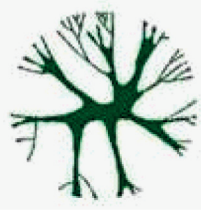


## Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture



The Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture (CSCC), the publisher of *Communication Research Trends*, is a non-profit research association of scholars interested in a values-oriented approach to communication. Sponsored by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), it links researchers around the world, particularly from Jesuit universities and social action centers. The Centre has promoted research on behalf of the Catholic Church as well as other Christian churches and welcomes collaboration with religiously based groups as well as those who share its commitment to values-based approaches.

Its projects over the past 25 years include

- communication and human values
- communication for social justice
- theology and communication
- media education

### History of the CSCC

Established in 1977, the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture emerged as the result of discussions within the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) since about 1971, concerning how the Society might best assist the Catholic Church to better understand and use what had been called, in Church documents, "the instruments of social communication." The driving force behind the CSCC's establishment was Very Rev. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, then Superior General of the Jesuits. Initially the Jesuits located the CSCC in London, England, which was felt to be the best site for relatively easy and inexpensive international transportation and communication on which the Centre would depend for its work with church-related decision-makers and communicators around the world, as well as for good library resources to use in its research. Britain was also the location of organizations and institutions with which CSCC hoped to collaborate, such as the World Association for Christian Communication, the International Institute of Communication, and the University of Leicester's Institute for Mass Communication Research. A Swiss Jesuit, Father Stefan Bamberger, SJ, who had recently served as Father Arrupe's secretary for social communication, became the Centre's first executive director. The CSCC immediately began to develop library resources and periodical exchange relations with other communication research

institutions and their publications; its initial staff of Jesuits and others drew on those trained in social science research and related disciplines. Rev. Robert White, SJ, assumed the role of research director of the Centre in 1978, after completing his doctorate in rural sociology at Cornell University, with a concentration in the application of mass communication technology to the needs of the rural poor in developing countries. The CSCC quickly began several research projects, including a study of the communication training of seminarians in three countries. It also started publishing, notably a series of ten titles in Spanish designed to promote interest in communication studies in Latin America. Publication of a simple newsletter began in 1979. The newsletter was replaced by the more formal quarterly publication, *Communication Research Trends* in 1980. *Trends* concentrated on one topic in communication studies in each issue and attempted to present an overview of research being done on that topic around the world, with special stress on its relevance for church-related communication decision-makers and practitioners. CSCC collaborated with the Gregorian University, St. Paul's University in Ottawa, the University of Dayton (Ohio, USA), and other institutions in conducting seminars and colloquia, resulting in various publications. Collaborative work formed an important part of the work of the CSCC. Ecumenical collaboration began, especially in conjunction with the World Association for Christian Communication. About the same time, the CSCC entered into an ambitious project of book publication in cooperation with the World Association for Christian Communication and Sage Publications. Eventually about twenty-five titles by leading scholars in social dimensions of communication appeared in that series, »Communication and Human Values.« These books embodied research on the social and cultural dimensions of communication studies that directly promoted the enhancement of human dignity, human rights, and social justice. Meanwhile, the Centre's offices and residence, in London's South Hampstead neighborhood, hosted many visiting international scholars and made its library available to others already doing research in the many universities and institutes in the London area.

Father Bamberger, leaving the CSCC to become provincial of the Swiss Province of the Jesuits in 1982, was followed by Rev. Jean Desautels, SJ, a French-Canadian Jesuit with long experience in East Asian religious communication work. Other senior researchers added to the Centre's permanent staff in those early years included James McDonnell, who had been a bibliographer with the British Library, and Rev. Paul Kenney, SJ, of the Jesuits' New England Province. Father Desautels left the Centre in 1984 to become secretary for communication to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Father White served as acting director until 1987, when Father Leo Murray, SJ, a Maryland Province Jesuit, became executive director. About that time, too, Father Kenney returned to the United States.

In 1989, Brother William Biernatzki, SJ, an American Jesuit who had been teaching in Korea, replaced Father White as research director and editor of *Trends*, when Fr. White moved to Rome to head the communication studies program of the Pontifical Gregorian University. Brother Biernatzki had long been involved with the CSCC, having assisted Father Bamberger in founding it during a sabbatical from Korea in 1977. In 1990, Father Kevin Kersten, SJ, took over the directorship of the Centre from Father Murray, and in the same year Rev. Jose Martinez de Toda, SJ, a Spanish Jesuit who had served in Venezuela, joined the staff to handle its many Latin-American activities.

The Centre's financial condition had gradually become increasingly insecure, and the new Superior General of the Jesuits, Very Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, asked Fr. Kersten to do an in-depth assessment of the Centre's structure and activities. As a result of that assessment, the Centre with its 9,000-volume specialized library was moved from

London to Saint Louis University, in Saint Louis, Missouri, USA, in 1993.

In 1995 Father Paul Duffy, SJ, a religious journalist who had been provincial superior of the Australian Jesuits, succeeded Fr. Kersten. Father Martinez followed Father White to teach at Rome's Gregorian University. Father Duffy returned to Australia in 1997, and Professor John Pauly, Chairman of the Department of Communication at Saint Louis University, was named acting director. *Communication Research Trends* had gradually developed into a substantial journal, with over 1,300 readers in more than 90 countries.

Other activities of the Centre were cut back, however, due chiefly to lack of adequate staff and funding. Its library was integrated into that of Saint Louis University, and surplus books later were sent to the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication, in Bangkok, Thailand. An institute patterned somewhat after CSCC and founded by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences to promote Catholic communication work in Asia.

Finally, in 2000, Saint Louis University decided to end its association with the Centre, and a search began for a new host institution. At length, various scholarly partners decided to transform the CSCC into more of a virtual research center, developing its presence on the World Wide Web and continuing to publish *Trends*. Rather than working from one physical location, those associated with the CSCC will remain at their own institutions but work cooperatively on key projects in the spirit of the CSCC's dedication to fostering research for church leaders, communication and human values, and ecumenical collaboration for social justice and communication.