

Mysticism and the World Crisis Communication as a psychoanalytic subject

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Abstract: The Roman Catholic Church played a primary role in fundraising and the recruitment of volunteers in the months following the December, 2004 tsunami that left 200,000 people dead and millions homeless in South Asia. In the aftermath of such crises, victims and sympathetic observers turn to recognized leaders to help make sense of the carnage. The Vatican emerged as one such source of leadership and sensemaking. The Vatican's crisis rhetoric provided insight into how the theological issue of God's role or purpose affected communication following the disaster. Kenneth Burke's perspective on identification (1950), action versus motion (1954), and terministic pyramids (1966); as well as Eisenberg's (1984) concept of strategic ambiguity as rhetorical strategy, provided the theoretical underpinnings for the present study. We conclude that the Vatican was successful in establishing identification with a diverse audience in the early stages of the crisis recovery. This success coincides with a use of strategically ambiguous messages that embraced the mystery and motion of the crisis. Using this strategy in the extended healing phase of the crisis is potentially problematic.

ON THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, 2004, a natural disaster wielding a level of force unseen for decades brought death and destruction to hundreds of island and coastal communities in a vast area of the Indian Ocean. Tens of thousands of people drowned as entire communities were washed to sea. John Lancaster (2004, December 28) described the disaster in the *Washington Post*: "The 9.0 magnitude earthquake Sunday morning was the fourth most severe since 1900, and the strongest since a 9.2 magnitude temblor in Alaska in 1964, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (n.p.). This earth movement caused what the Japanese term a tsunami, a destructive tidal wave spawned in the Indian Ocean that washed life off the shores of Asia, India, and parts of east Africa.

The tsunami and its effects were described in extremes: “The most powerful in 40 years (Foster, 2004, p. 1); “a deluge (Fernando, 2005, p. 62); “the day that shocked the earth, and a wave moving with “the power of more than 1,000 atomic bombs (Craig, Sherwell, Orr et al., 2006, p. 14). The initial death toll was enumerated for each affected country, including India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand (Tsunami, 2004, n.p.); with the confirmation of the deaths at over 200,000 people and the rendering of millions homeless and devastated (Soorley, 2005). Reports of the tsunami continued to make headlines for over six months—from 26 December 2004 to 26 July 2005—in U. S. and international newspapers. According to Mohler (2005), “the scale of suffering and the magnitude of the disaster in South Asia defy the imagination (n.p.).

The crisis communication literature explains that crisis events as extreme and shocking as the 2004 tsunami have the potential to, at least momentarily, collapse the sensemaking capacity of observers (Murphy, 1996; Sellnow, Seeger, & Ulmer, 2002; Weick, 1993, 1995). Weick (1993) labels such moments of mystification cosmology episodes:

A cosmology episode occurs when people suddenly and deeply feel that the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system. What makes such an incident so shattering is that both the sense of what is occurring and the means to rebuild that sense collapse together. (p. 634)

As Weick explains, surviving victims and observers alike are left to wonder how such a catastrophic event could overwhelm existing structures designed for warning and protection. This confusion is often accompanied by spiritual questions seeking to understand why their lives have been touched by such devastation and loss of life.

The process of making sense of such tragedies is, to a large extent, rhetorical. Crisis victims turn to respected leaders in the wake of a disaster to help them make sense tragedy (Reynolds, 2002). Previous research has focused on the traits and characteristics that enable leaders to succeed in reestablishing order out of chaos (Reynolds, 2006; Ulmer, 2001; Witt & Morgan, 2002). Burke offers a means for moving beyond leadership characteristics to an evaluation of the rhetorical strategies employed by leadership figures in response to extreme situations. Specifically, Burke’s (1954) discussion of the purpose, and the corresponding term *mysticism*, yields a novel perspective to crisis communication. Burke characterizes the *mystic moment* as “the stage of revelation after which all is felt to be different (p. 305). The tsunami meets the criteria for a mystic moment, reflecting what Burke describes as the dialectical principle of the Upward Way, where

“some level of generalization is reached that one did not originally envisage, whereupon the particulars of the world itself look different, as seen in terms of this ‘higher vision’ (p. 306).

When events like the tsunami occur with the appearance of mystic involvement or design, the attribution of God’s role in the crisis becomes mystical as the belief that people who are guilty should be punished by God comes into synch with what some would consider the fate of a natural disaster claiming the lives of people perceived to be guilty. Burke (1954) writes: “Experience itself becomes mystical when some accidental event happens to be ‘representative’ of the individual, as when a sequence of circumstances follows exactly the pattern desired by him [or her] (p. 307).

The Roman Catholic Church was one of the influential religious communities that responded both financially and rhetorically immediately following the tsunami. The Vatican provided four million dollars of emergency relief and dozens of Catholic agencies joined the cause making nearly \$650 million available to the affected region (Migliore, 2005). In addition, the Pope and his spokesperson made statements in support of those affected by the disaster. Amid this macro-level display of support from the Roman Catholic Church, different views emerged regarding the reasons why the disaster occurred. These conflicting perspectives voiced the views of those seeking to make sense of what happened and why.

Responses in this sensemaking process ranged from the scientific perspective explaining the geological reasons for the shift of the 620 mile section of subsurface tectonic plate in the Indian Ocean at a depth of 6.2 miles (Lancaster, 2004) to the religious attribution of God’s punishment on the inhabitants of the affected regions (Coffin, 2005; Kelley, 2005; Kettle, 2004; Lantos, 2005; Alphonso & Thomas, 2005). For some Christian observers, who believed the populations in the regions most affected by the tsunami were Muslims, God’s purpose was to punish non-Christians. For some Muslims, the affected region was a popular tourist area, making God’s purpose one of punishing decadence. These explanations provided a challenge for religious leaders who needed to solicit an appropriate crisis response for the victims of the disaster based upon a spirit of charity and benevolence.

