

I LISTEN TO YOU EVERY DAY:
PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SELF-DISCLOSURE
IN CHRISTIAN RADIO

by

MICHAEL E. AGEE

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Abstract

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Michael E Agee, MA

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2014

Supervising Professor: Erika Pribanic-Smith

Involvement with characters is an important part of our media rich environment. Researchers have examined different forms of character involvement, most often in television. Though unique because of its focus on the relationship between a media persona and viewers and listeners, researchers have paid scant attention to the effects of parasocial interaction (PSI) and parasocial relationships (PSR) that form between radio station announcers and their listeners. This case study explores parasocial relationships between listeners and announcers at a non-commercial Christian music station, the role of personal self-disclosure by announcers on the air, and whether it can affect real life behavior as evidenced by financial support of the station. The two-part study included a thirty-question survey that collected demographic data and established a

PSI scale to measure the depth of the listener's parasocial relationship. The study also collected and coded more than 600 audio instances for informative and emotional self-disclosure from announcers. Significant findings were found between the PSI scale and the amount of time spent listening to the station, financial support for the station, the amount of self-disclosure statements by announcers, and respondents' favorite announcer.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The conversation almost always begins with “I listen to you on the radio every day.” From there, a mostly one-sided conversation ensues, as a listener delves into my life, asking how my boys are; how my wife is; how my last shoulder surgery went; and how my mom is doing in her fight against cancer. For months, they have listened to a one-sided conversation about my life, and now that they are finally meeting me, this is their opportunity to offer their side of the conversation, much like an aunt you haven’t seen for years at a family reunion.

After more than three decades as a radio broadcaster and hundreds of conversations with listeners, I’ve frequently wondered at the one-sided relationships listeners develop with the people and characters they see and hear in the media. Over an extended period of time with repeated exposures, they come to learn much about you and your public life, much like a real-life acquaintance can become a friend, as you spend time together. In the smaller, and seemingly more intimate world of community-based radio, especially non-commercial Christian radio, the opportunity to actually meet a media figure, moving from a one-sided quasi-relationship to an actual relationship, keeps alive the listener’s hope of actually meeting their media heroes.

Parasocial interaction (PSI) theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956) surmises an audience member can develop a relationship with a media figure or fictional

character through contact, observation, and interaction through mediated communication. PSI theory, originally presented as a psychological theory to explain relationships with media figures in the early days of radio and television, has been extended to mediated relationships of many types, including plays, movies, fictional literature, and animation. In a rich media environment, people may come to "know" more people parasocially than they will through direct interpersonal contact. For instance, few people have had direct contact with the President of the United States or the Speaker of the House, but most adults in America have strong opinions about the person holding that office. Most media consumers form opinions and hold attitudes and beliefs about many politicians, athletes, journalists, entertainers, and radio announcers, with whom their contact has only been through the mass media. This is certainly the case with Christian radio station listeners.

Similarly, as we parasocially experience a mediated character, such as a radio announcer, we form impressions, make judgments about their personality, and form beliefs and attitudes about them. Just as interpersonal communication results in interpersonal relationships, repeated parasocial interactions can result in parasocial relationships. As Perse and Rubin (1989) note, people use identical communication-related cognitive processes for both mediated and interpersonal contexts, and "people and media are coequal communication alternatives that satisfy similar communication needs and provide similar gratifications" (p. 59).

If PSI mirrors real-life relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Perse & Rubin, 1989), then what elements of the parasocial experience between listeners and radio announcers affect the formation of a parasocial relationship (PSR) with repeated exposures to the announcer? Does the strength of PSR affect listeners' real-life behavior, specifically their decision to provide financial support for a non-commercial station? This study explored whether the amount and type of on-air self-disclosure, or the sharing of personal information, from announcers affects the strength of PSR with listeners to non-commercial Christian radio and whether the strength of the PSR has an effect on a listener's decision to become a financial supporter.

Not much has been done in the way of research on PSI in radio, even though Horton and Wohl (1956) recognized radio as the first mass medium to exhibit the theorized phenomenon. This two-part case study focused on parasocial relationships with on-air personalities at a non-commercial Christian radio station in the Northwest United States. Typically, non-commercial Christian music stations are small organizations compared to corporate-owned commercial stations in the same market. Non-commercial Christian radio stations typically have a staff of a half dozen full-time employees and several part-time or volunteer staff members. Commercial stations in the same city may have several dozen employees, typically organized as a market cluster of five or six stations, each with a different on-air format. A non-commercial Christian station

staff usually consists of a station manager, program director, office manager, and on-air personnel.

These positions are also found in commercial stations, but there are usually several more layers of personnel, with specific job descriptions and duties for each employee classification. Most employees in non-commercial Christian stations carry multiple areas of responsibility. The program director, besides being responsible for everything on air, will also work a key air shift, morning or afternoon drive time typically. The station manager will usually be heavily involved in fundraising and public relations, as well as oversight of the station's operation and budget and may work a shift on-air as well. Besides their on-air duties, on-air staff may also be responsible for maintaining the station's website and social media sites, as well as planning and executing station contests and promotional events. Part-time contract employees may be responsible for engineering and technical maintenance of transmission and computer systems. Other part-time contract employees may record particular air shifts. Volunteers can be found in many areas of the station depending on their skill sets but usually assist with office and clerical duties and public promotional events.

Commercial radio stations sell airtime to advertisers to produce income for station operations and provide income to station owners. In a typical commercial station market cluster, more than half of their employees will be focused on advertising sales and production. The rates for those advertising sales are

based on their competitive position in their market, as measured by the number and demographic characteristics of the station's listeners. The more listeners a commercial station has, the more they are able to charge for advertising, and ultimately a greater return of investment to station owners.

