentry/publicity and public information models of public relations

Models, measures, groups	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Press agentry/publicity model					
For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.					
Mainline (n=64)	2.89	1.100			
Other (n=48)	2.60	1.317	1.253	110	.213
In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.					
Mainline (n=64)	2.86	1.092			
Other (n=48)	3.29	1.184	-2.144	110	.034*
The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.					
Mainline (n=63)	2.86	.965			
Other (n=47)	2.81	.992	.258	108	.797
The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.					
Mainline (n=65)	2.20	1.107			
Other (n=50)	2.20	1.125	.000	113	1.000
Composite means for press agentry/publicity model					
Mainline	2.70	.3309			
Other	2.73	.4538	-.11	6	.916
Public information model					
In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.					
Mainline (n=64)	2.84	1.130			
Other (n=49)	3.08	1.187	-1.085	111	.280
In communication accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.					
Mainline (n=64)	2.59	1.035			
Other (n=48)	3.02	1.139	-2.070	110	.041*
Communication is more a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.					
Mainline (n=63)	2.49	1.061			
Other (n=48)	2.35	1.021	.690	109	.492
Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication.					
Mainline (n=64)	1.94	.794			
Other (n=48)	1.96	.898	-.130	110	.897
Composite means for public information model					
Mainline	2.47	.3793			
Other	2.60	.5413	-.42	6	.689
Composite means for columns					
Mainline	3.06	.6378			
Other	3.12	.6331	-.26	30	.797

*$p<.05$

get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out" (*M*=2.86 for mainline communicators, *M*=3.29 for non-mainline communicators). The other statement from the public information model said: "In communication accurate information should be disseminated but unfavorable information should not be volunteered" (*M*=2.59 for mainline communicators, *M*=3.02 for non-mainline communicators). Overall, survey results from the two groups presented substantially similar answer patterns for the 16 measures (r=.93, p<.001).

Composite means for the two-way symmetrical model (Table 8) were—contrary to H1 and what Church-Sect Theory would seem to predict—essentially the same for the two groups (*M*=3.61 for mainline communicators, *M*=3.62 for non-mainline communicators). Mainline communicators were, consistent with H1, less likely than non-mainline communicators to agree with survey statements about the other three models. But composite means for the two-way asymmetrical (*M*=3.47 for mainline communicators, *M*=3.51 for non-mainline communicators), press agentry/publicity (*M*=2.70 for mainline communicators, 2.73 for non-mainline communicators) and public information models (*M*=2.47 for mainline communicators, *M*=2.60 for non-mainline communicators) were all pretty close. Only the public information model had an effect size worth noting (d=.28 or small). But the t test was statistically insignificant. The mainline composite mean for the public information model was the only one in the analysis showing general disagreement.

Individual measures of the two-way symmetrical model (Table 8) did not reflect the hypothesized church-sect dynamic. Non-mainline communicators agreed more strongly than mainline communicators with two statements reflecting characteristics that

Church-Sect Theory would ascribe more to “churches” than “sects”: “The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of an organization and the publics the organization affects” (*M*=3.86 for mainline communicators, *M*=4.10 for non-mainline communicators), and “The purpose of communication is to change the attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics” (*M*=3.19 for mainline communicators, *M*=3.33 for non-mainline communicators). In fact, of the four statements about two-way symmetrical public relations, mainline communicators agreed least with the idea of mutual influence. Such mutual influence reflects a key way that Church-Sect Theory says that faith groups move from sect to church. Non-mainline communicators, on the other hand, agreed more strongly with the mutual understanding statement (*M*=4.10) than any other measure of public relations practice.

Mainline communicators agreed most strongly with a statement from the two-way asymmetrical model (Table 8): “After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people’s attitudes” (*M*=4.09 for mainline communicators, *M*=3.92 for non-mainline communicators). Both groups agreed with two of the three other statements about asymmetrical public relations. But concerning persuasion, both groups tended to disagree that they should be trying to influence behaviors of publics (*M*=2.56 for mainline communicators, *M*=2.84 for non-mainline communicators)

RCC members from both mainline and non-mainline groups disagreed most strongly with a statement from the public information model (Table 9): “Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication" (M=1.94 for mainline communicators, M=1.96 for non-mainline communicators).

Hypothesis 2

H2 said leaders of mainline Protestant denominations would be more likely to agree with survey statements about two-way symmetrical public relations than leaders of other faith groups. Tables 10 and 11 show no significant support for this hypothesis. Based on Church-Sect Theory, the hypothesis predicted significant differences in responses from the mainline and non-mainline groups.

But independent samples t tests of means showed no differences at the $p<.05$ level for any of the 16 individual measures of public relations practices. Only the composite mean for the press agentry/publicity model (Table 11) showed that the group significantly influenced the result. Effect size for that model was small (d=.32). Overall, survey results from the two groups presented substantially similar answer patterns for the 16 measures (r=.79, $p<.001$).

Responses did follow the predicted pattern. Table 10 shows mainline leaders had slightly higher composite mean scores than those from other faith groups for statements about two-way symmetrical public relations (M=3.44 mainline, M=3.41 non-mainline). Mainline leaders had lower composite mean scores than those from other groups for the other three models (M=3.06 mainline, M=3.31 non-mainline for two-way asymmetrical; M=2.56 mainline, M=3.06 non-mainline for press agentry/publicity; M=2.42 mainline, M=2.46 non-mainline for public information).

As in H1, individual measures of the two-way symmetrical model did not reflect

TABLE 10

Means for responses by faith group leaders about measures of two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models of public relations

Models, measures, groups	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
2-way symmetrical model					
The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics the organization affects.					
Mainline (n=17)	4.24	.437			
Other (n=11)	4.09	1.136	.476	26	.638
Before starting a communication program, survey or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.					
Mainline (n=17)	3.53	.943			
Other (n=12)	4.00	.739	-1.505	26.64	.144
Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.					
Mainline (n=16)	3.00	1.095			
Other (n=11)	2.55	1.214	1.014	25	.320
The purpose of communication is to change attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.					
Mainline (n=16)	3.00	1.033			
Other (n=12)	3.00	1.279	.000	26	.946
Composite means for 2-way symmetrical model					
Mainline	3.44	.5874			
Other	3.41	.7568	.07	6	1.00
2-way asymmetrical model					
After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes.					
Mainline (n=17)	3.71	1.263			
Other (n=12)	4.08	.793	-.913	27	.369
Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to deter-mine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.					
Mainline (n=17)	3.24	1.091			
Other (n=12)	3.50	1.168	-.625	27	.537
Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.					
Mainline (n=17)	2.71	1.160			
Other (n=12)	3.58	1.240	-1.950	27	.062
In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.					
Mainline (n=16)	2.56	1.263			
Other (n=12)	2.08	.996	1.122	25.9	.272
Composite means for 2-way asymmetrical model					
Mainline	3.06	.5251			
Other	3.31	.8692	-.51	6	.628

TABLE 11

Means for responses by faith group leaders about measures of the press agentry/publicity and public information models of public relations

Models, measures, groups	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Press agentry/publicity model					
The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.					
Mainline (n=17)	2.76	1.393			
Other (n=12)	3.00	1.477	-.437	27	.666
The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.					
Mainline (n=16)	2.63	1.025			
Other (n=12)	3.00	1.044	-.951	26	.351
In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.					
Mainline (n=17)	2.53	1.328			
Other (n=12)	3.17	1.267	-1.296	27	.206
For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.					
Mainline (n=16)	2.31	.873			
Other (n=12)	2.92	1.240	-1.515	26	.142
Composite means for press agentry/publicity model					
Mainline	2.56	.19			
Other	3.02	.1053	-4.28	6	.005*
Public information model					
In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.					
Mainline (n=17)	3.12	1.269			
Other (n=12)	2.83	1.642	.526	27	.603
In communication accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.					
Mainline (n=16)	2.38	1.025			
Other (n=12)	2.42	1.240	-.097	26	.923
Communication is more a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.					
Mainline (n=17)	2.24	.831			
Other (n=12)	2.67	.985	-1.275	27	.213
Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication.					
Mainline (n=16)	1.94	.443			
Other (n=12)	1.92	.515	.115	26	.909
Composite means for public information model					
Mainline	2.42	.5015			
Other	2.46	.3976	-.13	6	.901
Composite means for columns					
Mainline	2.87	.5985			
Other	3.05	.4416	-.81	30	.424

**p*<.01

the hypothesized church-sect dynamic. Non-mainline leaders agreed more strongly than mainline representatives with a statement about using advance research to learn how much organizations and publics understood each other (*M*=3.53 mainline leaders, *M*=4.00 non-mainline leaders). The two groups registered the same mean (3.00) for a statement reflecting a key "church" dynamic in Church-Sect Theory: "The purpose of communication is to change the attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics." Mainline leaders did agree more strongly than those from other groups that communication was intended to develop mutual understanding between organizations and publics (*M*=4.24 mainline, *M*=4.09 non-mainline). Mainline executives were also more positive about communication's mediation role (*M*=3.00 mainline, *M*=2.55 non-mainline).