This study explores the rhetorical responses of the Pope and Vatican spokespeople pertaining to the tsunami of 2004 in an attempt to explicate the rhetorical strategies of the Roman Catholic Church in reconciling conflicting perspectives about God’s role in causing the disaster. The findings help to inform the religious leaders and the general public how the role of

theology influences the crafting of crisis messages designed to help people to understand disasters and form better dispositions in the face of future disasters. This focus provides a meaningful extension of the existing crisis communication literature in three ways. First, and foremost, this analysis applies several of Burke's principles to the rhetorical process of crisis recovery. More specifically, Burke's notion of mysticism instills a rhetorical dimension into the extant sensemaking literature related to cosmology episodes. Finally, Burke's perspective allows for assessing the complexities of religion in the rhetorical sensemaking process following a major crisis event.

The theoretical perspectives included in this study provide a framework for analyzing the response of the Roman Catholic Church to the events that transpired following the tsunami of 2004 and lead to the following research question: How does the theological issue of God's role or purpose in a crisis affect the communication following a disaster? To answer this question, we identify the following sub-questions:

1. How did the Catholic Church respond rhetorically to the tsunami crisis?
2. How did the theological issue of God's role affect the ability of the Church to raise funds to help the victims of the disaster?

The study begins with an explanation of our theoretical perspective. We then explain the methodological procedures used in the study. An evaluation of the Pope and Vatican spokespeople follows. The study ends with a series of conclusions and implications related to the case.

Theoretical Framework

The writings of Kenneth Burke pertaining to identification (1950), action versus motion (1954), and terministic pyramids (1966); as well as Eisenberg's (1984) concept of ambiguity as rhetorical strategy, provide the theoretical underpinnings for the present study. In the case of a natural disaster, as individuals attempt to make sense of what happened following the event, differences in opinion emerge. The dialectic reflected in the range of interpretations about the disaster established the composition of the discussion. Identification is a way for religious leaders to gain agreement with their particular viewpoints. The rhetorical dimensions of identification reflect both action (voluntary) and motion (involuntary action). The recognition of how terministic pyramids help to sort how particular words reflect realms or order of thought adds insight into the process of explaining how leaders cast their rhetoric in a way that increases audience receptivity and identification. Furthermore, as religious leaders provide explanations for the

cause of a disaster to their constituencies, the use of ambiguity as a rhetorical strategy serves to enhance agreement among people who have different views about the origin of a crisis.

Identification

As leaders attempt to explain the cause of a natural disaster to their constituencies, they often rely on identification as a way to secure agreement with their particular viewpoint. For religious groups, as leaders attempt to establish identification through the expression of a common belief or story, they often draw upon their belief in, or association with, a divine being. Burke (1950) explains: "Identification ranges from the politician who, addressing an audience of farmers, says, 'I was a farm boy myself,' through the mysteries of social status, to the mystic's devout identification with the source of all being (p. xiv). The result of this identification is a rapport between the leader and the audience based upon a common religious orientation.

As identification between leader and audience is achieved on one level, the reality that not all people share a common religious perspective cannot be denied. Burke (1950) continues:

In being identified with B, A is "substantially one with a person other than himself [or herself]. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus, he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another. (p. 21).

The ambiguity inherent in identification is evident. Burke (1950) explains: "Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity (p. 22). Thus, the use of rhetoric as a persuasive means to achieve identification is essential as "the use of language [functions] as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols (p. 43).

The challenge for the leaders attempting to establish consubstantiation with people holding dialectic views about the cause of a disaster or crisis is complex due to the competing nature of the extremes, as Burke (1950) suggests, "they are enigmas of a *revealing* sort . . . insofar as they sum up, or stand for, a complexity of personal, sexual, social, or universal motives (p. 176). Therefore, in order to reconcile the dialectical tension between positions, the leaders must place them into what would be considered an ultimate order or relationship. Burke continues:

The "ultimate order would place these competing voices themselves in a *hierarchy*, or *sequence*, or *evaluative series*, so that, in some way, we

went by a fixed and reasoned progression from one of these to another, the members of the entire group being arranged *developmentally* with relation to one another.(p. 187)

In short, to persuade someone to accept a particular point of view, leaders must speak in a way that enables listeners to identify with them. In the case of the tsunami, the conflicting views about the cause of the disaster prompted a rhetorical response from religious leaders who sought the identification of the public with an ultimate perspective reflecting what the leaders believed to be of greatest importance.

Action versus Motion

When clarifying what constitutes a rhetorical response, Burke's (1954, pp. 135-137) discussion of action versus motion is relevant. When a situation calls for a rhetorical response, action is needed. This action may take various forms, but it is conscious, voluntary, and purposeful. Entities choose to act rhetorically. Alternately, motion is viewed as being outside the realm of personal control, independent, and involuntary. When something outside the control of humans is in motion, nothing can be done to stop the movement. In this study, some argued that God chose to send the tsunami. For others, the tsunami was perceived as an event caused by nature, not a purposeful act of God or humans.

While action and motion are distinguishable, the difference in this case seems immaterial about whether the event was actually a natural disaster or purposeful action by God. Our perspective is based upon the belief that how the public characterized the tsunami was rhetorical either way as meaning was assigned by observers. If the tsunami were a natural occurrence that happened involuntarily, those making this argument shared a common rhetorical perspective excluding God as the cause. If the tsunami was characterized as a purposeful act of God, this constituted a "mystery for the observer (Burke, 1950, p. 115) due to the ambiguity of how God chose who would live and who would die. As such, this "hierarchy of privilege (p. 122) became the rhetorical means by which those who identified with the viewpoint establishing God as the cause of the disaster could argue that a "mystifying condition (p. 123) enabled God to selectively save some and destroy others.

Understanding the complexity of why action or motion occurs requires observers to operate in the "mode of transcendence. In other words, in the context of symbols representing things, when some action or motion occurs, people assign meaning to the event and that meaning becomes part of how they come to understand the motivation for why that event occurred:

“When we use symbols for things, such symbols are not merely reflections of the things symbolized, or signs for them; they are to a degree a *transcending* of the things symbolized (Burke, 1950, p. 192). Due to the nature of the event, the explanation may “transcend reason if it is associated with God or a higher power. Burke concludes: “It may also make claims to be ‘religious,’ since it presumably represents man’s relationship to an ultimate ground of motives not available for empirical inspection (p. 203).

