



PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The Altar of the Scroll

The Bible 'Defines' Communication

The Bible aptly captures the basic aspects of **effective communication** (as all theories of Communication would generally discuss the concept) when it states,

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (1 Corinthians 14:8).

Aspects of Effective Communication

There are four basic **aspects** of communication highlighted in that verse, as all theoretical positions would agree:

1. **The sender** – the one who generates the communication event
2. **The receiver** – the ‘audience’ with whom the sender interacts
3. **The message** – the meaning or sense that the sender wishes to convey to the receiver
4. **The medium** – the means by which the message is being conveyed

With reference to 1 Corinthians 14:8, those basic aspects may be identified as follows:

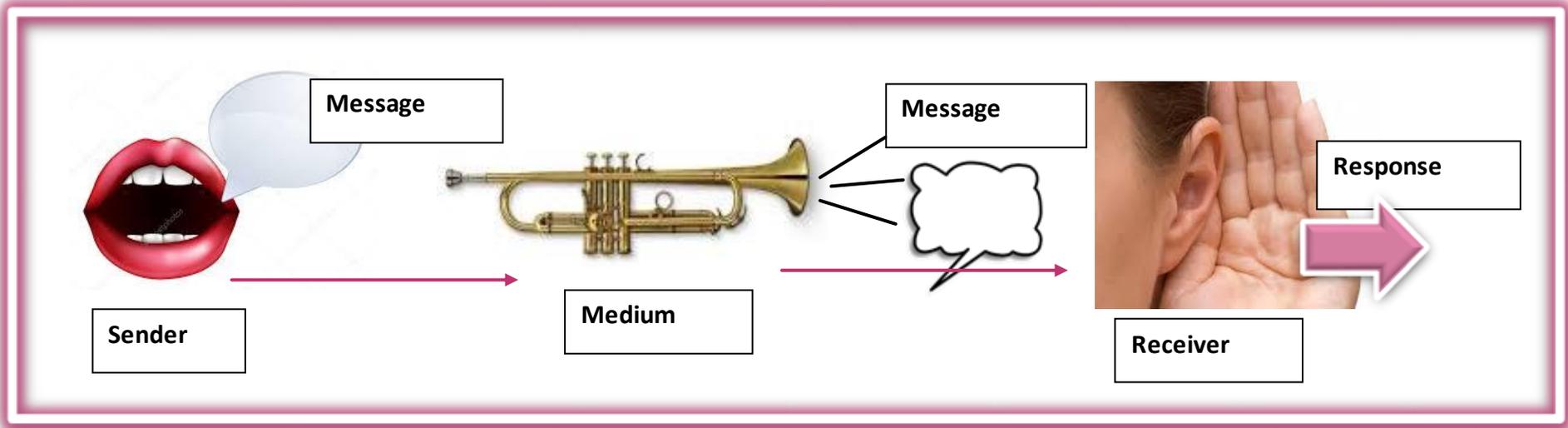
- **Sender** – the trumpeter
- **Receiver(s)** – the army
- **message** – ‘prepare for war’
- **medium** – the trumpet



Beyond the Sound

- ▶ Communication is disrupted, or becomes ineffective, when any of those basic aspects is faulty. It is not the loudness of the trumpet, the sweetness of the sounds, or the shine of the trumpet that makes the communication effective, or conveys the integral 'sense' of the sequence. If message is not *adequately* transmitted, if *action* has not been initiated as response to the message, we may be unable to properly judge that the communication had been effective, or very effective. Sadly, for many, emphasis is placed on other aspects to the detriment of the message, so the intended receiver makes little sense of the sounds or of the speech or of the written letters and words.





Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it (Habakkuk 2:2).

Not all communication is effective; not all trumpet sounds move their hearers into the action intended by the trumpeter (or move them in other ways related to the trumpet sound). Any communication event that is unable to stir applicable **action** or **reaction** may not be said to have been effective. It may have been noise, albeit elaborate and decorated noise, or a scramble of wasted words on paper. Again, the Bible comes handy in aptly highlighting the responsive/affective attribute of effective communication



TASK 1

In the following verse,

- * what action or response is supposed to follow or result from the effective communication of the vision?*
- * What means or skill is recommended to achieve that response?*
- * Does receiving a vision (maybe, spectacularly) and sharing the vision (maybe, very loudly) guarantee effective communication*

Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me

(1 Corinthians 14:11).



Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? (1 Corinthians 14:16).





Assessing Communication

Positive **action** is not all that indicates the effectiveness of a communication event.