On statements about the other three public relations models, means for mainline leaders were higher than means for non-mainline leaders on two of 12 measures. Those statements came from the public information model (Table 11): "In communication nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories and producing publications that there is no time to do research" (*M*=3.12 mainline, *M*=2.83 non-mainline), and "Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication" (*M*=1.94 mainline, *M*=1.92 non-mainline).

Leaders from both groups agreed most strongly with the same statement from the two-way symmetrical model (Table 10): "The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of an organization and the publics the organization affects" (*M*=4.24 mainline, *M*=4.09 non-mainline). Both groups disagreed most with the same statement from the public information model (Table 11): “Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication” (*M*=1.94 mainline, *M*=1.92 non-mainline).

CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

This study set out to determine five things: (1) how religion communicators in the United States practiced public relations, (2) if they approached their work differently from secular practitioners, (3) what faith group leaders expected from public relations, (4) if Religion Communicators Council members representing mainline Protestant denominations had different perspectives on public relations from those representing other faith groups and (5) if mainline Protestant communicators might be contributing to the decline of their denominations. Survey results from this study have answered those questions. But those results leave unresolved the ethical quandary concerning the two-way symmetrical model raised in Chapter 1.

RCC members generally work as communication technicians, not managers. That makes them different from public relations practitioners in 316 secular organizations studied by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). While both groups report similar public relations expertise, secular communicators work more as managers than technicians. As a result, religion communicators spend their days carrying out different tasks from secular practitioners.

Furthermore, religion communicators and faith group leaders do not understand public relations practice the way the four Excellence Theory models describe it. Religion communicators and faith group leaders do not agree that all statements in the models go together to characterize specific approaches to communication work. Religion communicators associate statements about research and publicity more with persuasion than relationship building. RCC members see little need for tasks assigned to the public information model. Nevertheless, they do recognize three mutual-influence statements from the two-way symmetrical model as one approach to public relations.

No matter how they understand public relations, however, religion communicators generally do not know what their supervisors expect from them or their departments. Likewise, communicators rate their contributions to their organizations lower than their supervisors do.

The faith group a religion communicator represents does not seem to influence the way he or she answers questions about various models of public relations. RCC members from mainline Protestant denominations were no more likely to favor two-way symmetrical public relations—as H1 predicted—than those from other faith groups. Consequently, two-way symmetrical public relations practices were not shown to be contributing—as Church-Sect Theory would predict—to the decline of mainline Protestant denominations in today's dynamic religious landscape. This chapter offers interpretations of these findings.

Religion Communicators: A Distinct Subgroup

Results from this research make a case that religion communicators in this study are a distinct subgroup of U.S. public relations practitioners. They perform different roles from practitioners in earlier research (Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier & Broom, 1995). Religion communicators are not completely the hacks represented by Ivy Lee and Ralph Stoody in Chapter 2. But they definitely are not the applied social science flacks or management counselors personified by Edward L. Bernays, either. Their work focuses on technical communication tasks. Religion communicators spend much more of their energies than secular practitioners on writing, editing, taking photographs, producing publications, maintaining media contacts and placing news releases in secular outlets. As Cutlip and Center (1952, 1958, 1964, 1971, 1978) said, they may still be lagging behind their secular counterparts in adopting modern roles and methods. As such, RCC members are much less likely than secular communicators to say they are considered experts at solving communication problems, provide counsel to top managers, take responsibility for the success or failure of communication efforts, or make communication policy decisions. Religion communicators do say they offer policy suggestions.

Some distinctions between RCC members and secular communicators were expected. That's because of differences in the Excellence samples and the RCC group. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) surveyed only top communicators in an organization. RCC respondents included top communicators and practitioners at other levels. Two-thirds of RCC respondents had executive titles and said they reported directly to the chief executive of their organization. Other religion communicators either filled lower positions or did not say what their jobs were. Those lower-level communicators could have made the overall RCC response more technical than managerial.

But differences in the survey population were not the only reason for the technical focus of religion communicators. Their work environment also played a role. A quarter of RCC respondents said they were the only communication person in their organization. Another third represented departments with fewer than five people. Someone has to produce the communication products, take questions from reporters and prepare responses. Those duties leave little time for more strategic flack functions. That may explain why 53% of top executives from mainline Protestant denominations—and 41% of leaders from other faith groups—agreed that people in their communication departments were so busy writing stories or producing publications that they had no time to do research.

Furthermore, two thirds of RCC respondents were women. Earlier roles research with members of the Public Relations Society of America (Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier & Broom, 1995) noted that women were more likely than men to consider themselves communication technicians. That sex difference did decline in the most recent study among PRSA members. But if a woman were the top communication executive in the Excellence surveys, she was more likely than a man to mix work as a manager and technician—even in excellent operations. As a result, women had fewer opportunities than men to develop their strategic expertise (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Furthermore, in nonprofit organizations, top communicators were both technician and manager (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Therefore, the sex of a respondent may be a factor in the way RCC members understand their roles. Earlier research showed that chief executives often hired communicators for their technical expertise. To be considered a manager, top communicators needed to demonstrate administrative and strategic knowledge as well as technical communication skills (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Women communicators in faith groups may see building a reputation for technical competence as a way to raise their status within management ranks. That speculation—as well as how the sex of the practitioner influences survey responses—could be a topic for future research.

Previous studies have connected education and knowledge with management role enactment (Dozier, 1992; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). This study did not clearly replicate that result. A quarter of RCC members reported no formal communication training. That may mean they do not have the background to think of themselves as anything more than technicians who have learned a craft on the job. They may not know about or recognize broader public relations roles. In fact, RCC members with little or no formal education in communication were most likely to agree that public relations essentially meant publicity.

Religion Communicators: A Distinct View of What They Do

Not only do religion communicators appear to be a distinct subgroup of practitioners, they have a distinct view of what they do. Results from this study show that RCC members do not understand public relations the way that Excellence scholars or their secular counterparts do. That finding is consistent with the resistance to the flack approach to public relations seen in RPRC/RCC newsletters over the past three decades.

Among communicators from 316 secular organizations, the four models of public relations first presented in Grunig and Hunt (1984) have proved to be fairly reliable representations of how practitioners do their work. Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002) reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for results from communicators in 316 Excellence studies of 0.72 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.70 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.56 for the public information model and 0.78 for the press agentry/publicity model. For their samples of chief executives, Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) reported alphas of 0.65 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.59 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.70 for the press agentry/publicity model and 0.68 for the public information model.

In this study, however, alphas were much lower. Among religion communicators alphas were 0.62 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.55 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.24 for the public information model and 0.54 for the press agentry/publicity model. Alphas for faith group leaders were 0.34 for the two-way symmetrical model, 0.61 for the two-way asymmetrical model, 0.36 for the public information model and 0.71 for the press agentry/publicity model. Low inter-item correlations showed that RCC members generally did not agree that the four statements about the two-way asymmetrical model, public information model and press agentry/publicity model went together to describe a specific way to practice public relations. Religion communicators did see the four statements about the two-way symmetrical model going together. Responses from faith group leaders showed more pronounced disconnects among statements describing each model. For faith group leaders, only the four statements about the press agentry/publicity model represented a unified description of public relations practice.

The factor analysis of responses from RCC members about all four models reinforced the idea that religion communicators understood public relations differently from Excellence scholars and secular practitioners. Factor loadings showed that religion communicators connected statements about research and publicity more with persuasion than relationship building. RCC members saw little need for tasks associated with the public information model. Three of the four public information statements did not even load. But RCC members did associate three mutual-influence statements from the two-way symmetrical model as one specific approach to public relations.

The factor groupings seem to be in line with the technical focus of religion communicators. The RCC members may again be lagging behind secular practitioners in adopting modern roles and methods (Cutlip & Center, 1952, 1958, 1964, 1971, 1978). Consequently, religion communicators do not relate to many statements about public relations practice in the four models. Those descriptions do not match what RCC members think hacks should do.