Terministic Pyramids

Burke (1966) in his discussion of the relationship between words and things, suggested the utility of what he termed *terministic pyramids*, “each of which contains words for a certain realm, or order (p. 373). The first pyramid represents the natural order and is characterized by motion and position. In the case of the tsunami, words in the natural order would provide the scientific explanation of what caused the disaster. The verbal order represents the second pyramid, with words reflecting, “a high degree of aptitude at symbol-using (p. 374). The knowledge a person possesses would reflect a level of rationality and cognitive complexity. Through words, leaders can connect with the presupposed knowledge of their audiences and establish consubstantiation with them. The third pyramid reflects the sociopolitical order which identifies relationships and roles within a social system. The ordering that takes place reflects the established hierarchy and provides an opportunity for the reordering of the relationships within this realm.

The fourth pyramid is the supernatural order and words within this realm reflect the supernatural. The first three pyramids reflect the order of the world (motion, rationality, hierarchy) and provide the words needed to describe the supernatural order. In the supernatural order, mystery exists regarding the origins of creation. As such, humans use words from the worldly orders to explain the supernatural order. For example, if something is in “the hands of God, motion is in play and we must accept that we have no control over the outcome. When a leader responds to a crisis by saying, “mankind realizes his vulnerability (see below), we rely on our rationality to remember that no one is immortal and even Jesus, as man, was crucified and died. As we consider the sociopolitical hierarchy, a reference such as “Mother of the Church would suggest an ordering of importance based upon a mystery we may not fully understand.

The usefulness of these terministic pyramids may be best realized as we consider the presupposed information that individuals may believe about the supernatural. As Burke (1966) suggested: “Words being in the realm of

the worldly, it follows by the very nature of the case that any words designed to describe a realm by definition transcendent must be inadequate to their real or supposed subject matter (p. 374). Because one cannot be certain about the mystery of the supernatural, words may be inadequate and ambiguity may be necessary to enable the audiences to make their own connections and achieve transcendence.

Ambiguity as Rhetorical Strategy

Burke (1969) explains that, “insofar as men cannot themselves create the universe, ambiguities and inconsistencies are inherent in human understanding and interaction (p. xviii). Thus, purging one’s rhetoric of all ambiguity is impossible. For Burke, the suitable objective is “not terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise (p. xviii). In this manner, strategic ambiguity is natural and acceptable occurrence in human interaction that is worthy of analysis. Eisenberg (1984) explicates this strategic use of ambiguity when discussing communication competence within an organizational culture. He suggested that ambiguity may be effective in promoting a unified diversity, facilitating organizational change, amplifying existing source attributions, and preserving privileged positions. For the leaders of an organization, Eisenberg (1984) suggested:

The ambiguous statement of core values allows [people] to maintain individual interpretations while at the same time believing that they are in agreement. It is a political necessity for leaders to engage in strategic ambiguity so that different constituent groups may apply different interpretations to the symbol. (p. 231)

In the situation following the tsunami, the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church was challenged to establish a hierarchy or core value associated with responding to the victims with charity and benevolence. The competing dialectic regarding God’s role in the disaster served as potentially distracting rhetorical challenge to the establishment of the core value. In this situation, ambiguity is a rhetorical strategy with some utility for the leaders because “it permits participants to express their thoughts and feelings and simultaneously to deny specific interpretations which may be especially face-threatening (p. 236). By allowing different groups to interpret symbols, messages, or events differently, strategic ambiguity enables the larger organization to remain united.

The use of ambiguity as a rhetorical strategy can also contribute to the maintenance of power by those in positions of authority. Miller, Joseph, and Apker (2000) discussed this concept in the workplace. They suggest that

“strategically ambiguous discourse may be used to privilege those in power by examining how organizational members’ responses reified the firm’s existing power structure and perpetuated a system of control (p. 197). In the case of a religious community, when addressing dialectic views about the cause of a disaster, in order to retain authority within the group, the leaders need to establish a position that encompasses the disparate views. In doing so, they solidify their control over the power structure within the group and retain their ability to speak for the group to the public.

In crisis situations, Sellnow and Ulmer (2004) explain that strategic ambiguity typically focuses on three consistent questions. At the outset of this essay, we established the consistent need of crisis victims to make sense of their experience. Such victims often turn to leaders, including religious officials, to help them understand why a crisis event has entered their lives. Sellnow and Ulmer (2004) in their discussion of ambiguity in organizational crises identified three consistent questions that arise: questions of evidence, questions of intent, and questions of locus. Questions of evidence involve the details or facts of the crisis. Depending upon the amount and quality of the evidence, varying interpretations may result. Questions of intent point to the motive of an organization *prior* to the crisis. The intent is often cast in ambiguity to enable the organization to explain its actions. Questions of locus are used to identify the cause and assign blame. Often rhetorical strategies are used by organizations to “minimize the intensity of a crisis as well as their responsibility for it (p. 259). While focused specifically on organizations, these questions are useful when critically analyzing the rhetoric issued by the Pope and his spokespersons, to gain a clearer picture how the theological issue of God’s role or purpose in a crisis affects the communication following a disaster.

Competing Claims as Context of the Vatican’s Rhetoric

As the Vatican sought to solidify support for survivors of the tsunami, it had to do so within a context of debate and uncertainty. The essence of this debate focused on whether the tsunami was a natural disaster or an act of retribution from God.

The devastation caused by this tsunami prompted speculation as to God’s role in the crisis (Coffin, 2005; Kelley, 2005; Kettle, 2004; Lantos, 2005; Alphonso & Thomas, 2005). Many people asked why God would allow such a disaster to hit his followers (Balkin, 2005; Bates, 2005; Briggs, 2005; Humphreys, 2005; Johnston, 2005; Neighbour, 2005; Woods, 2005). Some non-Christians viewed the tsunami as a proof that God does not exist (Fraser, 2005; Patterson, 2005). Some Christian and Muslim groups cast the

tsunami as a divine wrath or retribution for the sins of the Other (Briggs, 2005; Joshi, 2005; Neighbour, 2005; Pearson 2005), while most saw it as only a natural occurrence.