Non-commercial radio stations, both Christian and public, are prohibited by law from selling commercials by the Federal Communication Commission, the federal bureau that oversees telecommunications in the United States. Public radio and television stations receive grant money from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is funded by the U.S. government, as well as grants from many state governments. Non-commercial Christian radio stations in America are funded primarily through donations from their listeners. Thus, developing a "relationship" with listeners and encouraging them to become financial supporters is vital to their survival and success. This study looked at the strength of listeners' parasocial relationships with announcers and whether that affected real-life behavior, as indicated by whether they were a financial supporter of the radio station on the study survey. The results of the study could provide information to operators of non-commercial Christian radio stations that is relevant to their everyday operation. Does it matter what their announcers say on the air? Does a stronger relationship with announcers lead to support for their station? Concrete information on content that might strengthen the bond between the station and its listeners should be valuable to station operators.

One part of the study was an online survey of listeners to a Christian radio station in the Northwest about their listening habits, the extent of their parasocial relationships with their favorite on-air personalities, demographic information, and whether they have ever supported the station. The second part of the study involved collecting on-air comments of announcers at the same station. The comments were coded for self-disclosure, distinguishing between content that was informative in nature (e.g. news, traffic, and weather), and content of a personal and intimate nature (e.g. personal stories, family information, and personal reflections). PSI theory and the interpersonal process of intimacy suggests listeners will have a stronger PSI relationship with those on-air personalities who disclose more personal information during the course of their air shifts, mirroring the disclosure found in real life intimate relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Reis & Patrick, 1996; Reis & Shaver, 1988). The premise of this case study is the more announcers talk about themselves on-air (self-disclosure), in effect sharing information that would cultivate intimacy in face-to-face relationships, audience members will express a stronger parasocial relationship with the announcers. This parasocial relationship should also be evidenced in real-life activities, as demonstrated by financial support of the station.

Why Christian Radio

Historically, radio stations espousing religious beliefs date from the beginnings of radio in North America. Reginald Fessenden is credited with

broadcasting the first audio ever heard over a continuous wave from Cobb Island, in the Potomac River, downstream from Washington, D.C. while working for the United States Weather Bureau on a project to broadcast weather information without wires. On Christmas Eve, 1900, Fessenden read portions of the Christmas story from the Book of Luke and played the Christmas carol “O Holy Night” on his violin (Belrose, 2006).

The first commercial radio station KDKA (Pittsburg, PA), was licensed on Nov. 20, 1920. In early 1923, just some two and a half years later, one of the first Christian radio stations, WOAN, signed on in Lawrenceburg, TN (Lochte, 2006). James Vaughan, president of the Vaughan Conservatory of Music and Bible Institute, Vaughan Quartets, and Vaughan Phonograph Records, purveyors of Southern Gospel quartet music, owned WOAN. By the end of 1923, ten churches and Christian organizations were operating radio stations. In 1928, the Federal Radio Commission listed sixty Christian radio licenses (Lochte, 2006). The number of radio stations has, of course, increased since those early days. According to the Federal Communication Commission media database, there were more than 15,000 licensed radio stations in the United States at the end of 2013.

The Nielsen Ratings Company is the leading global provider of information and insight into what consumers watch and buy (Nielsen, 2014). On September 30, 2013, they acquired Arbitron Inc., an international media and marketing

research firm that collects and sells audience data from every county in the United States to radio stations. Radio stations use this information to make informed decisions about marketing, on-air formats, and management decisions about their stations. According to Nielsen (2014), 92% of Americans 12+ listened to the radio weekly. Nielsen lists more than 5100 licensed stations in America that broadcast Christian programming. Those stations broadcast a variety of formats, from Spanish teaching programs to Christian hip-hop music. With more than a third of the broadcast signals in the United States, logic might indicate a fair share of Americans listen to Christian radio. Just the opposite is true.

Nielsen (2014) reports just 6% of U.S. listeners 12+ listen to Christian radio each week, half of which (3.15%) listen to Contemporary Christian music stations.

More than 19 million people listen to Contemporary Christian music (CCM) weekly. Demographically, 63% are female, with 58.5% between the ages of 25 and 54. CCM listeners, on average, listen five and one quarter hours per week. Fifty-seven percent of CCM listeners have household incomes over \$50,000. Almost 69% have some college, with 32% graduating from college. More than three quarters of CCM listeners (77%) are white (Nielsen, 2014).

The largest provider of commercial Christian programming in the United States is Salem Communications. Salem has focused their stations in 35 of the top fifty population markets in the U.S., where they have a total of 89 radio stations. In all but three of those markets, they own more than one station. Most

of their stations broadcast Christian Talk, which is a collection of conservative talk shows that feature guests and audience participation, teaching/preaching shows that feature prepackaged sermons from nationally known preachers, and business programming. A dozen of their stations program CCM music and are branded as *Fish* stations, all in top 25 markets in the U.S. Salem also distributes CCM through a satellite network branded as *Today's Christian Music* and maintains several websites dedicated to their stations, syndicated speakers, and format brands. They also maintain a publishing division for publication and distribution of magazines and books supporting their format brands and syndicated speakers. In 2013, Salem reported total revenue of \$62.7 million on expenses of \$53 million (Salem, 2014).

The Educational Media Foundation (EMF) owns the largest group of non-commercial CCM stations in the U.S. EMF began in 1982 with a single station in Santa Rosa, California, and has grown to more than 670 non-commercial stations in 47 states broadcasting with two networks, one airing the KLOVE format, and the other airing the Air1 format. KLOVE is an adult contemporary format that focuses on women 35-64. Air1 is a contemporary hit format that focuses on a younger population of listeners aged 18-39. According to EMF's latest audited statement, in 2012 they received almost \$131 million in donations, with \$82 million in expenses (Educational Media Foundation, 2013).