Religion, Secular Communicators Claim Similar Expertise

Despite their different approaches and views of their work, religion and secular communicators report similar levels of public relations expertise. Both groups say their communication departments are topnotch at performing journalistic tasks associated with the public information model. Those duties include understanding news values, working as a journalist inside the organization, providing objective information about the organization and preparing news stories that reporters would use. Religion and secular communicators say their departments have average abilities to do publicity work. They can get their organization's name into the news, persuade reporters to publicize the organization and get maximum coverage from a staged event. Secular practitioners say their departments have above-average expertise to perform both manager and technician duties. They can develop goals and objectives, prepare budgets, devise strategies, manage issues and oversee people on a par with top managers of any organization. Furthermore, secular practitioners say the can produce publications, write news releases, prepare advertisements, coordinate news coverage and write speeches with the best communication technicians anywhere. Religion communicators claim above-average technical expertise, especially writing, editing, producing publications and taking photographs. But RCC members say they are only average at manager tasks.

Secular and religion communicators say their departments are less prepared than an average communication unit to handle research-based initiatives associated with both two-way models of public relations. Departments are not well equipped to conduct evaluation research, segment audiences and keep track of the news and issues environment. But RCC members seem to want to emphasize how poorly prepared they are to do research. For example, of religion communicators who agreed they should do post-campaign research to check for attitude changes, 36% said they had no expertise for using attitude theories in such an effort. Twenty-three percent said they had less-than-average theoretical expertise. Of RCC members who agreed that they should do pre-campaign research to help plan messages, 10% said they had no expertise for persuading publics that their organization was right. Another 29% said they had less-than-average persuasion skills. Nevertheless, factor analysis of RCC statements about public relations practices showed that research for planning and evaluating messages was the most strongly recognized element of public relations work.

The cross tabulations of statements about expertise with those from the models about practice seemed to show the longstanding fear among religion communicators of manipulating people through psychology. The results also reflected the long-running flack-vs.-hack debate and Ralph Stoody's 1959 admonition about avoiding hidden persuasion. In a statement against the flack approach to public relations, Stoody said religion communicators should not aspire to be propagandistic manipulators or engineers of consent. Instead, they should be committed to standards of good taste and the public welfare (Stoody, 1959). Nevertheless, the factor analysis of statements about public relations practice showed that RCC members understood their work more in terms of persuasion and publicity than relationship building or public information.

Religion Communicators May Not Really be Hacks

The factor analysis suggests that RCC members may not really be the hacks they think they are. Religion communicators showed their weakest support for the public information model of public relations that Stoody seemed to advocate (M=2.52 on a five-point Likert scale). The factor analysis of statements about the four public relations models did not load three public information measures into any grouping. Only a public information statement about disseminating accurate information but not volunteering unfavorable information seemed credible to religion communicators. It appeared in one factor. Such disagreement with the public information measures was exactly the opposite of what would be expected from a group of hacks. RPRC and RCC newsletter items over the past 29 years have shown that members consistently maintained they were journalists inside their organizations. Their statements reflected the legacy of Ivy Lee and the spirit of the public information model.

To be sure, the low reliability coefficients for the four public information measures in this and earlier studies make survey results suspect. In fact, insufficient Cronbach's alpha ratings since the first uses of these measures raise questions about the credibility of the public information scale throughout the Excellence scholarship. Grunig and Grunig (1992) acknowledged the low reliability coefficient for the public information index. They attributed low alphas to items describing information dissemination. That function is common to all models. But Excellence surveys have continued using the suspect index. Later studies do not mention any attempts to improve it (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). By replicating the scale, this study was saddled with the same reliability problem.

Nevertheless, overall survey results in this study do not support that longstanding hack claim. RCC members gave slightly stronger support (*M*=2.71)—although still a neutral rating—to statements about the press agentry/publicity model than they did to the public information model. The factor analysis loaded three of the four press agentry/publicity measures into factors. Two were grouped with a measure from the two-way asymmetrical model. That factor emphasized persuasion through publicity. The other joined the lone public information measure in a two-item factor emphasizing the quest for positive news coverage. Both factors fit a promotional stereotype of public relations. That approach, which seeks to influence people, is consistent with the flack orientation—especially as represented by promoter P.T. Barnum.

Furthermore, religion communicators supported statements about the two-way symmetrical model (*M*=3.62). They tended to support statements about the two-way asymmetrical model (*M*=3.49). The two-way asymmetrical model represents the flack approach to public relations that Edward L. Bernays used. The two-way symmetrical model represents the management-oriented approach advocated by Grunig (1992) and Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Those findings provide additional evidence that RCC members may really be more flacks than they would like to admit.

Future research should explore how closely daily religion communication practice does or does not match language in the survey responses used in this study. Low reliability coefficients among RCC responses indicate that the longstanding Excellence survey statements may not describe how religion communicators understand public relations. That may be particularly true in today's fast-changing environment of social media. Results from this study suggest that RCC members may acknowledge and favor Excellence concepts—especially research-based two-way communication. But they may or may not put those principles into practice. In fact, RCC respondents do not report the research expertise needed to carry out two-way symmetrical or asymmetrical public relations. Depth-interview, participant-observation or case-study approaches may be more appropriate methods than survey research to probe questions about actual daily practices.

Communicators Do Not Know What Supervisors Expect

The most unexpected findings in this study are the persistent mismatches between faith group leaders and communicators concerning expectations. RCC members clearly do not know what their supervisors expect from them or their departments. That does not speak too well for the public relations competencies of religion communicators. Senior leaders should be a priority public for them and their departments. Furthermore, communicators have little excuse for not knowing what their leaders want or consider important. Proximity alone should provide such intelligence. Thirty-six percent of survey respondents said they were on their organization's senior management team ("dominant coalition"). Two-thirds said they reported directly to their organization's chief executive. With that type of direct access, how could communicators consistently not know what their bosses think?

These results are not like the roles ambiguity reported by Dozier (1992). He found the expectations of supervisors sometimes at odds with communicators' professional expectations learned through formal education or participation in professional organizations. But RCC members and faith group leaders independently gave basically the same responses to 16 statements about public relations practices (r=.99, p<.05). When asked to predict how their leaders would respond to the 16 statements, however, communicators overestimated support for the press agentry/publicity and public information models. Furthermore they underestimated support for the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models. Communicators thought faith group leaders would consider attendance at events a primary indicator of public relations success, publicity the purpose of public relations and getting good news coverage the primary objective of communication work. Top executives generally disagreed with those ideas and were much more interested in researched-based efforts to establish relationships. These priorities were in line with what Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) reported for secular chief executives.

Managers, Not Technicians, Sought

But faith group leaders were clearer about what they expected from communicators than secular top executives in Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Secular leaders identified five roles within the manager-technician categories: *manager*, *technician, media relations specialist*, *senior manager* and *organizational representative.* The manager role was an amalgam of the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solver functions identified by Broom (1982). But manager duties included senior manager and organizational representative subcategories. The technician dealt solely with internal communication tasks, such as writing, taking photographs and editing. Media relations was a separate technical function. Secular executives considered it more important than internal communication (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Faith group leaders, too, said they wanted their communicators to be managers more than technicians. Specifically, top religious executives were looking for expert prescribers (although leaders may view that role differently from communicators) and problem-solving facilitators. Such communicators would diagnose communication problems, point out needs for systematic communication planning, plan and recommend courses of action, outline alternative approaches, keep management involved in communications decisions, make communication policy decisions, and take responsibility for the success or failure of the communication effort. Top executives did not expect communicators to spend much time taking pictures or editing materials written by others for grammar and spelling.

Like secular executives, faith group leaders valued two technical tasks related to media relations. Religious leaders gave high marks to maintaining contacts with reporters and keeping the leaders informed about what news media were reporting about the organization.

Religion communicators and leaders generally agreed about the way public relations contributed to strategic planning, issue management, major initiatives, routine operations and information gathering for management decision making. But communicators generally rated their contributions lower than their supervisors did. On only 1 of 10 measures (routine operations) did RCC members say their departments made major contributions to the organization. Communicators rated their contributions as "average" on six measures: responses to major social issues, major initiatives, judgments based on experience, strategic planning, contacts with knowledgeable people outside the organization, and informal approaches to information gathering. Leaders, on the other hand, said public relations made major contributions compared to other organizational departments on the first five of those six measures. Leaders rated informal approaches to information gathering as average. Furthermore, executives said public relations made average contributions in three additional areas: specific research to answer specific questions, formal approaches to gathering information for use in decision making, and regularly conducted and routine research activities. Communicators said they made minor contributions to formal information gathering and routine research.