God's Role in the Tsunami

The world's newspapers carried questions about God's role in the tsunami. Columnist Martin Kettle (2004) asked, "How can religious people explain something like this? He conceded that earthquakes and a belief in the judgment of God were hard to reconcile, and queried:

What God sanctions an earthquake? What God protects against it? What kind of order is it that decrees that a person who went to sleep by the edge of the ocean on Christmas night should wake up the next morning engulfed by the waves, struggling for life?(p. 16)

Others echoed this perspective. Lantos (2005) wrote: "A reasonable question is: 'If God exists, and if as the Bible teaches, He is (1) all-powerful, (2) all-knowing and (3), all-good, why does God permit disasters of such epic proportions as this Tsunami and the 9/11 terrorist attacks that took 3,000 lives?' (n.p.).

Coffin (2005) suggested that the Tsunami was not directed by God because no group was shown preference among the victims: "The quake made no attempt to differentiate between the religions of those whom it made its victims (n.p.). So, how can one explain God's role in the disaster? Gray (2005) proposed that the debate filling the press and the Internet was a test of the people who believed that the God who answers their prayers could not be seen as responsible for slaughtering hundreds of thousands of people: "how [could] a loving God . . . deal such a cruel blow? (n.p.).

Tsunami as Retribution

Among the first reports of those who thought the tsunami was an act of God's retribution was the reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Bible. Citing the beliefs expressed by a Christian minister, Briggs (2005) reported: "Some of the places most affected by the Tsunami attracted pleasure-seekers from all over the world (p. 3). Briggs further quoted arguments from a Christian minister providing support for the belief that the tsunami was an intentional act of God:

It has to be noted that the wave arrived on the Lord's Day, the day God set apart to be observed the world over as a holy resting from all employments and recreations that are lawful on other days. Do not worldliness, materialism, hedonism, uncleanness, and pleasure-seeking characterize our own generation to a great extent and does not this solemn visitation in providence remind us that He remains the same God still? (qtd. at p. 3)

While the Christian minister voiced his own convictions, his perspective represented the belief of many silent religious extremists. Even those with more balanced views about the cause of the tsunami found it difficult to explain God's role in the disaster.

Other reports of the event expressed a similar belief that the tsunami was retribution from God, including one that warned those in Morocco that, "the disaster was a warning . . . to take measures against sex tourism (Neighbour, 2005, n.p.). Another report in News24, a South African online news source, suggested that God signed the tsunami. The newspaper quoted Mohamed Faizeen as saying that a look at the picture taken of the Sri Lanka's west coast near the town of Kalutara as [the water] was receding, clearly spelled out the name of Allah in Arabic. The newspaper also quoted another Muslim leader, Mohammed Fawmey, as saying that he too believed the tsunami was sent by God (Pearson, 2005).

Finally, the *Hindu Business Line*, in an article entitled, "A Retribution for Warnings Ignored? suggested that, "A nation that stoically took the suicides of over 8,500 farmers now stands jolted by about the same number of deaths caused by a similar absence of concern for the common man [sic] (Joshi, 2005, n.p.). As reported, the Indian Government failed to make an equitable distribution of the agricultural subsidy, and had been warned against the injustice to the farmers. The newspaper recalled that at the wake of the 1934 Bihar earthquake, Mahatma Gandhi maintained that it was a retribution for the sin of untouchability. The paper maintained that the government had ignored several warnings that had brought about the suicide of many Indian farmers. So, it was justified to say the tsunami was God's retribution for those ignored warnings (Joshi, 2005).

Tsunami as Natural Occurrence

Another side of the discussion on God's role in the tsunami supported the belief that it was a natural occurrence. Although this aspect of the discussion did not take up headline position in many newspaper reports, it formed a base for the discussion about the role of God in the tsunami. Other than providing the scientific information describing the geological occurrence, few newspapers specifically spelled out that the tsunami was a natural disaster (Balkin, 2005; Bates, 2005; Gray, 2005; MacCormark, 2004). Even in these, the focus of the discussion was on effect of this natural disaster on the public in terms of building unity to help the victims. One columnist wrote: "even for the normally politicized Jawaharlal Nehru University, political differences have been buried for the moment as students and teachers are attempting to raise funds (Samanta, 2005, n.p.).

In the face of the dialectic regarding the extremes of belief about God's role in causing the tsunami, religious groups found themselves in a situation calling for a rhetorical strategy to build support for the victims without disregarding the basis for beliefs held by these different groups within their religious communities. The religious leaders needed to establish identification with their goal to raise support for the victims while allowing different opinions about whether the tsunami was an action of God or the motion of geological forces occurring without control. How the leaders rhetorically chose to address this dialectic had the potential to affect the level of support they could muster to provide aid to the victims. Within this context, the present study explores the public communication of the leader of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II, and Vatican leaders, following the disaster.

Method

To analyze the crisis of faith expressed in the communications following the tsunami disaster, we employed a critical analysis to investigate how the theological issue of God's role or purpose in a crisis affected the public communication of religious leaders. Over 100 national and international newspaper articles drawn from *Pro Quest*, *Lexis Nexis*, and *Google* search engines were reviewed to provide a descriptive account of different perspectives regarding God's role in the disaster.

Data

We selected the public communication of Pope John Paul II following the disaster as the specific data for this study. As the leader of the worldwide Roman Catholic Church, the Pope is designated for Catholic Christians as God's representative on Earth. Therefore, how the Pope rhetorically characterizes God's role in the tsunami disaster would be especially insightful. The texts used for analysis represent the official public communications from the Vatican following the tsunami disaster. These were limited to the official statements of the Pope taken from the Vatican News Service, press releases featuring prominent spokespersons within Vatican published by the Catholic News Service, and official comments published in *Catholic World News*, an official news source from the Vatican. In order to get authentic Vatican statements, the authors searched the Vatican Website for the official translation of these public communications that were originally in either Italian or Latin. The texts were drawn from the time of the disaster on the December 26, 2004, through January 31, 2005, when the story was most urgent.

Procedure

We used the process of critical discourse analysis to study the texts delivered by Pope John Paul II or presented in his name by senior Vatican spokespeople following the tsunami of 2004. As the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II was in a position to identify the principle interests of the church through his communication about the crisis. Fairclough (1995) suggested that texts constitute versions of reality, “in ways which depend on the social positions and interests and objectives of those who produce them (p. 104).