In contrast, most non-commercial Christian music stations are independent organizations in local markets. Local, non-commercial Christian radio stations compete with national networks Like Salem and EMF, as well as in-market commercial stations, satellite music services like XM Sirius, and online services like Pandora and Spotify. Non-commercial Christian stations, which serve a small portion of what is already a small portion of the radio listening universe, have to provide content that captures the attention of potential listeners, inviting them to listen longer, and to become financial supporters in order to survive.

According to analysis from Radio Research Consortium (2014), using raw data from Nielsen to deliver audience ratings to non-commercial radio stations, overall radio usage has declined more than 13% in the past four years in the United States. In contrast during the same period, non-commercial Christian radio's audience, as measured by Nielsen's personal people meter (PPM), has grown by almost 20%.

Clearly, something is happening in successful non-commercial Christian radio stations. Audiences don't grow over a four-year period while overall radio listening was declining by accident. This case study, looking through the lens of PSI and interpersonal relationship theories, studied an award-winning and successful non-commercial Christian radio station to determine if on-air self-disclosure by their announcers played a role in building a parasocial relationship

with their audience, and whether the strength of the relationship affected real-life audience behavior evidenced by financial support for the station. The study may also offer other Christian radio stations insights on how to engage their listeners on the air, deepening their parasocial “relationships” with announcers and the station, and ultimately lead to support for their station.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Christian Radio

Many studies have looked at radio listening in general, spanning a variety of topics from Clark's exploration of the listening habits of children (1940), Lazarsfeld and Kendell's research on radio listening in America (1975), to Patel and Ekpere's study on the characteristics and radio listening behaviors and their impact on farmer's knowledge of agricultural innovations (1978). Recent studies have focused on talk radio and their influence on American politics (Rubin & Step, 2000; Bennett, 2009; Lee, 2007), the presentation of self on call-in radio shows (O'Sullivan, 2005), the role of personal values in predicting radio listening (Christie, 2007), and the impact on radio listening with the advent of new technologies and the 1998 changes in ownership rules by the FCC (Mooney, 2010).

The literature on Christian radio in particular, what there is, frequently focuses on reviews of historical preachers (Bolan, 1989; Abbott, 1994; Pohlman, 2011), studies of the use of distribution technologies to facilitate delivery of content (Gerstner, 2007), or proposals and reviews of the missionary effectiveness of Christian radio broadcasts in Third World countries (Warren, 1990; McSkimming, 1995; Sackey, 1990).

Robert Woods (1999) focused on uses and gratifications (U&G) theory in his survey of listeners to four CCM stations, adding several categories to the typical inventory of U&G theory. Rubin (1983) established a uses and gratifications inventory in his research on television viewing. Those uses include relaxation, companionship, habit, entertainment, information, escape, and social interaction. Woods (1999) adapted the inventory to include new categories for Christian radio listeners: spiritual guidance/development, fellowship, and witness/evangelism. His study found listeners chose to listen to CCM as a lifestyle choice, something Woods called para-community, to vicariously fellowship with larger Christian community. A second factor was what Woods called lifestyle management, using CCM radio to manage time and emotional and spiritual moods.

Uses and gratifications was also the focus of a study (Bentley, 2010) that looked at nine CCM radio stations and their websites. Bentley's study found entertainment consistent with respondents' faith and values, lifestyle management, and information seeking were the primary reasons for visiting a CCM station's website. And another review of the CCM music landscape (Lindenbaum, 1999), including record companies that produce the music, radio stations that broadcast it, and churches that use it in the presentation of their services, actually looked at the physical landscape. Lindenbaum's study was for a PhD in geology at University of California, Berkley and looked at the

intersection of the places of CCM, including the temporary spaces of CCM festivals, the permanent spaces of a California megachurch coffee shop, and ephemeral spaces of broadcast signals. Lindenbaum found CCM fans live in proportionately poor, rural, Republican-voting, and evangelical Christian media markets, and enjoy CCM at music festivals, in church, and on CCM radio stations. The study also found “CCM reinforces religious faith; positions abortion and sex as moral and personal; emphasizes faith-based NGOs as the solution to social ills such as world poverty; obfuscates racism; and portrays electoral politics as ineffective” (p. 2).

An obvious gap exists in the literature on exploring how CCM radio stations build relationships with members of the listening audience. Uses and gratification research has shown association and lifestyle management (Woods, 1999; Bentley, 2010) to be primary uses of CCM radio stations by listeners. This case study explores one aspect of the how those association needs may be met in encouraging parasocial relationships with announcers.

Parasocial Interaction

The concept of parasocial interaction was first presented by Horton and Wohl (1956), where they made “observations on intimacy at a distance.” Horton and Wohl, professors of sociology who taught at Yale, Harvard, and the University of Chicago, discussed the interaction between users of mass media and “media figures,” such as presenters, actors, and celebrities, and the “illusion

of face-to-face relationships” found in mass media (p. 215). They claimed the user’s responses to the program was “analogous to those in a primary group,” and those interactions produced what they called a “parasocial relationship,” in which the user responds in a manner found in typical social relationships. The authors focused primarily on television because of its visual elements.

Horton and Wohl believed the visual cues provided by a performer or celebrity mirrored those found in normal social interaction. They surmised those cues facilitated the formation of a group that “observes and participates in the show by turns,” especially when the performer faced the spectator, acting as if they were talking “personally and privately” with the audience (p. 215). Of course, the crucial difference in parasocial and normal social relations was the lack of reciprocity from the user to the performer. Horton and Wohl also speculated the relationship between spectator and performer created a relationship framework that allowed a certain degree of fantasy, which seemed to deepen the perceived relationship, albeit in a one-sided way.