These perception mismatches suggest new a research question: Why don't religion communicators know what their bosses expect? That question deserves further investigation. Future research should also probe how faith group leaders understand the relationship of the six tasks related to the expert-prescriber role. A low Cronbach's alpha for that scale among leaders in this study suggests they do not see the tasks all relating to a single, unified role. Depth interviews with faith group executives might reveal their thinking in more detail.

No Church-Sect Connection Found

Findings from this study could not show any connection between Excellence Public Relations Theory and Church-Sect Theory among religion communicators or faith group leaders. The research design was too limited and the measures clearly too crude to detect if any overlapping dynamic existed.

The logic of Church-Sect Theory suggests denominations that accept their social environment (meeting the Johnson (1963) definition of "church") would be likely to rely on two-way symmetrical relationships with groups in society. Mainline Protestant denominations meet Johnson's description of church. That's because scholars see them accommodating secular values more than other U.S, faith groups to lower tensions with society (Carroll & Roof, 1993; Finke & Stark, 2001, 2005; Johnson, 1963; McKinney, 1998; Michaelsen & Roof, 1986; Niebuhr, 1929; Roof & McKinney, 1987; Stark & Bainbridge, 1985; Stark & Finke, 2000; Wuthnow, 1988). In fact, mainline movements have been shown not only to accept social influences. Their call to mission—like many other Christian groups—motivates them to try to influence society (Stark & Bainbridge, 1985). As such, mainline Protestant denominations would seem to need two-way symmetrical communication "to protect and enhance their self-interests" (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, p. 321). Therefore, mainline Protestant denominations would appear to be more likely candidates than other faith groups for regularly using two-way symmetrical public relations.

But contrary to the relationships proposed in H1, RCC members from mainline Protestant denominations were no more likely to agree with survey statements about two-way symmetrical public relations than communicators from other faith groups. In fact, results showed no differences in responses about the two-way symmetrical model between mainline and non-mainline groups. Composite means for the model were—contrary to H1 and what Church-Sect Theory would seem to predict—3.61 for mainline communicators and 3.62 for non-mainline communicators. Mainline communicators were, consistent with H1, less likely than non-mainline communicators to agree with survey statements about the other three models. But composite means for the two-way asymmetrical, press agentry/publicity and public information models were all pretty close.

The response pool may have been a factor. Respondents were mostly from centrist faith groups on the church-sect continuum. More than 60% of participants were mainline Protestants or Roman Catholics. Communicators from extreme groups—either Christian or non-Christian—were not strongly represented. All "other" faith groups in the H1 analysis showed higher tension with secular values than mainline Protestants (Stark & Finke, 2000). But no one from a far right- or left-wing Christian, Islamic, Jewish or other faith group replied to the survey. As a result, in this collection of religion communicators, faith group—and whether that group was classified as a church or sect—did not influence how individual practitioners responded to the 16 statements measuring public relations models. Religion communicators showed a general consensus about those statements.

Among faith group leaders, responses did follow the patterns predicted in H2. Mainline executives had slightly higher composite mean scores than those from other faith groups for statements about two-way symmetrical public relations (M=3.44 mainline, M=3.41 non-mainline). Mainline leaders had lower composite mean scores than those from other groups for the other three models (M=3.06 mainline, M=3.31 non-mainline for two-way asymmetrical; M=2.56 mainline, M=3.06 non-mainline for press agentry/publicity; M=2.42 mainline, M=2.46 non-mainline for public information). But none of the differences were significant at the $p<.05$ level and could, therefore, be the result of chance. Again, faith group did not really influence whether religion executives said they agreed or disagreed with the 16 statements about public relations practices.

Study Design was Limited

In one sense, those results are surprising. Church-Sect Theory and the two-way symmetrical approach to public relations from Excellence Theory appear to be related. Church-Sect Theory provides a useful way to explain Christian denominationalism, predict how faith groups might respond to social issues and analyze religious interactions—by both individuals and groups—with cultural forces. Excellence Public Relations Theory offers another way to explain and predict how organizations interact at the individual, organizational and program levels with groups in society. The two-way symmetrical approach mirrors the interactive dynamic in Church-Sect Theory. Identifying a connection between these two theories would have been fascinating—

especially because of the ethical implication. Such a connection could have opened new theory-building doors as well.

In another sense, however, finding no connection in this study is not surprising. Grunig's four statements about two-way symmetrical public relations were not designed to reflect the dynamic predicted by Church-Sect Theory. Trying to make them do that was an intellectual stretch. Therefore, learning that they did not show the church-sect dynamic was no shock.

The 16 statements in this study about public relations models measured only how much religion communicators agreed or disagreed with various descriptions of work. As noted earlier, responses did not indicate if RCC members actually practiced public relations in the ways described. Indeed, emphasis on technical roles and claims of little research expertise in other parts of this analysis gave strong evidence that RCC members did not practice either two-way approach. They did not report the ability to carry out symmetrical or asymmetrical tasks. Furthermore, low reliability coefficients for the four models and a factor analysis showed that religion communicators did not link the 16 statements about public relations practices the same ways that Excellence scholars did. The resulting factors emphasized persuasion and publicity more than the relationship building implied by the two-way symmetrical model.

Had this study detected a connection to the church-sect dynamic, the research design—replicating part of earlier Excellence work—might not have been adequate for meaningful interpretation. Unit of analysis as well as the other level of analysis problems would have arisen.

H1 and H2 see denominations as the key unit of analysis. Survey respondents represented either mainline denominations or other similar faith groups. That denominational emphasis reflected Niebuhr's (1929) organizational conceptualization of U.S. Christian groups and the dichotomous nature of church-sect scholarship in sociological research.

Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) analyzed public relations practices in 327 secular groups at the individual, organizational and program levels. This project probed public relations practices by religion communicators and views from faith group leaders at the individual and organizational levels. This study design had no clear standard for judging how, if, at what level or when a faith group made accommodations to accept its social environment.

Sociologists have generally judged where a faith group sits on the church-sect continuum (Johnson, 1963; Finke & Stark, 2001) based on how exclusive it makes membership and participation requirements (Niebuhr, 1929; Stark, 1985; Stark & Bainbridge, 1979, 1980, 1985, Stark & Finke, 2000; Troeltsch, 1931; Weber, 1922/1993, 1949). But other ways of identifying accommodations to secular society are possible. Scholars could, for example, see if faith group members had different opinions about political and moral questions from the general public. Miller (2008b) reported survey data by faith group on current political questions. Another standard might compare faith group operations to secular businesses. Twitchell (2007) noted that non-mainline Protestant magachurches had often adopted secular advertising and merchandising techniques to attract visitors and keep members involved.

Some faith groups, therefore, might be more willing than others to accept social influence and adapt their witness in certain *situations*. Other groups may be willing to accommodate social pressures on certain *issues* but not others. Both situational and issues changes would usually be made at the organizational or program levels. A key variable in that decision making may be how central the issue is to core beliefs. This project could not have addressed or adequately interpreted those factors.

Furthermore, while religion communicators in this project could be grouped by faith group, not all were functioning at a denominational level or even in denominational roles. Some served church-related agencies, colleges, retirement facilities, children's homes and local congregations. Others worked for regional organizations or local groups (congregations or temples). Communicators in specialized ministries or regional offices may operate in different social/cultural environments from those at a national level or those in a local congregation. Interactions—as well as the way communicators and their leaders view interactions—may be different. The wide range of work environments did not become clear until survey results were collected. Recoding respondents into "mainline" and "other" groups for the church-sect analysis did not take those differences into account.

Data were collected about whether RCC members worked at a local, regional or national organization. But since the initial analysis showed no differences between mainline and other groups, applying that information as a control proved pointless. Nevertheless, the varied places that RCC members work should be a consideration in future research.

Time could be another factor in social accommodation. Some denominations may resist change initially but adapt their positions over time as cultural values evolve. These long-term changes may come at an organizational level of analysis and even modify what had been considered core beliefs (McKinney, 1998; Spilka, Hood, Hundsberger & Gorsuch, 2003; Stark & Bainbridge, 1985). This study captured data about only one moment in 2006-07 for communicators and 2008 for leaders. The questionnaires did not include adequate measures to interpret how churches accepted their environment at multiple levels of analysis over time or to evaluate the moral questions related to social accommodations.

