

THE GOOD NEWS: MEASURING THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS WORDS IN MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Timothy J. Walker

Dr. Paul Bolls, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This study explored the relation and use of religious ideas in television news stories. A psychophysiological experiment, based on Lang's (2006) model of limited capacity processing, was conducted using pre-recorded television news stories containing religious cue words. Reactions to these words were measured using secondary task reaction times. The experiment was designed to test whether reaction times were slower in stories containing a religious cue word. Results were also paired with responses from a index of religious belief to test whether religious people processed religious cue words in stories differently than non-religious people. The analysis yielded no significant results. However, this study does help further the basis and need for more insight into the interaction between religion and media