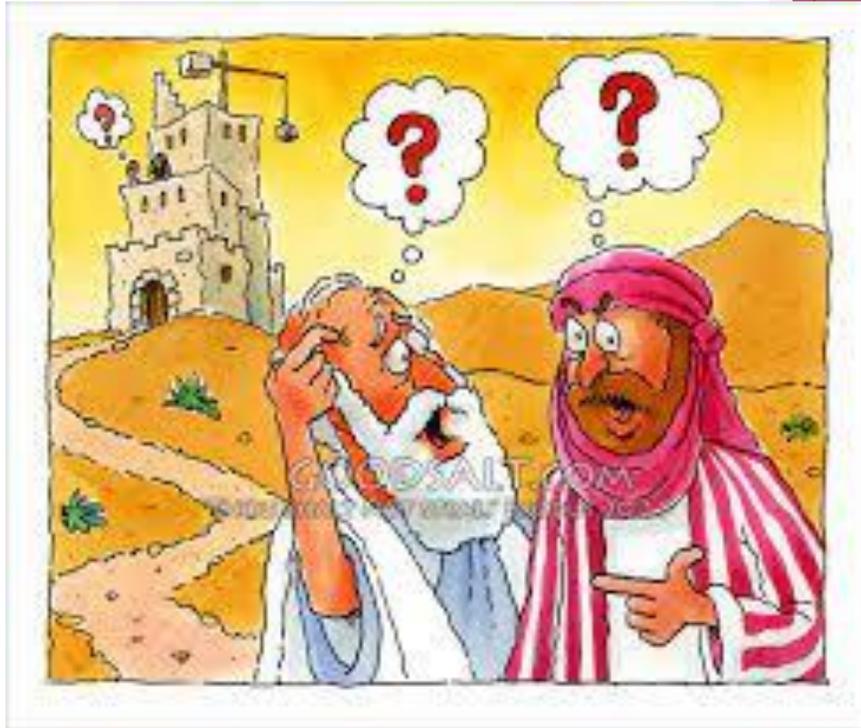
Sometimes negative **reactions** are also a powerful sign that something or someone has been touched.

Sometimes, however, the absence of *expected response* could be due to **apathy** in the subject matter rather than because the communication had not been effective.

Matthew 11: 17

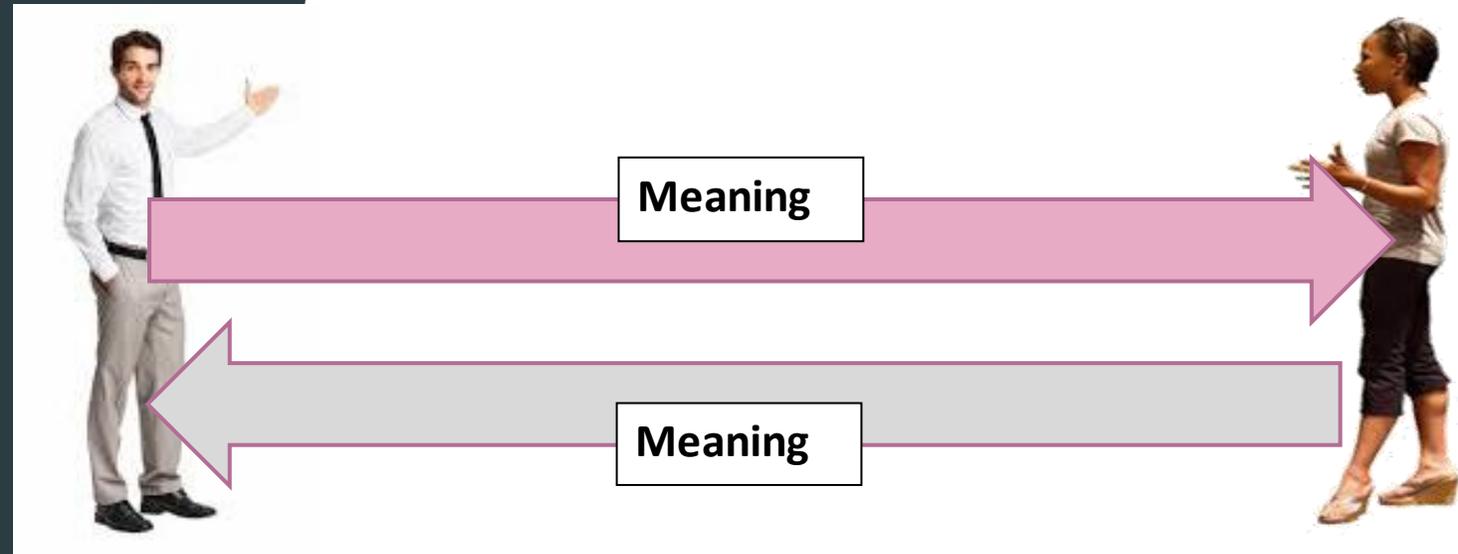
And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

The Babel Fiasco



- ▶ The story of the collapse of the Babel Tower Project teaches many lessons on communication (Genesis 11:6-8). There were speeches being made, there were senders and supposed receivers. Acts of communication were taking place. However, when the communications ceased to convey meaning; when the sentences ceased to make sense, there could no more be commensurate **action** in response to the sending codes, and the elaborate building project was stalled.