Distinctions between peripheral topics at the program level and core beliefs at the organizational level could have become especially muddled in this study design. Mainline Protestant denominations have historically made social reform and social justice issues—which may involve a variety of program initiatives—key parts of their public witness (an organizational concern). Official denominational (organizational) positions on such program topics as equal rights for various groups (women, racial/ethnic groups, homosexuals), abortion, birth control, divorce and capital punishment have evolved through history (Finke & Stark, 2005; McKinney, 1998; Michaelsen, & Roof, 1986; Roof & McKinney, 1987; Stark & Finke, 2000; Wuthnow, 1988). Niebuhr (1929) called such program changes moral failures. They reflected the surrender at the organizational level of faith groups to social forces of class, politics and power. Finke and Stark (2005), Roof and McKinney (1987), Stark and Finke (2000) and Wuthnow (1988) generally agreed. They attributed the declining social influence of mainline denominations to program decisions that led to organizational changes. These accommodations weakened the spiritual vitality of mainline groups. These assessments imply a societal level of analysis.

Grunig (1992, 2002, 2006), on the other hand, described accommodations between an organization and its publics as normative and ethical. He appeared to be combining organizational and societal levels in his moral judgment. Analysis at the societal level was beyond this study's design.

Ethics Question Remains

Design flaws aside, this study left the ethical question raised in Chapter 1 unanswered. Could using two-way symmetrical public relations present a moral quandary for RCC members?

RCC ethical statements have historically encouraged council members to be responsible promoters of their faith groups. The council's first ethical statement (Professional Aims of Christian Public Relations Personnel, adopted in 1955 and revised in 1970) directed members "to keep in mind the basic purpose of my faith and direct all my professional activities toward achieving that purpose" (Dugan, Nannes & Stross, 1979, p. 32). For mainline Protestant practitioners that purpose would reflect the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20a): "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." That commission does not allow any of the moral surrender to social forces of class, politics and power that Niebuhr (1929) condemned.

The current 22-point Religion Communicators Council Guidelines for Ethical

Conduct, adopted in 2006, encourages each member to be "a responsible advocate for the faith group for which I work." Another provision says RCC members should "promote mutual understanding and respect among faith groups, the public and the media" (Guidelines for ethical conduct, 2006). The moral challenge appears to be promoting mutual understanding without letting the interaction change the denomination and its essential witness. Finke and Stark (2005), Roof and McKinney (1987), Stark and Finke (2000) and Wuthnow (1988) say accommodation to social values has sapped the spiritual vitality of mainline Protestant denominations. That weakened vitality is causing those denominations to lose market share and influence in today's dynamic U.S. religious landscape (Miller 2008a).

But Excellence Theory maintains that the best organizations establish two-way symmetrical relationships with key publics. Those two-way relationships allow social groups to influence the organization as much as it influences the publics. In fact, the management in Excellence organizations is open to outside influence and not afraid of outside threats (Dozier, 1992). Clearly, according to Church-Sect Theory, such two-way influence and openness could harm mainline Protestant denominations. That would be bad, according to Niebuhr (1929), and at odds with the RCC "responsible advocate" ethical standard. But would two-way symmetrical relationships be harmful in all cases? When—if ever—and at what levels could religion communicators encourage mutual influence without violating the "responsible advocate" standard? Future research will have to address those questions.

Possibilities for future research

This limited study presents a snapshot of how some religion communicators say they practiced public relations in 2006-2007. Results from faith group leaders provide a second snapshot. It shows what executives who supervise those communicators say they want from public relations in 2008. These survey results establish benchmarks for future research. Follow-up studies could—much like Broom (1986) and Broom and Dozier (1995)—look at how the roles of Religion Communicators Council members evolve in coming years. Related research could collect data on what roles members of other faith-related communication groups (i.e., Baptist Communicators Association, Episcopal Communicators, Presbyterian Communicators, United Methodist Association of Communicators) play. Future studies could compare how different approaches to role enactment affect the influence of various faith groups in the dynamic U.S. religion marketplace. Other research might examine the hack-vs.-flack dynamic—especially in light of the current, fast-changing social media environment—or whether persuasion or relationship building most effectively advances public witness.

Additional future research might examine how practitioners from other specialized public relations organizations compared to those in the Excellence studies. Those groups might include the Agricultural Relations Council, National Association of Government Communicators and the National School Public Relations Association.

Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) have suggested yet another line of research. It would probe the three communication dimensions underlying the four models: one-way or two-way, symmetrical or asymmetrical and mediated or interpersonal. Such research moves beyond the four classic public relations models. It would require new methods and might avoid some of the measurement problems associated with the Excellence questionnaires. Such research might also build on one idea in this study and examine the morality behind various public relations approaches.

The communication environment has changed in the brief time since the snapshots in this study were taken. That evolving environment offers still other opportunities for research. Social media, for instance, have become much more important public relations tools since the data in this study were collected. Capabilities of social media change how organizations can relate to various publics. Those interactive relationships fit the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models more closely than the one-way public information or press agentry/publicity models. Emerging tools, such as social networks, blogs, online video and Twitter, may force religion communicators to change their approaches to public relations practice. The data set in this study does include responses—not analyzed in this project—on how religion communicators used blogs, podcasts, e-newsletters and other emerging communication tools. That data could provide a baseline for future studies.

But future studies should avoid the obvious shortcomings of this project. Those include not recognizing in advance the range of jobs religion communicators fill, conceptually overreaching and asking too many questions online. Religion communicators do not just work in national, regional and local faith group offices. They serve in colleges, health-care facilities, welfare organizations, outreach groups and allied agencies. Each environment could influence the way religion communicators practice public relations. Survey questions from Excellence studies have their limits. The questions may not accurately gauge public relations practices for all groups of communicators. Those questions certainly should not be used to detect more complex relationships, such as social accommodations by faith groups in a dynamic religious environment. Online surveys should not ask 142 questions. Even when respondents have an interest in the survey topic or sponsoring organization (Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2000)—the way RCC members do—they may find the online presentation too challenging or time-consuming. Based on the experience in this project, paper-and-pencil questionnaires are more likely to reduce break-off rates for long surveys.

Conclusion

Despite its limitations, this study has begun filling the void in scholarship on how faith groups use communication to manage relationships. By replicating parts of the work of Broom, Dozier, Grunig and their colleagues, the project has expanded the Excellence public relations body of knowledge to include a new area—religion communication. Results from this study show that religion communicators are a distinct subgroup of U.S. public relations practitioners. RCC members work primarily as communication technicians, not managers. That makes them different from public relations practitioners in 327 secular organizations studied by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002). Furthermore, religion communicators understand public relations differently from the way the four Excellence models describe it.

Religion communicators do not know what their supervisors expect from them or their departments. Communicators overestimate their supervisors' support for the press agentry/publicity and public information models of public relations. Communicators underestimate support for the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models. Furthermore, communicators rate their contributions to the work of their faith groups lower than their supervisors do. Faith group leaders say they want their communicators to be managers more than technicians. Specifically, top executives are looking for managers with qualities of expert prescribers and problem-solving facilitators. Religion communicators are not carrying out the tasks associated with those roles.

This study also posed an intriguing theoretical question for scholars of religion and public relations: Have these two disciplines been independently investigating a common social dynamic? Unfortunately, the survey results in this study do not provide an answer. In fact, the findings here could make no connection between what religion communicators do and changes in the dynamic U.S. religion marketplace. But that does not mean future studies might not detect a common dynamic that researchers from sociology, public relations and other social sciences might want to explore. Combining techniques and theories from related fields may lead to a broader ontology of sociology, religion and public relations.

If future research ever finds a common dynamic, that discovery could renew consideration of the moral quandary raised in Chapter 1. Niebuhr (1929) and Grunig (1992, 2006a, 2006b) present different moral positions concerning two-way symmetrical relationships in a religious context. Those opposing positions seem to be built on different levels of moral analysis. Religion communicators in this study generally agree with statements about two-way symmetrical practices. Ethicists, therefore, might want to explore when—if ever—two-way symmetrical public relations practices would be morally inappropriate for religion communicators.

APPENDIX A

What do Religion Communicators do?

2006 Questionnaire used with members of the Religion Communicators Council

What do religion communicators do?

