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The University of Dayton Studies Impact of Telecommunications on Ministry of Education

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DAYTON, Ohio, June 28, 1984 -- The Center for Religious Telecommunications at the University of Dayton recently initiated a two-month, interdisciplinary study of the role of telecommunications in Catholic higher education involving faculty, administrators, and staff.

Participants identified four areas for research and discussion: educational methodologies, technologies and services, moral/ethical issues, and administrative/organizational concerns. Their discussion resulted in a set of criteria to evaluate different models integrating telecommunications into the total program of a university's educational mission. Then the group identified possible alternative models. Finally, their work resulted in a planning process applicable to a religious-based college or university. A written report of their work is being readied this summer for presentation/publication in the fall.

The purposes of the series of meetings were:

- to study the impact of telecommunications and the developing technologies on the university community and its mission to the community as educator, researcher, servant, and critic;

- to prepare the university for changes in educational methodologies which might be influenced or caused by telecommunications;

- to respond to the needs of the students, the faculty, and the administration in light of new and developing technologies;

- to investigate ways the university can respond to and broaden its service to the local population who seek continuing education by making effective use of telecommunications;

- to provide aid and service to other institutions of learning and to businesses and industries in coping with the expanding role of telecommunications in society today;

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- to serve as a model for other universities that are attempting to come to grips with telecommunications and higher education on their campuses;

- to identify a number of faculty, staff, and administrators to serve as resource persons to UD honors students who will investigate the question of telecommunications later in the school year;

- and to identify areas of further research in this area.

The study placed an emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach as well as on the systematic analysis of the topic. The 18 active participants represented a cross section within the university community. Participants were invited from the College of Arts and Sciences (Communication Arts, Philosophy, Physics, and Religious Studies Departments), and from the Schools of Business, Education, Engineering, and Law. In addition, there were representatives from the University library system, the Offices of Development, Academic Affairs, Computer Services, and the Centers for Creative Ministry and Religious Telecommunications.

Dr. Russell Primrose, dean of the School of Engineering, and Prof. Robert Mott, of the Mechanical Engineering Department, conducted the meetings using the systems design approach. This approach is a process of self-education by and for the participants.

The purpose of the Center for Religious Telecommunications at UD is to address those concerns which enhance the value and dignity of a person in a technological milieu and to assist communities of persons to utilize the new technologies. The Center explores the meaning, value, and impact of telecommunications on education, cultures, and faith communities. It is funded by the contributed services of the members of the Society of Mary (Marianists) working at the University of Dayton.

For further information about the study, the upcoming publication of the results, or about the Center for Religious Telecommunications, contact Brother Elmer C. Lange, S.M., The University of Dayton, Center for Religious Telecommunications, Dayton, OH 45469; (513) 229-2704.