To examine the reality depicted in texts, Fairclough (1995) included four degrees of textual presence or absence as a way to identify the interests and objectives of those crafting the messages: foregrounded information, backgrounded information, presupposed information, and absent information. Both foregrounded information and backgrounded information are explicitly stated in an article. Fairclough (1995b) used the term, “global text structure to describe foregrounded information (p. 119). This information includes the main themes, topics, or ideas that are emphasized. While foregrounded information is prominent, backgrounded information is provided to fill in the needed information for a more complete picture of reality. For example, backgrounded information would follow the main theme or focus, be placed later in an article, or be embedded in subordinate clauses within sentences. In the case of presuppositions, the interpretation relies on elements that are constructed in other texts. For example, references in a press release calling on the Virgin Mary to “help your people and protect them from danger (Pope joins Europe’s mourning, 2005, n.p.), would be considered as presupposed information drawn from Biblical references to Mary, as the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. The fourth degree of presence is absence. When something is unsaid, it is absent in the text. Fairclough (1995) argued that, “the unsaid of a text (p. 6) identifies implicit assumptions about what might prove to be the most insightful viewpoint for the purpose of comparative analyses. In the case of the present study, if the word “Muslims is absent in the Pope’s texts, the critic could speculate why this group was not specifically identified.

In the present study, we studied the texts using Fairclough’s model to identify what information was foregrounded, backgrounded, presupposed, and absent. This enabled us to determine how the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church framed their response to the tsunami in official Vatican communication. Following the description of their rhetorical strategy, we interpret the findings using Burke’s theoretical framework and the literature

on strategic ambiguity, and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy along with providing conclusions and directions for future study.

Results

Foregrounded Information

The desired outcome or purpose of the texts we analyzed called for the giving of aid and support for the survivors in the affected regions following the crisis. The Pope and those who spoke for him were explicit in making this the focus of their messages to the world and expressed what they hoped would be the desired response from those hearing their words. First, the Pope called for material aid and acts of relief. The following terms represent these desired positive responses: “aid, “acts to bring relief, “concrete responses, and “generous support (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.); “programs to rehabilitate (Vatican bids generosity, 2004, n.p.); “donations and “relief efforts (Pope applauds Asian relief, 2004, n.p.); “material assistance (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.); “aid to victims (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.); and “assistance for survivors (Vatican mass, 2005, n.p.). The immediacy of providing money and aid to help the relief efforts made this appeal attractive to those hearing the call for assistance.

A second form of support involved encouraging solidarity and cooperation among members of the Church, as well as other individuals and groups. Examples of these terms calling for people to work together to help the victims included: “solidarity (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.); “support the efforts of the local churches (Ireland, 2005, n.p.); provide “expressions of genuine, active solidarity, (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.); “encourage followers of different religions to cooperate on their efforts (Pope encourages joint effort, 2005, n.p.); and prayers, such as, “May this catastrophe lead . . . to a future of greater generosity, cooperation and unity in the service of the common good (John Paul II, 2005, January 22, n.p.).

The commitment to a higher order was the third purpose in the messages issued by the Pope. Included among these more universal goals were the following: “renew determined commitment to build peace (Ireland, 2005, n.p.); bring about “a radical and dramatic change of perspective among people ‘too often preoccupied with making war’ (Vatican paper raps, 2004, n.p.); “defeat the temptation toward selfishness (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.); “promote human dignity (Pope lists 4, 2005, n.p.); “reduce materialism and selfishness (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.); and have faith that “the lessons of the tragedy could also help to form the members of the younger generation (Vatican leads church mobilization, 2005, n.p.).

The foregrounded responses of the Pope were clearly focused on getting his message across to members of the Roman Catholic Church. However, he also meant for his words to be heard by other religious groups, mentioned only as “different (Pope encourages joint efforts, 2005, n.p.) and “too often preoccupied with making war (Vatican paper raps, 2004, n.p.). His intended action was explicitly identified as the giving of material aid, the showing of solidarity and cooperation, and the fulfillment of higher order values such as peace and human dignity.

Backgrounded Information

In all of the official communication, the Pope and Vatican spokespeople used general terms that described the crisis event, its location, those affected, and its effects. These terms reflected the necessary information to provide a more complete picture of the reality of the situation. The following terms illustrate how the Pope and his official spokespeople focused the attention on the crisis event of December 24, 2004: “tsunami, “tidal waves, and “earthquake (Papal prayers, 204, n.p.); “wake (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.); “quake (Ireland, 2005, n.p.); “natural disaster (John Paul II, 2005, January 24, n.p.); “natural forces (Vatican mass, 2005, n.p.); and “terrible seaquake (Sodano, 2005, n.p.). Except for the word “tsunami, which is of Japanese origin, the terms describing the event mostly were familiar to the public.

All of the texts provided information about where the crisis occurred. Commonly, the authors identified the general areas of Asia, Southeast Asia, or South Asia. The specific countries of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, the Maldives, and Somalia often were named. The Indian Ocean and “that region (John Paul II, 2005, January 22, n.p.) also were identified as locations for the crisis.

The terminology used to identify those affected by the tsunamis reflected a similar tendency toward the general. Those affected were: “victims, “people, and “populations (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.); “refugees (Vatican bids generosity, 2004, n.p.); “survivors (Vatican schedules memorial mass, 2005, n.p.); “loved one (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.); “the world’s children (Pope prays for all, 2005, n.p.); “the dead (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.); “families (Pope joins, 2005, n.p.); “the grieving, “the homeless, and “the peoples struck (John Paul II, 2005, January 22, n.p.); and “the souls of those who died (Vatican mass, 2005, n.p.).