This survey is for members of the Religion Communicators Council. The purpose is to provide the board benchmarks for professional development planning. For this questionnaire "department" refers to the office or organizational unit of which you are a part, such as communications, benevolence interpretation, public relations or marketing. "Organization" refers to the overall religious organization. If you work for a local unit or judicatory of a faith organization, such as a conference, synod or diocese, your "organization" answers should refer to that local unit. **NOTE**: Many questions use language that may seem "commercial" or "corporate." That's because we want to compare your responses to those of communicators in earlier corporate studies. Please associate those terms with similar concepts in your religious organization. Your answers to all the questions—even the ones that may not seem to apply to you—are important to the accuracy of this research. Thanks for your input and your contribution to improving RCC.

In the following questions, please circle the number of the appropriate response.

1. Does your communication department report directly to the most senior manager in your religious organization?

    a. Yes ***(Please skip to Question 4)*** b. No

2. Does an indirect reporting relationship exist, then, from the communication department to the most senior manager (for example, in which the department reports directly on some matters but not all)?

    a. Yes ***(Please skip to Question 4)*** b. No

3. Which of the following best describes your communication department's reporting relationship?

    a. The department reports to a senior manager who, in turn, reports to the most senior manager.

    b. The department reports to a more junior level of management.

    c. Some other reporting relationship ***(please specify)***. ___________________________

4. Please describe the extent to which your communication department contributes to each of the following organizational functions.

	No contribution	Minor contribution	Average contribution	Major contribution	Extremely strong contribution
a. Strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5
b. Response to major social issues	1	2	3	4	5
c. Major initiatives (e.g., new programs, movements into new areas of ministry, launches of new products or services, starts of new faith communities, property acquisitions, new facilities)	1	2	3	4	5
d. Routine operations (e.g., development and maintenance of employee communication, community relations or media relations programs)	1	2	3	4	5

5. Which of the following communication activities conducted by your department, if any, must be cleared by senior managers outside your department? ***(Circle all that apply)***

a. None
b. New projects
c. Major projects (in terms of expenditures)
d. Statements, oral or written, that involve numbers
e. Financial information
f. Crisis communication
g. Statements that include direct quotes
h. Specialized content
i. Statements with political ramifications
j. "Sensitive" information
k. Statements about top administrators
l. Other ***(please specify)*** _______________

6. Please indicate the extent to which your department contributes to strategic planning and decision making through each of the following activities.

	No contribution	Minor contribution	Average contribution	Major contribution	Extremely strong contribution
a. Regularly conducted and routine research activities	1	2	3	4	5
b. Specific research conducted to answer specific questions	1	2	3	4	5
c. Formal approaches to gathering information for use in decision making other than research	1	2	3	4	5
d. Informal approaches to gathering information	1	2	3	4	5
e. Contacts with knowledgeable people outside the organization	1	2	3	4	5
f. Judgments based on experience	1	2	3	4	5

7. Today's business and religious organizations are so complex that many require more than a single leader to operate effectively. Instead of a single powerful person, then, many organizations are controlled by a group of powerful people—often called the "dominant coalition." In your organization, who is represented in this power elite? ***(Circle all that apply)***

a. The chief executive officer (e.g., general secretary, bishop, executive director, president)
b. The chief financial officer
c. The chief operating officer
d. The communications head
e. Other top managers ***(please specify)*** ____

8. What, if any, representatives of external groups are in the dominant coalition? ***(Circle all that apply)***

a. None
b. Members/stakeholders
c. Employee groups
d. Clients
e. Suppliers
f. Activist groups
g. Other external group ***(please specify)*** ___________________________

9. Please indicate the extent to which you believe the dominant coalition that you just identified supports the communication function in your organization.

   a. No support
   b. Weak/minor support
   c. Average support for all organization
   d. Strong/major support
   e. Extremely strong support

10. Senior administrators of an organization—the dominant coalition you were asked to identify—generally have a prevailing idea about how communication or public relations should be practiced. Sometimes that idea differs from that of the communication department. Please indicate the extent to which the dominant coalition in your organization would agree with each statement about communication or public relations. ***(NOTE: You will be asked how much you agree with these same statements in Question 11.)***

Please circle the number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Don't know**
a. The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
b. After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes	1	2	3	4	5
c. In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.	1	2	3	4	5
d. In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.	1	2	3	4	5
e. The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics the organization affects.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.	1	2	3	4	5
g. In communication accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Before starting a communication program, surveys or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
i. In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.	1	2	3	4	5
k. The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.	1	2	3	4	5
l. For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.	1	2	3	4	5
m. The purpose of communication is to change the attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.	1	2	3	4	5
n. Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication.	1	2	3	4	5
o. Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
p. Communication is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.	1	2	3	4	5

11. Now please indicate how much you agree with each statement about communication or public relations.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
b. After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes	1	2	3	4	5
c. In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.	1	2	3	4	5
d. In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
e. The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics the organization affects.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.	1	2	3	4	5
g. In communication accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Before starting a communication program, surveys or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.	1	2	3	4	5
i. In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.	1	2	3	4	5
k. The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.	1	2	3	4	5
l. For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.	1	2	3	4	5
m. The purpose of communication is to change the attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.	1	2	3	4	5
n. Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication.	1	2	3	4	5
o. Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
p. Communication is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Consider next about the value you think your communication department has to your organization and about the value that members of the dominant coalition think it has. Using the choices below, estimate the value you think the department has in comparison with a typical department in your organization.

a. No value at all
b. Weak/minor value
c. Average value for a typical department
d. Major/strong value
e. Extremely strong value

13. On the same scale, what value do you think members of the dominant coalition would choose for the communication department?

a. No value at all
b. Weak/minor value
c. Average value for a typical department
d. Strong/major value
e. Extremely strong value

14. Now think about the value the communication department has to your organization in terms of cost-benefits ratio. Think of the money your organization budgets for communication each year—both for the communication department itself and any outside public relations consulting firms. Then estimate the value of the department to the organization as a percentage of the department's budget. A percentage less than 100 would indicate that you think the department provides benefits worth less that the amount budgeted. 100 percent would indicate that the benefits equal the costs. A percentage greater than 100 would indicate that the benefits are worth more than the amount budgeted.

a. 0 to 50 percent
b. 51 to 99 percent
c. 100 percent
d. 101 to 150 percent
e. More than 151 percent

15. Estimate the cost-benefit ratio percentage you think members of the dominant coalition would assign to the communication department.

a. 0 to 50 percent
b. 51 to 99 percent
c. 100 percent
d. 101 to 150 percent
e. More than 150 percent

16. The following statements describe different aspects of what communication practitioners do. If the statement describes something you never do in your work, select 1. If the statement describes something you always do, select 5. If you do the task occasionally, select a number between 2 and 4 that best describes how often you do it. Please don't score a task higher if someone else in your department does it but you don't. These statements apply to what you do.

	Never do	**Seldom do**	**Sometimes do**	**Often do**	**Always do**
a. I make the communication policy decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I write materials presenting information on issues important to the organization.	1	2	3	4	5

	Never do	Seldom do	Sometimes do	Often do	Always do
c. I keep management informed of public reaction to organizational policies, procedures and/or actions.	1	2	3	4	5
d. I produce content for Web sites and e-mail newsletters.	1	2	3	4	5
e. In meetings with management, I point out the need to follow a systematic communications planning process.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I diagnose communications problems and explain them to others in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I do or commission audience research.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
i. I report public opinion survey results to keep management informed of the opinions of various publics.	1	2	3	4	5
j. I work with managers to increase their skills in solving and/or avoiding communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
k. I plan and recommend courses of action for solving communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
l. I'm involved in producing Web logs (blogs).	1	2	3	4	5
m. I handle the technical aspects of producing communication materials.	1	2	3	4	5
n. I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.	1	2	3	4	5
o. I encourage management participation when making the important communications decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
p. I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's communication programs.	1	2	3	4	5
q. I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.	1	2	3	4	5
r. I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues.	1	2	3	4	5
s. I keep management actively involved in every phase of the communication program.	1	2	3	4	5
t. I produce podcasts.	1	2	3	4	5
u. Because of my experience and training, others consider me to be the organization's expert in solving communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
v. I do photography and graphics for communication materials.	1	2	3	4	5