Structure of Parasocial Interactions

The Persona

Horton and Wohl believed the relationship started with the “persona,” which they described as the “typical and indigenous figure of the social scene” portrayed in the media. This persona, whether it is a real person, e.g. a newscaster or talk show host, or an actor portraying a fictional character, comes

to be known by their audience. But to say he is known is to use language the authors called “pale and feeble” in describing the relationship the mass audience has with the persona (p. 216). The authors say the persona becomes “known” in much the same way we come to know our chosen friends: through direct observation and interpretation of their various cues, i.e. their appearance, gestures, conversations, and the way they act in various situations. In fact, the mediated experience of movies, television, and radio, driven by economic forces, are specifically designed to encourage the audience to make just those evaluations, inviting them to become involved in the relationship rather than just being a passive observer. The persona is designed to offer a “continuing relationship, something to be counted on, planned for and integrated into the routines of daily life” (p. 216). The parasocial relationship is built on what Horton and Wohl called the “illusion of intimacy.”

The Bond of Intimacy

The parasocial relationship is built on the media’s illusion of designed intimacy. Horton and Wohl called it an illusion because of the one-sided nature of the relationship and because reciprocity is only suggested, not actual. This intimacy is carefully crafted through the choice of camera angles including shots from the audience, gestures, portrayal of face-to-face gatherings, informal language, etc. The persona is also surrounded by surrogates for the audience in the form of a supporting cast, sidekicks, co-hosts, and bandleaders. This

supporting cast is treated as intimates by the persona, presenting the illusion the audience participant is there by extension (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

You can look at personality-based television shows of the present day, and those techniques are still used. David Letterman and Jimmy Fallon include recurring characters and elements in their shows, like Top Ten lists and bandleaders with whom they interact. Personality-based radio morning shows include a cast of characters with specific roles, all designed as surrogates for the listening audience, asking questions and interacting with the “star persona.” And the highest rated shows usually include direct audience interaction during their broadcasts, all designed to extend the parasocial relationship to audience participants. Depending on the level of craft, you could speculate great writers employ many of the same elements when crafting an engrossing novel, script, or story, inviting the reader to become engrossed in the story and develop a “relationship” with the primary characters.

The Role of the Audience

The audience, of course, is at the center of parasocial interactions and relationships. The audience makes the decision to participate by watching and listening on a repeated basis, assumes the roles and expectations the persona presents to participate in the parasocial exchange in the role provided by the persona. Horton and Wohl (1956) also say the successful show will “coach” the audience in many ways to help the at-home viewer assume those roles. Most

prevalent, more than fifty years later, is a studio audience, which provides the persona opportunity for face-to-face interaction and clues for the audience watching at home. In sitcom shows on television, where the personas are fictional characters, this “coaching” is facilitated with laugh tracks and other cues from the characters and producers to invoke the audience role.

Horton and Wohl (1956) also speculated acceptance by the audience of the portrayed roles depended on the role-patterns and self-conceptions held by audience members and how those coincide with what is being presented (p. 220). In other words, we seek out programs and personae that resonate with our own personal schema. The further the presentation departs from those personal schema, the more likely the role would be rejected, the only real option a participant has in a parasocial interaction.

The authors concluded their paper stating their observations were intended to be no more than suggestions for further study by social psychologists to “learn in detail how these parasocial interactions are integrated into the matrix of usual social activity” (p. 225).

Conceptualizing the Parasocial Interaction Experience

Horton and Wohl (1956) saw parasocial interaction as “one-sided, nondialectical, controlled by the performer and not susceptible of mutual development” (p. 215). In contrast, the media experience is designed to capture and draw the attention of the viewer or listener and to be “immediate, personal

and reciprocal” (Horton & Strauss, 1957, p. 580). Parasocial encounters with media personas are designed to provide the illusion of social engagement for the user. The user who has repeated parasocial experiences with the persona may come to experience a parasocial relationship in a similar way they would experience a real social interaction (Chory-Assad & Yanen, 2005). Horton and colleagues didn’t look at the various facets of the parasocial experience in every detail. A look at recent research on parasocial interaction, though, can provide some clues in defining the parasocial experience.

Rubin and McHugh (1987) explored the development of parasocial relationships between a viewer and a television character, applying principles of uncertainty reduction theory. Their results suggested a parasocial relationship would develop in much the same way as a face-to face relationship. First, social and task attraction brings individuals together. Interaction ensues and sense of relational importance grows, albeit for a parasocial relationship, in a single direction from viewer to character. Perse and Rubin (1989) also applied uncertainty reduction to examination of the parasocial phenomenon when they looked at the parasocial relationships college students formed while watching daytime soap operas. Their results pointed to reducing uncertainty and the ability to accurately predict the attitudes and feelings of their favorite soap opera persona.

Psychological research suggests that in any social encounter, individuals engage in mindreading to ascertain the mental states of other people present in the encounter (Malle, 2005; Malle & Hodges, 2005). In contrast to more reflective ways of ascertaining another's perspective, mindreading seems to occur automatically and renders intuitive feelings about the others rather than elaborate beliefs (Malle, 2005; Sally, 2000; Chartrand, Maddux, & Lakin, 2005). If mindreading is automatic in any social encounter, including mediated encounters like a phone call, a television program, or a radio show, it seems plausible that users in a parasocial encounter would automatically engage in mindreading when they encounter media personas. As such, a parasocial experience can be considered an immediate and natural social response for a user (Horton & Strauss, 1957). Just as it occurs in real life social encounters, repeated and habitual exposures over time could be said to lead to "relationships."