The effects of the crisis took the form of positive and negative terms and phrases. When describing the response of people around the world, positive descriptions emerged: “a unanimous chorus of fraternal solidarity

(Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.); “rapid international and humanitarian mobilization and “the great work of solidarity (Ireland, 2005, n.p.); “prayerful sympathy (Papal prayers, 2004, n.p.); “a \$4 million aid package (Vatican bids generosity, 2004, n.p.); “the international community rushing help to the survivors (Pope applauds Asian, 2004, n.p.); “emergency aid (Vatican paper raps, 2004, n.p.); “condolences (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.); “three minutes of silence in memory of those who died (Pope joins, 2005, n.p.); “globalization (Vatican mass, 2005, n.p.); “efforts to provide relief and “remarkable outpouring of sympathy throughout the world (Pope encourages joint efforts, 2005, n.p.); and “young people discover[ing] the face of God in Christ (John Paul II, 2005, January 6, n.p.). The negative effects of the crisis were captured by such descriptors as: “destruction, “tremendous tragedy, and “devastating calamity (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.); “suffering (Vatican paper raps, 2004, n.p.); “thousands of deaths (Papal prayers, 2004, n.p.); “devastation (Pope applauds Asian, 2004, n.p.); and “the most difficult and painful trials (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.).

Through the inclusion of backgrounded information generally describing the event, where it occurred, those affected, and the effects of the crisis, the audiences of these messages gained a more complete picture of the reality as it presented itself following the crisis. General terms were used to describe these aspects of the situation, keeping the desired outcome of seeking aid and support for those affected in the foreground of people’s minds.

Presupposed Information

The Pope and those who spoke for him assumed the receivers of the messages would draw upon information previously acquired from other sources to make sense of the rhetoric explaining the disaster and what action should be taken to help those affected by the crisis. By including references to Christian beliefs, universal principles, and terms often associated with divine intervention, the leaders of the Church enabled the listeners to make their own connections between the rhetoric and their individual perceptions regarding the disaster.

Throughout the texts, references to information that would make sense to Christians and those familiar with Christian practices emerged. The timing of the tsunami corresponded with Christmas and there were numerous references to “the Christmas holiday (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.); “at this Christmas time (Ireland, 2005, n.p.); “Christmas festivities (Papal prayers, 2004, n.p.); “Epiphany (Pope prays, 2005, n.p.); and the “Christmas season (John Paul II, 2005, January 5, n.p.). The connection with

Christmas was used on several occasions by Pope John Paul II (2005, January 5) to identify a time when God intervened on behalf of humanity: “We contemplate the great mystery of the birth of Jesus, in whom God definitely enters history and offers salvation (n.p.); and “the Church recalls the message of hope made visible in Bethlehem with the birth of Christ and assurance that God never leaves man alone in his suffering (Pope lists 4, 2005, n.p.). The Christian belief that the dead will be raised up to be with God in “our heavenly home presupposes that the victims of the tsunami will enjoy a similar outcome (Pope joins, 2005, n.p.).

Christians were often referred to specifically in the texts: “all believers, “Christians and “the faithful. In establishing this common tie with Christianity, references could be made to individuals and groups who previously had been tested by God in biblical times. Cardinal Renato Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice, suggested in this situation: “Perhaps God wants to test our capacity . . . (Vatican leads church, 2004, n.p.). Archbishop Josef Cordes, President of the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum, agreed: “If faith does not shed light on their circumstances, what will? (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.).

In addition to the Christian references, the texts included universal appeals that relied on non-Christian audiences to make their own sense of the rhetoric. Whenever Christians were mentioned, non-Christians were included as, “and men [sic] of good will (Pope applauds, 2004, n.p.). In a press release, the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore*, pointed to the universality of the destruction by referencing its magnitude: “The fact that the devastation swept across different societies, cultures, and nations should help to reinforce the universal perspective (Vatican paper raps, 2004, n.p.). The perspective referred to in this case is the suffering endured by those impacted by the magnitude of the disaster. Church leaders made references to the universality of suffering by issuing such comments as: “No one can feel a stranger to those who suffer and “mankind realizes his [sic] vulnerability (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.).

The universal urges to question why something as devastating as a tsunami would be allowed to occur, often is reflected by the Pope and Church leaders. Cardinal Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, speaking for the Pope explained, “The natural response is ‘to look to the heavens seeking response to the many questions that arise during these times of confusion (Vatican mass, 2005, n.p.). Cardinal Renato Martino also characterized the times as “full of difficulties and contradictions (Pope lists 4, 2005, n.p.). The Pope himself suggested a similarity between the disaster and the

mystery of Jesus' suffering and resurrection when urging that the "Christian community to be led to a deepened trust in God's mysterious providence and ever closer union . . . in the mystery of his suffering and resurrection (John Paul II, 2005, January 22, n.p.). The relationship between suffering and resurrection for Christians is cast as a framework for viewing the suffering experienced by the victims of the tsunami and their resurrection to eternal life.

The terminology used in the texts also provides reference to what might be considered as divine intervention. In biblical texts, God's power is often reflected in verb choices with physical characteristics, such as: "powerful tsunamis which struck Indonesia (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.) and "the peoples struck by this immense natural disaster (John Paul II, 2005, January 22, n.p.). When the plagues were sent by God in Egypt, they moved across the face of the earth striking down the firstborn son in every household, much as how Church leaders suggested the tsunami "swept across different societies (Vatican paper raps, 2004, n.p.) without discriminating among its victims. By referring to the tsunami as a "devastating cataclysm (Vatican schedules memorial mass, 2005, n.p.), the Pope presupposed a familiarity with biblical history when the earth opened up to swallow some evil force or destroy unbelievers, such as when Moses came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments only to find his followers worshipping false idols. When he threw the stone tablets against the idol in the form of a golden calf, the earth opened and swallowed up the unbelievers. A similar reference, "came like a bolt from the blue (Sodano, 2005, n.p.), suggests the presence of a higher power sitting in judgment and sending a lightning bolt as a warning or message to observers about the power of God or "vengeful deities (Burke, 1954, p. 161).

Through references to Christian beliefs and believers, universal messages, and attributes to divine intervention, the Pope and Church leaders relied on connections that the audiences could make with previously acquired information to make sense of the disaster. In each instance, through this presupposed information, the audiences could transcend from the *here and now* to the *eternal*. These references made it possible for Pope John Paul II to have his rhetoric understood by members of the Roman Catholic Church, non-Catholic Christians, and non-Christians.