	Never do	Seldom do	Sometimes do	Often do	Always do
w. I conduct communication audits to identify communication problems between the organization and various publics.	1	2	3	4	5
x. I operate as a catalyst in management's decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
y. I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication programs...	1	2	3	4	5
z. I maintain media contacts for my organization............	1	2	3	4	5
aa. I represent the organization at events and meetings................	1	2	3	4	5
bb. When working with managers on communication, I outline alternative approaches for solving problems..................	1	2	3	4	5
cc. I do video productions...	1	2	3	4	5
dd. Although I don't make communication policy decisions, I provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendations and plans.	1	2	3	4	5
ee. I am responsible for placing news releases.	1	2	3	4	5
ff. I am the senior counsel to top decision makers when communication issues are involved.	1	2	3	4	5
gg. I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization.	1	2	3	4	5
hh. I do audio productions.	1	2	3	4	5

17. Using the same five-point scale, rate how accurately each of the following statements describes how you practice communication:

	Never do	Seldom do	Sometimes do	Often do	Always do
a. I am the organization's expert on diagnosing and solving communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I am the specialist in writing and producing communication materials............................	1	2	3	4	5
c. I am the liaison, promoting two-way communication between management and our various publics...............................	1	2	3	4	5
d. I am the problem-solving process facilitator, helping management go through defining problems, setting objectives and planning programs in a systematic fashion..	1	2	3	4	5

18. Which of these four communication functions best describes your primary role?
   a. I am the organization's expert on diagnosing and solving communication problems.
   b. I am the specialist in writing and producing communication materials.
   c. I am the liaison, promoting two-way communication between management and our various publics.
   d. I am the problem-solving process facilitator, helping management go through defining problems, setting objectives and planning programs in a systematic fashion.

19. The next items list tasks requiring special expertise or knowledge that is available in some communication departments but not in others. Using a five-point scale, indicate the extent to which your department or someone in your department has the expertise or knowledge to perform each task. If no one has the expertise, select 1. If your department is among the tops in the field for the task described, pick 5. Select 2 to 4 to show levels of expertise between those extremes.

	None	Some	Average	Good	Tops
a. Determine how publics react to the organization.........	1	2	3	4	5
b. Coordinate press coverage or arrange media coverage of an event..	1	2	3	4	5
c. Get publics to behave as your organization wants	1	2	3	4	5
d. Produce a Web site..	1	2	3	4	5
e. Negotiate with an activist group	1	2	3	4	5
f. Manage people...	1	2	3	4	5
g. Conduct evaluation research	1	2	3	4	5
h. Provide objective information about your organization	1	2	3	4	5
g. Produce publications..	1	2	3	4	5
h. Persuade a reporter to publicize your organization.................	1	2	3	4	5
i. Use theories of conflict resolution in dealing with publics......	1	2	3	4	5
j. Write an advertisement	1	2	3	4	5
k. Take photographs..	1	2	3	4	5
1. Understand the news values of journalists..................	1	2	3	4	5
m, Get your organization's name into the media............	1	2	3	4	5
n. Write speeches	1	2	3	4	5
o. Keep bad publicity out of the media	1	2	3	4	5
p. Develop goals and objectives for your department.................	1	2	3	4	5
q. Produce audio/visuals (graphics, slide shows, videos, radio spots)	1	2	3	4	5
r. Prepare a department budget	1	2	3	4	5
s. Use attitude theory in a campaign	1	2	3	4	5
t. Manipulate publics scientifically.................................	1	2	3	4	5
u. Get maximum publicity from a staged event...............	1	2	3	4	5
v. Perform environmental scanning	1	2	3	4	5
w. Write news releases and feature articles	1	2	3	4	5
x. Develop strategies for solving communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
y. Prepare news stories that reporters will use................	1	2	3	4	5

	None	Some	Average	Good	Tops
z. Create and manage a speakers bureau	1	2	3	4	5
aa. Help management understand the opinion of particular publics	1	2	3	4	5
bb. Use research to segment publics	1	2	3	4	5
cc. Manage the organization's response to issues	1	2	3	4	5
dd. Perform as journalists inside your organization	1	2	3	4	5
ee. Persuade a public that your organization is right on an issue	1	2	3	4	5

20. About how many people are employed by your overall organization? _____________

21. About how many communication professionals are employed by your department? _____________

22. Does your department or organization use the services of outside public relations, advertising or marketing firms?

    a. Yes b. No ***(please skip to Question 24)***

23. Please indicate which of these public relations services, if any, your department or organization purchases from outside public relations firms ***(Circle numbers for all that apply)***.

    a. None
    b. Preparation and placement of publicity and advertising materials
    c. Preparation of publications directed to employees, stakeholders, investors and similar publics
    d. Consulting about relations with the news media during periods of actual or potential controversy or disputes
    e. Consulting about top-level strategic problems related to the relationship your organization has with outside organizations or groups
    f. Research in support of the public relations function
    g. Assisting in developing a communication department or doing an audit of an existing department
    h. Other ***(please specify)*** ____

24. Are you? a. Maleb. Female

25. Your age is: _____________________

26. How many years have you worked in communication? ________________________

27. How many years have you worked in religion communication? _________________

28. Your highest level of education in any field is:

    a. No college
    b. Some college
    c. A bachelor's degree
    d. Some graduate courses
    e. A master's degree
    f. A doctoral degree

29. The highest level of formal training you have completed in communication, journalism, advertising, public relations or marketing is:

   a. No formal training in communication, journalism, advertising, public relations or marketing
   b. Some continuing education courses
   c. Some undergraduate-level college courses
   d. A bachelor's degree
   e. Some graduate-level courses
   f. A master's degree
   g. A doctoral degree

30. Which, if any, professional credential in communication or public relations have you earned? ***(Circle numbers for all that apply)***

   a. None
   b. Accredited in Public Relations (APR)
   c. Accredited Business Communicator (ABC)
   d. Faith group certification in communication
   e. Other ***(please specify)*** ____

31. To which, if any, of the following professional communication or public relation associations do you belong? ***(Circle numbers for all that apply)***

   a. Religion Communicators Council
   b. Public Relations Society of America
   c. International Association of Business Communicators
   d. Women in Communication
   e. Groups related to your faith group
   f. Society of Professional Journalists
   g. Radio-Television News Directors Association
   h. Society of News Design
   i. None
   j. Other ***(please specify)*** ____

32. About how many times a year, if any, do you attend meetings of professional communication/public relations associations? ______________________________

33. In the past 10 years, how many times, if any, have you served as an officer of a professional communication/public relations association? ____________________

34. To which of the following communication trade periodicals, if any, do you subscribe?

a. None
b. Communication World
c. Public Relations Journal
d. Public Relations Tactics
e. Public Relations Strategist
f. Public Relations Review
g. International Public Relations Review
h. PR Reporter
i. PR News
j. O'Dwyer's Newsletter
k. Communications Briefings
l. PR Week
m. Regan Report
n. Editor & Publisher
o. Advertising Age
p. Ad Week
q. Other (please specify) __________

35. Your position title is: ____

36. Your faith group is: ____

That completes the questionnaire. Thanks so much for your time and responses. Your input will help RCC leaders target future professional development offerings to your needs.

APPENDIX B

What should Religion Communicators do?

2008 Questionnaire sent to faith group leaders supervising members of the Religion Communicators Council

What should religion communicators do?

This survey is for faith group executives who supervise members of the Religion Communicators Council. The purpose is to provide broad benchmarks for understanding the place of communication within religious organizations. RCC will use this information in planning professional development offerings for members.

NOTE: Many questions use language that may seem "commercial." That's because they were developed for a study of 300 secular organizations in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Please associate those terms with similar concepts in your organization. Your answers to all the questions—even the ones that may not seem to apply to you—are important to the accuracy of this research. Thanks for your input.

In the following questions, please circle the letter or number of the appropriate response.

1. Does your communication department report directly to the most senior manager in your religious organization?

    a. Yes ***(Please skip to Question 4)*** b. No

2. Does an indirect reporting relationship exist, then, from the communication department to the most senior manager (for example, in which the department reports directly on some matters but not all)?

    a. Yes ***(Please skip to Question 4)*** b. No

3. Which of the following best describes your communication department's reporting relationship?

    a. The department reports to a senior manager who, in turn, reports to the most senior manager.

    b. The department reports to a more junior level of management.

    c. Some other reporting relationship ***(please specify)***. ____________________________

4. Please describe the extent to which your communication department contributes to each of the following organizational functions.