Specifically, just like any other social encounter, a parasocial encounter should include an immediate sense of mutual awareness and attention (Goffman, 1983). Mutual awareness and attention builds on automatic mindreading activity (Malle & Hodges, 2005). "Persons must sense they are perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others and that they are perceived in this sensing of being perceived" (Goffman, 1963, p. 17). In other words,

mutual awareness and attention implies an individual is not only aware of another person, but the other person is aware of them as well.

In a parasocial encounter, users can acquire the impression the persona is aware of them and pays attention to them, especially if the persona uses natural cues that normally initiate social interaction (Goffman, 1963). Television personas look directly into the camera to establish eye contact and act like they are talking to a single person. Beginning radio announcers are instructed to use the psychological cue of speaking to one person, a friend, when they are talking on the radio. Both are attempts to mirror normal social behavior and foster “normal” relationships with their audience.

Finally, a parasocial interaction can have a socially normative effect that will strengthen the parasocial relationship, something important to the success of a media personality. In general, interaction in society involves expectations of how others will react (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993). These expectations often follow context-based rules and norms (Bennett & Bennett, 1970). Partners in the interaction agree, often silently, on the social norms that will guide their interaction and adjust their behavior accordingly (Goffman, 1983).

These interactions usually carry an implied commitment to social norms, and a violation of those norms may seem impolite or embarrassing (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). Effective parasocial interactions that lead to parasocial relationships will conform to the user’s societal norms, since they alone control

the option of whether to continue the contact with the persona. Thus, to be effective, personas can carefully craft their communication efforts in line with the norms of their intended audiences. Indeed, a media personality can be a perfect friend: dependable, discreet, and uncritical (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

Media Uses and Parasocial Interaction (PSI) Theory

Originally a psychological topic, there was little interest in PSI until the advent of the uses and gratifications approach to mass media research in the early 1970's (Blumler & Katz, 1974; McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, 1972; Rosengren & Windahl, 1972). In their study of a British television audience, McQuail et al. (1972) found many of the phenomenon described by Horton and Wohl when they looked at viewer responses to an early soap opera. The authors identified two essential functions of PSI that fit into their uses and gratifications model: companionship and personal identity. As Horton and Wohl had predicted, McQuail et al. (1972) found viewers identified with the soap opera characters, who reminded them of people they knew. Respondents also said the situations and behavior they saw helped them understand their own lives.

The next major development in PSI research took place in North America with Mark Levy's (1979) study of older adults and television news. He conducted several focus groups looking at, among other things, viewers' PSI with newscasters. Levy used his data to construct a 42-item psychometric scale to measure PSI with newscasters. He then used the scale to sample an audience

looking at PSI factors, which found viewers compared their own ideas with those of newscasters and that when newscasters joke around “it makes the program easier to watch.” In Levy’s study, education was strongly negatively correlated with PSI, but other variables were not significant when education was taken into account.

Many studies have operationalized PSI by using variations on a scale devised by Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985), referred to by researchers now as the PSI scale (Appendix B). The original 29-item instruments used a number of Levy’s (1979) items and other items based on previous research. Following its first use on an adult sample, nine redundant items were removed which resulted in an acceptable internal reliability scale (.93).

Later studies used variations of the 20-item PSI scale to measure PSI with comedians (Auter, 1992), TV shopping hosts (Grant, Guthrie, & Ball-Rokeach, 1991), and favorite television personalities of any type (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Rubin and Perse (1987), in a study of PSI with soap opera characters, further reduced their scale to ten items and found the shorter version had high internal reliability and high correlation with the 20-item scale. The 10-item scale has been used in a number of studies, including a study by Conway and Rubin (1991) that found PSI was associated with most viewing uses and was a better predictor of television use than many other behavior measures. The authors

argued that PSI might be more important as a viewing motive than the program itself.

Studies that used the PSI scale have found the most important elements were perceived realism and attraction to the media persona (A. M. Rubin et al., 1985; A. M. Rubin & Perse, 1987, R. B. Rubin & McHugh, 1987). This suggests that users look at media figures in much the same way as people they encounter in their everyday lives, something Horton and Wohl surmised almost fifty years ago.

Recently, Auter and Palmgreen (2000) have developed a multidimensional measure of PSI they called the Audience-Persona Interaction (API) Scale (Appendix B). The scale was developed to attempt to factor questions that addressed the development of PSI over time (forming a PSI relationship), to tap “all possible sub-dimensions of the construct” (p. 81). This second scale was developed using a qualitative response approach to framing the questions about favorite television characters by asking subjects to respond in essay fashion to four questions about their favorite situation comedy. Those questions asked what they found attractive in the characters, how they responded to the characters, and similarities they saw between their friends, themselves, and the characters. Forty-seven initial items were assembled from responses in the open-ended questionnaire and tested in several cross-sectional survey situations. The questionnaire was reduced to 22 that had acceptable internal

reliability (.84) and tested with a different respondent group. Data they collected from a high school sample was one of the first to demonstrate group identification as a characteristic of PSI.

Both of these scales were designed for measuring parasocial relationships with television characters. For this study, they were adapted to fit parasocial relationships in radio and combined to provide the fullest measure of the PSI experience for radio listeners (Appendices A & B).

Psychological Interaction and Parasocial Interaction

While much of the research on PSI has been tied to media uses and gratifications, it was originally proposed as a psychological theory that tried to tie relationships with persona or even fictional characters to normal social behavior. Giles (2002) in his review of PSI believes there are several reasons to pursue PSI as a psychological construct that explains our relationships with media persona.