Absent Information

The absence of specificity in the texts is noteworthy regarding the cause of the event, the victims, the location, and some of the effects. While the crisis was named, details of how the disaster occurred are missing. No

geological terms or information were forthcoming from the Vatican regarding the origin or science of the disaster. Specific victims were also nameless. The groups were identified as: “populations and “people (John Paul II, 2005, January 5, n.p.); “communities (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.); “Asians (Pope joins, 2005, n.p.); “world and “children (Pope prays for all, 2005, n.p.); “families (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.); and “souls (Vatican mass, 2005, n.p.). The details of the “homeless (Pope to offer mass, 2004, n.p.), the nature of the “suffering (Pope joins, 2005, n.p.), and the condition of the “dead (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.) were missing. No specific ethnic or non-Christian religious groups were named. Similarly, no mention of previous conflict, terrorism, or war was found in the Vatican’s rhetoric. The location of the disaster remained at the national or regional levels, with specific communities and cities affected absent from the texts issued from the Pope and those who spoke for him from the Vatican.

Equally absent was the suggestion that God had a reason or the right to purposefully cause the tsunami. No specific reference was made to God as being vengeful or even powerful. In this manner, the Vatican embraced the mystery of the event and avoided the potentially controversial process of explaining why such an event would occur.

When examining the effects of the disaster and the desired actions sought by the Pope in response to the crisis, there is some divergence in what is present and absent in the texts. The negative effects of the disaster are mentioned, but absent are the details of what the destruction actually entailed. Facts are missing from the official Vatican communication about the disaster. This absence of specifics about the negative effects contrasts with the more specific strategies of efficacy reflected in the positive responses to the disaster and the strategies needed to respond further to the crisis.

In summary, the Pope and other Church leaders were explicit in the foregrounded information about what the world’s response should be to the tsunami disaster. With sufficient backgrounded information to provide a clearer picture of the reality as it presented itself following the crisis, the audiences were able to use their previous knowledge through references to Christian teachings, universal principles, and examples of divine intervention to make sense of what had transpired. The absence of more specific information about the details of the disaster and those affected enabled Vatican rhetoric to focus on how the people of the world should respond to the crisis.

Discussion

The Vatican's crisis rhetoric offered a clear message of identification, but failed to address directly the mystery of the crisis event. We discuss the relevance of this strategy from the perspective of Burke's terministic pyramids and apply these observations to the sensemaking process of crisis communication.

Terministic Pyramids and Identification

The foregrounded information was based on language from the socio-political pyramid (Burke, 1966). The Vatican established "relief efforts (Vatican bids generosity, 2004, n.p.) and "aid to victims (Vatican prelate reflects, 2005, n.p.) as the primary objective. To achieve the world-wide response needed for such a severe disaster, the Vatican called for "solidarity (Ireland, 2005, n.p.) and aspired to see "a future of greater generosity, cooperation and unity in the service of the common good (Pope encourages joint efforts, 2005, n.p.). This foregrounded message made no mention of conflicts among groups or differences among ideologies. Instead, the primary objective was to unify in an effort to bring aid and comfort to those who were suffering. This approach was appropriate in that the Vatican offered a call to action that ignored differences and provided an irrefutably altruistic goal.

The backgrounded information touched on the natural order of the situation, but failed to provide any messages regarding causation. The Vatican made clear mention of the fact that an "earthquake (Pope John Paul II prays, 2004, n.p.) had caused a "tsunami (Papal prayers, 2004, n.p.), but there was no detailed discussion of the science. Similarly, the Vatican identified the region and every country whose shores had been ravaged by the tsunami, but no mention of the victims' religion or political preferences were identified. In this manner, the Vatican made clear the action which was needed, why it was needed, and where it was needed. The only mention of God in the backgrounded information was a reference to young people discovering the "face of God (John Paul II, 2005, January 6, n.p.) in their service to the "suffering (Pope encourages joint efforts, 2005, n.p.). By establishing the background of the crisis relief effort without mention of the political and ideological tensions in the affected areas, the Vatican was able to maintain a focus on the immediate need of providing aid to thousands of suffering people. Any mention of the political and ideological tensions described above, would likely have only served to distract the audience from the Vatican's primary goal of service.

The presupposed information addresses what Burke (1966) refers to as the verbal pyramid. The crisis event gave the Vatican an opportunity to

connect the crisis with the story of Christ's "suffering and resurrection (John Paul II, 2005, January 22, n.p.). The Vatican's message made consistent reference to the universality of "suffering (John Paul II, 2005, January 5, n.p.), claiming "no one can feel a stranger to those who suffer (Vatican leads church, 2005, n.p.). As consolation to those who lost loved ones in the tsunami, the Vatican mentioned life after death with such references as "our heavenly home (Pope joins, 2005, n.p.). Each of these references calls upon the established beliefs of Christians. These beliefs call for tolerance for suffering, a hope of a brighter future, forgiveness, and the need to offer aid to those in need. At no point in the discussion of presupposed information, however, did the Vatican seek to provide a specific reason for the suffering. This ambiguous approach is consistent with the Vatican's overall objective of fostering identification in the service to those in need.

The absent information identified in the analysis suggests a willingness and preference by the Vatican to accept and tolerate the mystery of the disaster. The Vatican viewed the tsunami in essence as, in Burke's (1966) terms, a force of motion over which there is no worldly control. In so doing, the Vatican accepts the most basic hierarchical division—God's supremacy over worldly powers. Yet, there was no speculation about God's vengeance or any other possible motives for creating or allowing this disaster to occur. Thus, the supernatural dimension of the crisis received little attention from the Vatican.

Mystery and Sensemaking

The Vatican's rhetoric did not address any specific cause or motive for the crisis. Instead, the Vatican employed a strategically ambiguous strategy that embraced the mystery of the event and allowed for multiple interpretations. We explain this observation further based on questions of evidence, intent and locus. As we noted above, these deal with, respectively, (1) the details or facts of the crisis, (2) the motive of the organization prior to the crisis, and (3) the cause of the crisis and who is to blame.

Questions of Evidence. The absence of references to the scientific information explaining the disaster resulted in ambiguity in the backgrounded information explaining exactly what happened. While the scientific description of what occurred could be found in the press (Lancaster, 2004), at no time was this information forthcoming from the Vatican. The choice not to include this information may or may not have been intentional. However, the fact that it was absent supports the argument that without specific evidence to the contrary, the ambiguity of the rhetoric enabled audiences to transcend between the reality of the here and now to the possibility that God

had a divine purpose that was played out through the events surrounding the tsunami.