	No contribution	Minor contribution	Average contribution	Major contribution	Extremely strong contribution
a. Strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5
b. Response to major social issues	1	2	3	4	5
c. Major initiatives (e.g., new programs, movements into new areas of ministry, launches of new products or services, starts of new faith communities, property acquisitions, new facilities)	1	2	3	4	5
d. Routine operations (e.g., development and maintenance of employee communication, community relations or media relations programs)	1	2	3	4	5

5. Please indicate the extent to which your communication department contributes to strategic planning and decision making through each of the following activities.

	No contribution	Minor contribution	Average contribution	Major contribution	Extremely strong contribution
a. Regularly conducted and routine research activities................................	1	2	3	4	5
b. Specific research conducted to answer specific questions.....................	1	2	3	4	5
c. Formal approaches to gathering information for use in decision making other than research	1	2	3	4	5
d. Informal approaches to gathering information	1	2	3	4	5
e. Contacts with knowledgeable people outside the organization	1	2	3	4	5
f. Judgments based on experience.............	1	2	3	4	5

6. Today's business and religious organizations are so complex that many require more than a single leader to operate effectively. Instead of a single powerful person, then, many organizations are controlled by a group of powerful people—often called the "dominant coalition." In your organization, who is represented in this power elite? ***(Circle all that apply)***

   a. The chief executive officer (e.g., general secretary, bishop, executive director, president)
   b. The chief financial officer
   c. The chief operating officer
   d. The communications head
   e. Other top managers ***(please specify)*** ____

7. Please indicate the extent to which the dominant coalition that you just identified supports the communication function in your organization.

   a. No support
   b. Weak/minor support
   c. Average support
   d. Strong/major support
   e. Extremely strong support

8. Senior administrators of an organization—the dominant coalition you were asked to identify—generally have a prevailing idea about how communication or public relations should be practiced. Please indicate the extent to which you would agree with each statement about communication or public relations.

Please circle the number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. The purpose of communication is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.......................	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
b. After completing a communication program, research should be done to determine how effective it has been in changing people's attitudes.	1	2	3	4	5
c. In communication, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.	1	2	3	4	5
d. In communication the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.	1	2	3	4	5
e. The purpose of communication is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics the organization affects.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Before starting a communication program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.	1	2	3	4	5
g. In communication accurate information should be disseminated, but unfavorable information should not be volunteered.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Before starting a communication program, surveys or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.	1	2	3	4	5
i. In communication one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Before beginning a communication program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.	1	2	3	4	5
k. The success of a communication program can be determined from the number of people who attend an event or who use products or services.	1	2	3	4	5
l. For this organization public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.	1	2	3	4	5
m. The purpose of communication is to change the attitudes and behaviors of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.	1	2	3	4	5
n. Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of communication.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
o. Communication should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.......................................	1	2	3	4	5
p. Communication is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.	1	2	3	4	5

9. Consider next the value you think your communication department has to your organization . Using the choices below, estimate the department's value in comparison with a typical department in your organization.

a. No value at all
b. Weak/minor value
c. Average value for a typical department
d. Major/strong value
e. Extremely strong value

10. Now think about the value the communication department has to your organization in terms of cost-benefits ratio. Think of the money your organization budgets for communication each year—both for the communication department itself and any outside public relations consulting firms. Then estimate the value of the department to the organization as a percentage of the department's budget. A percentage less than 100 would indicate that you think the department provides benefits worth less than the amount budgeted. 100 percent would indicate that the benefits equal the costs. A percentage greater than 100 would indicate that the benefits are worth more than the amount budgeted.

a. 0 to 50 percent
b. 51 to 99 percent
c. 100 percent
d. 101 to 150 percent
e. More than 151 percent

11. The following statements describe different tasks that communication practitioners do. Please indicate how often you think the **head of your communication department** should do these tasks. Please don't score a task higher if you think someone else in the communication department should be doing that work.

	Never do	Seldom do	Sometimes do	Often do	Always do
a. He/she should make communication policy decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
b. He/she should write materials presenting information on issues important to the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
c. He/she should keep management informed of public reaction to organizational policies, procedures and/or actions.	1	2	3	4	5
d. He/she should produce content for Web sites and e-mail newsletters.	1	2	3	4	5

	Never do	Seldom do	Sometimes do	Often do	Always do
e. In meetings with management, he/she should point out the need to follow a systematic communications planning process	1	2	3	4	5
f. He/she should diagnose communications problems and explain them to others in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
g. He/she should do or commission audience research	1	2	3	4	5
h. He/she should edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
i. He/she should report public opinion survey results to keep management informed of the opinions of various publics.	1	2	3	4	5
j. He/she should work with managers to increase their skills in solving and/or avoiding communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
k. He/she should plan and recommend courses of action for solving communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
l. He/she should be involved in producing Web logs (blogs).	1	2	3	4	5
m. He/she should handle technical aspects of producing communication materials.	1	2	3	4	5
n. He/she should create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics	1	2	3	4	5
o. He/she should encourage management participation when making the important communication decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
p. He/she should take responsibility for the success or failure of the organization's communication programs	1	2	3	4	5
q. He/she should produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.	1	2	3	4	5
r. He/she should keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues.	1	2	3	4	5
s. He/she should keep management actively involved in every phase of the communication program.	1	2	3	4	5
t. He/she should produce podcasts.	1	2	3	4	5
u. Because of his/her experience and training, others consider him/her to be the organization's expert in solving communication problems.	1	2	3	4	5
v. He/she should do photography and graphics for communication materials.	1	2	3	4	5
w. He/she should conduct communication audits to identify communication problems between the organization and various publics.	1	2	3	4	5
x. He/she should operate as a catalyst in management's decision making.	1	2	3	4	5

	Never do	Seldom do	Sometimes do	Often do	Always do
y. Others in the organization should hold him/her accountable for the success or failure of communication programs.	1	2	3	4	5
z. He/she should maintain media contacts for the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
aa. He/she should represent the organization at events and meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
bb. When working with managers on communication, he/she should outline alternative approaches for solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5
cc. He/she should do video productions.	1	2	3	4	5
dd. Although he/she doesn't make communication policy decisions, he/she should provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendations and plans.	1	2	3	4	5
ee. He/she should be responsible for placing news releases.	1	2	3	4	5
ff. He/she should be the senior counsel to top decision makers when communication issues are involved.	1	2	3	4	5
gg. He/she should use his/her journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization.	1	2	3	4	5
hh. He/she should do audio productions.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Please estimate the percentage of your time as a senior administrator that you spend on communication activities inside and outside the organization.

a. Inside __________% b. Outside __________%

13. How important is it for you and other senior managers in your organization to be aware of what people in the organization are doing that may affect the organization?

a. Not important b. Somewhat important c. Important d. Very important

14. Are you? a. Male b. Female

15. Your age is: ______________________

16. Your position title is: ____

17. Your organization is: ____

18. Your faith group is: ____

That completes the questionnaire. Thanks so much for your time and responses. Your input will help RCC leaders better target future professional development offerings to meet the needs of organizations that our members serve.

Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to 16400 Huebner Road, San Antonio, Texas 78248-1693.

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VITA

Douglas Farber Cannon was born in Florida. After graduating from Upper Arlington (Ohio) High School in 1972, he attended The Ohio State University on an Army ROTC scholarship. He graduated in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism degree *summa cum laude* and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He delayed beginning active duty for one year. He completed a Master of Arts degree in journalism at The Ohio State University in 1976. He worked as a reporter for *The Times-Leader* in Martins Ferry, Ohio, until starting active duty at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in 1977. Over the next 26 years he served as an armor and public affairs officer in the Regular Army, Texas Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. He graduated from the Armor Officer Basic Course in 1977, Information Officer Course in 1977, Armor Officer Advanced Course in 1983 and Command and General Staff College in 1989. He retired from the U.S. Army Reserve as a lieutenant colonel in 2003. After his initial active duty tour, he was publisher of *The Sellersburg* (Indiana) *Star*, an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Kentucky and an assistant professor of mass communications at Eastern Kentucky University. In 1984 he began working as a communicator for The United Methodist Church. He filled various administrative and executive communications positions for United Methodist agencies in Dallas and San Antonio, Texas, through May 2008. He entered the School of Graduate Studies at The University of Texas at Austin in August 2003.

Permanent Address: 203 Kendall Pointe Drive, Fair Oaks Ranch, Texas 78015

This dissertation was typed by the author.