It seems likely that, once we have made a personal judgment about a media figure or attributed person characteristics to that figure (e.g., an anthropomorphized cartoon animal), then we will subsequently respond to that figure “as if” it occupies our physical space, thereby becoming incorporated into our social network. If this is the case, then we might expect to identify similar psychological processes underpinning the course of parasocial relationships to those found in face-to-face relationships (Giles, 2002).

Recent research in PSI theory has looked at the impact of computer-mediated relationships (McKenna & Bargh, 1999; Parks & Floyd, 1996). Papachrissi and A. M. Rubin (2000) found support for their hypothesis when they looked at the possibility that individuals who had difficulties with face-to-face interaction might use computer-mediated communication as an alternative. Lather and Moyer-Guse (2011) used the television writers' strike in 2007-2008 to gauge the temporary parasocial breakup users experienced when their favorite characters were no longer being aired. Their questionnaire revealed that participants with stronger PSI relationships experienced greater distress and adjusted their television viewing time to increase non-media activities.

Sun (2010) also studied the parasocial relationship fans have with their favorite sports teams and athletes. Theran, Newberg, and Gleason (2010) recently studied aspects of adolescent girls' parasocial relationships with media personae and found 94% of their sample reported engaging in some form of parasocial interactions to some degree. The authors suggested that the results are characteristic of girls with preoccupied attachment but may also be part of normal development.

Tian and Hoffner (2010) look at an interesting aspect of PSI, in that positive feelings were not necessary for parasocial relations to develop. The authors' study asked viewers of the ABC drama *Lost* to measure their responses to liked, neutral, and disliked characters on the show. They looked at

identification, a primary psychological study factor, perceived similarity, and parasocial interaction with the characters. And finally, Jin and Park (2009) looked at the parasocial interaction with ourselves, as portrayed by an avatar on the console game Wii. Their study looked at self-presence and parasocial interaction with a personal graphical representation. Their study showed self-presence actually mediated the effects of self-construal when interacting with your avatar, in effect, a parasocial relationship with yourself through computer mediated communication.

Though originally included as a mass medium by Horton and Wohl (1956), where listeners exhibited parasocial interaction and relationships with media personas, parasocial relationships with radio persona has been little studied by researchers. Rubin (2000) looked at public affairs call-in radio and its influence on the political process in America, finding the social presence exhibited in listener participation radio programs did influence listeners' political attitudes and behaviors. Hofstetter and Gianos (1997) also looked at talk radio, finding political talk radio served a mix of needs, including information seeking, helping listeners make sense of their world, or finding companionship through parasocial interaction. Rubin (2000) looked at political talk radio and found PSI and entertainment motivation predicted intentional and frequent listening to a favorite radio announcer.

These studies in talk radio show that intentional and frequent listening to a particular host or announcer can lead to parasocial relationships with those announcers, affecting behavior and attitudes among listeners. This study seeks to expand this body of knowledge by looking at music-oriented radio, in particular non-commercial Christian music stations.

Uncertainty Reduction and Parasocial Interaction

Berger and Calabrese (1975) formulated uncertainty reduction theory (URT), positing a connection between cognition and affect. Individuals seek information to reduce uncertainty in social situations. As uncertainty is reduced, liking increases. According to Berger and Calabrese, relationships develop as individuals increase their ability to predict others' behaviors.

Berger (1979) proposed that people would use three strategies to reduce uncertainty: (a) passive strategies, like observing the behavior of the target in a variety of situations; (b) active strategies, such as asking others about the target; and (c) interactive strategies, such as deception detection, interrogation, and self-disclosure. The strategies seem to coincide with the deepening of trust in a relationship, from observation to self-disclosure. As disclosure increases and becomes more intimate in detail, uncertainty reduces and relationships are strengthened.

Interpersonal communication, an interactive strategy, is a prime method of uncertainty reduction in social relationships. Mediated relationships, however,

are characterized by non-interactive strategies, such as watching a television show or listening to a radio show and talking about the personalities with others. These strategies have been linked to the development of parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin & Perse, 1987).

There are several conceptual links between parasocial interactions and URT. First is the basic assumption that people communicate to reduce uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Second, participation in a mediated, parasocial episode exemplifies a passive strategy in viewing the target's behavior in a variety of situations. And finally, the length of time people have been acquainted allows them to accumulate more and better information about an individual through mutual self-disclosure, learning more about their feelings and likely response in a variety of situations. Clatterbuck (1979) found a positive relationship between the amount of communication, information, and length of time spent together in building relationships.

Research has shown this to be true of mediated or parasocial relationships. Lemish (1985) found that prolonged exposure to a soap opera led to an understanding of the characters' personalities and motivation. Parasocial interaction is seen as an antecedent to involvement (Rosengren & Windahl, 1972), just as interpersonal interaction is seen as an antecedent to relationship involvement (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

In addition to parasocial interaction with "real" people, consumers also experience parasocial interaction and form parasocial relationships through repeated exposure to fictional characters (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000; Perse & Rubin, 1989; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985). Parasocial interaction is described as a normal outcome of television viewing (Perse & Rubin, 1989), with repeated and habitual exposure, which results in the formation of parasocial relationships. Not all interpersonal interactions result in the development of relationships. When an exchange of information leads to the expectation of a continued exchange or self-disclosure of information, then an interpersonal relationship can emerge (Miller & Steinberg, 1970).

Parasocial relationships seem to mirror social interaction. Increased interaction (listening levels) and perceived self-disclosure (persona sharing personal information) may lead to a reduction of uncertainty and deeper perceived intimacy and liking of the mediated persona. Thus:

H1: Respondents will express a deeper parasocial relationship with radio personalities who self-disclose intimate details about themselves on the air compared to radio personalities who do not self-disclose.

Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy

The interpersonal process model of intimacy suggests relationships are a dynamic process where individuals disclose personal information, thoughts, and feelings to others. In return, the receiver responds in a fashion the sender

interprets as understanding, validating, and caring (Reis & Patrick, 1996; Reis & Shaver, 1988). Reis and Shaver (1988) largely focused on the process of a single exchange of personal information but acknowledged that intimacy would deepen with repeated interactions over time. In other words, the more personal information you share over time, the deeper or more intimate a relationship becomes.

The model emphasizes two key components of intimacy: self-disclosure and partner responsiveness (Reis & Patrick, 1996; Reis & Shaver, 1988). They also suggest that particular types of self-disclosure are more closely linked to intimacy than others, so disclosures about your core self affect a deeper intimacy. Some researchers have distinguished between factual and emotional disclosure when examining the impact of self-disclosure in intimate relationships (Morton, 1978; Reis & Shaver, 1988).

Factual self-disclosures deal with personal facts and information, whereas emotional self-disclosures reveal private feelings, opinions, and judgments. Although both disclosures reveal private information, those involving emotional disclosures have been shown to generate greater intimacy than just informational disclosures (Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Reis & Patrick, 1996).

Partner responsiveness is the other key to the interpersonal model of intimacy. Partners are responsive when they address the communication,

needs, wishes, or actions of the other in a way that shows they understood the communication and validate the sender (Reis & Shaver, 1988).

Both URT and the interpersonal process model of intimacy suggest intimacy is developed through the exchange of personal information, especially through the disclosure of emotional personal information. Parasocial relationships develop with audience members when media figures mirror interpersonal communication techniques in their on-air communication. Thus:

H2: Respondents will express a deeper parasocial relationship with radio personalities who self-disclose emotional details about themselves on the air compared with radio personalities who self-disclose primarily informative details about themselves.

In a parasocial interaction, synchronous response to the initial communication is usually impossible, though there are exceptions. In the world of non-commercial Christian radio, an on-air fund drive assumes a response from a listener. In fact, an on-air fund drive assumes a certain level of parasocial relationship in advance, hoping at least some of their listeners will respond for the event to succeed. An appeal is made, sharing information about the station by an on-air personality, in effect making a demand on the listener's parasocial relationship with the personality, seeking a response, i.e. making a phone call of financial support. The effect of responding to a fund drive appeal, in effect, moves the relationship from a parasocial interaction to a real-life interaction, in

that two people are communicating synchronously when the listener responds to the fund drive appeal. Thus, in order for non-commercial Christian radio stations to be successful, at least from a fundraising viewpoint, they must build intimate parasocial relationships with their audiences. Thus:

RQ1: To what extent does the measured parasocial relationship of respondents who have provided financial support to the station differ from those who have not provided financial support for the station?

Finally, non-commercial Christian radio stations in America actively target women between 35 and 54 years of age. As a result, almost two thirds (63%) of Christian music radio listeners are women (Nielsen, 2014). More than two thirds of them (67%) have attended college. Does gender, age, or education affect parasocial interaction and the development of parasocial relationships? And does the amount of time a listener spend listening to the station, i.e. repeated exposure, deepen parasocial relationship with the announcers they listen to?

Thus:

RQ2: To what extent does the measured parasocial relationship of respondents differ based on the following:

2a: respondent gender?

2b: respondent age?

2c: respondent educational level?

2d: how much a respondent listens?

Chapter 3

Methodology

The Station

This case study looked at the impact of self-disclosure on parasocial relationships by sampling the audience of a non-commercial Christian radio station. For this study, I chose a non-commercial Christian radio station in Boise, Idaho. Five other stations, with complimentary credentials, were approached to participate in the study, but for a variety of reasons including leadership changes, format changes, illness, and equipment malfunctions, the logistics of carrying out the research in a timely manner with the other stations proved insurmountable.

This station was open to participating in the study, partly because of the researcher's relationship to the station as its founder and first general manager, serving twenty years in that capacity before leaving radio management to join the academic world as a communication professor. Initially, I had decided not to approach them because of my past association with the station. I didn't want my intimate knowledge of the station and my relationship with the staff to influence the project. Through a colleague, who was aware of my subject travails, the current station manager contacted me and volunteered to participate. My knowledge of the station's inner workings and format guidelines and twenty-year experience with tens of thousands of listeners proved helpful in building and executing the study. To complete the study, I worked with the station manager to

gather the audio I needed and send the survey to the affinity list. The staff wasn't informed on the details of the study and who was conducting it until after the audio was collected to protect against any changes in their normal routines.

The station was founded in 1990, broadcasting a Christian music format from the beginning. Originally staffed by high school students, the station has grown to seven full-time employees and a dozen part-time employees, with an annual operating budget in excess of \$800,000. Total listener donations in 2013 were \$856,462 from 2886 donors. The station's programming focus is local events and activities in the Boise metro. Boise is market 100 according to the latest Nielsen survey, which places it at the bottom of the medium market category of radio markets 50-100.

At the time the survey was distributed (March, 2014), the station had a weekly audience of 45,900 with a time spent listening average of five and half hours a week. The station's market ranking in their target demographics, women 35-44 and 45-54, was tied for second and first respectively. Programming is locally hosted and provides listeners with local information, activities, and promotions. The station is a three-time winner of the Station of the Year award from the Gospel Music Association, a Radio & Records Station of the Year award winner, and a finalist for Station of the Year and the Crystal Award for Community Service from the National Association of Broadcasters.