Questions of Intent. God's involvement in the crisis brought into play Burke's notion of action versus motion. The dialectic tension between those who argued that God intentionally struck Southeast Asia contrasted with those who contended that the act of nature was motion. The presupposed information was key in affecting the rhetoric of the Pope and those who spoke for him due to the transcendence experienced by audiences who acknowledged the mysticism of God's previous intervention into history through the birth and resurrection of Jesus. The use of terminology associated with previous divine intervention furthered the presupposed view that God was capable of the action. However, in the absence of rhetoric suggesting God took such action, the questions behind God's role remain clouded in mystery.

Questions of Locus. While Sellnow and Ulmer (2004) used these questions to determine who was responsible or to blame for the crisis, these questions are pertinent to the issue of identification within Burke's discussion of consubstantiality. When exploring the theological issue of God's role affecting communication about a crisis, the establishment of whose God we are talking about becomes relevant. The use of references to Christian beliefs and Judeo-Christian history helps to promote identification between the Church leaders and the audience. For Christians, God is the same being. This identification enables audiences to understand the rhetoric of the Church leaders as they explain the crisis. In addition, while secondary, the use of terms that appeal to a universal perspective enables those who are different from Christians in their beliefs to become consubstantial with Christians in what their response should be to the crisis.

Accepting the mystery of the tsunami's supernatural origin proved effective in allowing the Vatican to meet its initial objective of raising money and providing aid. The Vatican's ambiguity allowed for what Eisenberg (1984) described as allowing diverse groups to maintain "individual interpretations while at the same time believing that they are in agreement (p. 231). The fact that the Vatican orchestrated a combined effort by Catholic relief agencies to raise \$650 million is evidence that this strategy was effective. Yet, there is no evidence that the Vatican's ambiguity contributed to the eventual need of the victims to have some sense of understanding and healing after the crisis. Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer (2003) explain that, as time passes and the acute phase of the crisis subsides, there is a lingering sense of loss and bitterness that must be addressed. Ulmer, Sellnow, and

Seeger (2007) contend that, for victims to feel a sense of renewal after a crisis they must adopt a prospective rather than retrospective vision of the crisis. Turner (1976) describes this prospective post-crisis view as a readjustment of one's belief system. For those who experienced the tsunami disaster directly and even for those whose vicarious experience was intense, the need for an adjusted belief system was not likely addressed in the Vatican's initial rhetoric. Thus, the tolerance of mystery displayed by the Vatican could be useful for other agencies in the initial stages of crisis recovery. As time passes, however, the crisis literature suggests that messages of greater specificity may be needed to address the healing process of victims and observers.

In the prolonged aftermath of a major crisis, Turner (1976) contends that the crisis victims must adopt a new sense of what is normal. As explained above, Burke (1954) describes this altered outlook as a "higher vision (p. 306). To fully grasp this new sense of normal or higher vision, crisis victims must undergo an extended post-crisis recovery process. Seeger et al. (2003) explain that this post crisis period typically involves messages of explanation, forgetting, remembering, and renewal. In short, crisis victims seek a better understanding of what occurred, move beyond the trauma emotionally, memorialize those who died, and embrace a transformed perception of order that gives them a renewed sense of purpose and fortitude. As the tsunami survivors continue their recovery process, their informational needs will shift from the sympathetic and ambiguous responses described here to a need for a better understanding of how to move past the event emotionally and how to enhance their warning systems for and resilience to similar crises in the future.

Conclusion

Neither the Pope nor Vatican representatives made any direct mention of the general argument that was prevalent in the world newspapers. Whether God could permit such a disaster on his people either as retribution or as natural occurrence is out of the question. Rather, in its rhetoric, the Roman Catholic Church strategically avoided being drawn into such argument or apportioning blame. Instead, the Church maintained the position that responding to the crisis was more important than determining with certainty who or what was responsible for causing it.

This position leaves the crisis communicator ample opportunity to move the stakeholders in any crisis forward for the common good. Such a position serves as a help to those affected in the crisis in their coping and healing process. The Church leaders concentrated their rhetoric on God's

love for the people affected by the disaster. The rhetoric of Vatican officials supported the presupposed belief that since God allowed Jesus to suffer in order to save the people of the world, everyone must be ready at all times to suffer for their own good. For the Catholics, the belief that God loves his people, and his love should prompt love and concern for others, is reflected in the foregrounded position that aid and support must be forthcoming from the world. The Catholic Church did not participate in the dialectic of whether or not God caused the tsunami. Instead, the Pope and those who spoke for him used their rhetoric to accomplish their objective of providing aid and support. The rhetoric reflected multiple objectives: the texts promoted identification and consubstantiation among Christians and non-Christians, relied on the mystery of action versus motion in establishing the disaster's cause enabling audiences to experience transcendence with the possibility of divine intervention, and used ambiguity as a strategy to keep the attention of the world focused on mobilizing aid and support for the victims of the disaster.

Future research in this area should continue to explore the relationship between action and motion when examining how a crisis unfolds in organizations or in larger contexts. Are there signs that a crisis unfolds in predictable ways from specific actions or does a crisis acquire motion that, once started cannot be mitigated until the crisis has run its course? The further application of Burke's conceptualization of action and motion to crisis situations may provide insight into this question. Another area for exploration involves how the cultural elements of crisis messages establishing identification must consider the perspectives of those who do not share the presupposed information necessary to make sense of the communication. Burke's discussion of consubstantiation may help to explain how the recognition of difference may be helpful in crafting messages that must take different perspectives into account. Finally, further analysis of the role of ambiguity as a rhetorical strategy in crises that may appear to have mysterious causes or conditions might illustrate how crisis communicators can more effectively help victims of a crisis to make sense of a tragedy.

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Note

The Pope issued four statements through the Vatican News Service in the month of January, 2005: "General Audience (5 January), "Angelus (6 January), "Message of John Paul II to the President of the Pontifical Coun-

cil 'Cor Unum' For Those Affected by the Tsunami in Southeast Asia (22 January), and "Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 39th World Communications Day (24 January).

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