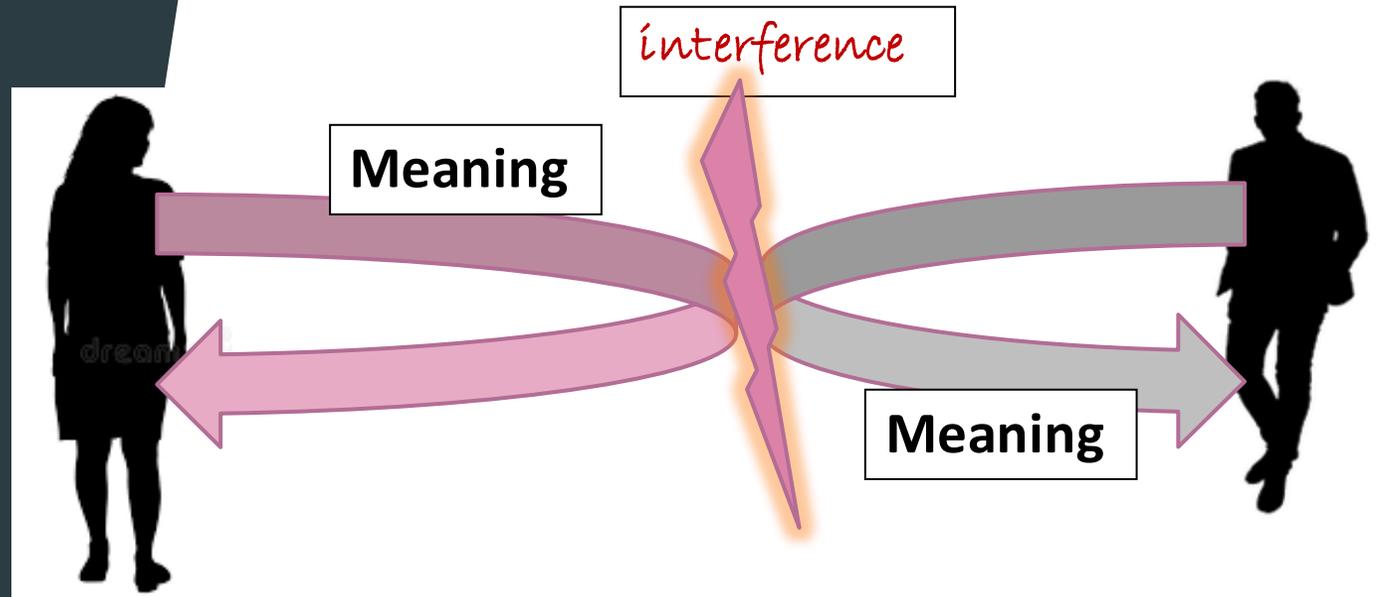
Babel



Nobody responds appropriately to communication that does not make sense to them

Babel

- ▶ Genesis 11:7
- ▶ Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.



PASSAGE	TEXT	ACTION	REACTION
Matthew 22:22	<i>When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.</i>		
Matthew 22:33	<i>And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.</i>		
Acts 19:5	<i>When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.</i>		
John 1:37	<i>And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.</i>		
Acts 5:33	<i>When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.</i>		

Fill the blanks above

Know your Audience

Any writing may be read by anyone; any speech may be heard by anyone; any painting may be seen by anyone, but every communication assumes a specific group or kind of audience. Why does the Coke advert 'speak' Igbo in Nigeria but dare not in Canada? Audience awareness.

The more aware someone is of whom they are addressing, the more specific would be their writing or speech or music or painting, and the clearer their message, and happier their audience. A message addressed to 'everybody' is a message for nobody.

The audience to which one conveys a message could be as general as 'everybody,' to being as specific as a particular age-group or gender or academic class, professional class, or even a smaller group within a larger group, etc.



Revelation 1:4-5, New Living Translation

4 This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world.

Revelation 2:1-2, Good News Translation

*"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
"This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven gold lampstands.*



Luke 1:1-4, Good News Translation

1 Dear Theophilus:

*Many people have done their best to write a report of the things that have taken place among us. 2 They wrote what we have been told by those who saw these things from the beginning and who proclaimed the message. 3 And so, **Your Excellency**, because I have carefully studied all these matters from their beginning, I thought it would be good to write an orderly account for you. 4 I do this so that you will know the full truth about everything which you have been taught.*

1 Corinthians 1:1-2

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

When you find your audience, and they find you, they can **identify** with you, which establishes a **'bonding'** between sender and receiver.

Tips on Keeping Your Primary Audience

- * Choose the most appropriate language, not too high, not too low.
- * In how you address your subject, be aware of their culture or values, so you don't lose them before they have heard you.
- * Choose graphics and other effects appropriate for that audience. For example, material for **children** would generally be in large prints, have pictures, and be colourful, with language that is very accessible: monosyllabic words, short sentences, etc. A document for a medical class would be different.
- * If you lose your reader in the first sentence or paragraph or your opening scene, you might have lost them altogether, so start with an arresting sentence, or proposition, or story or picture or voice tone or colour or sound or theme.
- * Be entertaining, in style and content. No audience wants to be bored even with a good tale. A good story poorly told is a lost story already.



Thank You

Prof Kontein Trinya

May, 2022.

Wailing Women Worldwide: Departmental Training