The Study

The Survey Instrument

The study was a two-step process. First, an adaptation of Auter and Palmgreen's (2000) Audience Persona Interaction scale (API) and the PSI scale developed by Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985), was developed, moving from a television-centric instrument to reflect a radio audience use (Appendices A & B). For example, the PSI scale asked, "On an average week how many soap opera episodes do you watch?" The question was reworded for this study to ask, "In an average week, how many hours a week do you listen to the station?" The API scale uses simple, declarative statements, like "my favorite character reminds me of myself," and "I seem to have the same beliefs or attitudes as my favorite character." Those statements were reworded to seek the same information about their favorite announcer.

An online survey was prepared on Survey Monkey to measure the PSI and API of the station's listeners with its on-air personalities. The survey also collected basic demographic information, like age, gender, and education level, as well as whether they had ever supported the station. It also asked about listening habits, like length and time(s) of listening. The survey also allowed respondents to respond in their own words on questions seeking explanations: why the announcer was their favorite announcer, why they listened to the station,

and whether they would continue to listen to the station if the announcer was no longer on the air.

A link to the survey was inserted into an email to the station's affinity marketing list on two occasions. The station's affinity list was built over many years, with names and email addresses collected through a variety of means. A link on the station's website allows listeners to add their information to receive mailings from the station. Names and email addresses are collected on registration slips for prize giveaways at station events, with a check box that indicates they want to be included in the affinity list. Finally, phone operators ask callers if they wanted to receive station emails when they called in during on-air fund drives.

The first email with a survey link was sent to 9049 email addresses on March 12, 2014. A second email was sent on March 17, 2014 to 9026 email addresses from the same list thanking them for their participation if they had completed the survey and asking them to take the survey if they had not. A total of 687 people, a 7.6% completion rate, had responded to the survey when it was closed on March 21, 2014. Three respondents were prohibited from taking the survey because they didn't meet the minimum age requirement of 18.

The answers to the survey questions measuring PSI and API were given a weight value of 0-5 to provide a mean score to measure the strength of the parasocial relationship the respondent had with their stated favorite announcer.

No answer was scored as a 0; strongly disagree, 1; disagree, 2; neutral, 3; agree, 4; and strongly agree, 5. To negate survey fatigue and encourage respondents to think before answering, some questions were worded negatively and scored in the reverse direction, with strongly agree valued as 1 and strongly disagree a value of 5. No answer was still scored as 0. Answers were summed for the survey questions that measured the parasocial relationship level and divided by 20 to give an average scale for comparison of PSI/API for each of the research questions in the study.

To clarify the survey scale and its measure of parasocial relationship, it was assumed a score of 0 or 1 would be indicative of a non-listener, or someone who had no opinion about the announcers. Frankly, this would be an unexpected answer for a survey distributed to a station affinity list. Logic would dictate if the respondent were on the station's affinity list, the respondent would have some knowledge or contact with the station. In contrast, a score of 5 would be indicative of a super fan, or in the vernacular, a "stalker." This was also an unexpected answer, given the nature of audience in question: primarily middle class, married women of faith between 30 and 60 years of age.

This leaves scores; 2, 3, and 4. For this study, a score of 2 was assumed to express a range from dislike to a neutral statement of relationship, as indicated by its weighting in the Likert scale for the survey. The score of 3 was assumed to express a range from neutral to a statement of expressing some level of

parasocial relationship. A score of 4 was assumed to show a higher degree of parasocial relationship. Given the nature of the makeup of the affinity list, and an assumption of at least some knowledge of the station and its announcers by the respondents, mean scores between 2 and 3 would have been unexpected, with scores of 3 to 4 more likely and a score above 4 somewhat surprising, though a possible result for the more popular announcers.

Measuring On-air Self-disclosure

The second part of the case study involved station-provided scoped recordings of each of their on-air personalities, concurrent to the surveys being administered. A scoped recording is compiled by software that records station audio when the microphone in the studio is activated. This allows for recording of every word spoken on air during an air shift. Each of the day's audio files were then edited into separate audio files by a station production assistant for each of the announcers, and then edited into separate files for each announcing instance, or "break" in the radio vernacular. In the case of the morning show, which features two hosts on the air concurrently, their audio breaks included both voices. These recordings, or announcing instances, were the unit of measure for the second portion of the study.

In a typical hour on the station, this meant five to eight instances of announcing or breaks, with between five and eight minutes of audio per hour, depending on the shift in question. For instance, the morning show included a

newscast of two minutes at the beginning of each hour as a programming element, where all of the other shifts did not include a newscast. Each of the shifts included elements of community events, station identification, and weather information. The morning show (5-10 a.m.) and the afternoon show (4-7 p.m.) are referred to as drive time shifts, since many in the audience are on their way to and from work, school, errands, etc., and are listening in their cars. Both of those shifts had four traffic reports embedded in each hour. The station has no programming policies for the content of breaks for the on-air staff, other than each break should include station identification. Announcers are encouraged to share personal information on the air but are not required to do so by management.

Announcers who worked weekday shifts generated an average of 125 announcing instances for the collection period. One hour was dropped from each five-hour shift for weekday announcers, beginning with the first hour on the first day, hour two the second day, hour three the third day, hour four on the fourth and hour five the last day. Announcers who worked weekend-only shifts generated an average of 30 announcing instances over the collection period, and all of their audio was coded. This generated a total sample of 558 audio instances, more than 75% of the total audio captured. In the case of the weekday morning show, which featured a team of two announcers, each announcer's remarks were coded separately in each instance, resulting in 624

coding instances for the audio. Mechanical difficulties caused some announcing instances for the afternoon drive host (Travis) to be erased, which limited the capturing of his audio to between two and three hours each day. Allowances could have been made to capture more audio from Travis the following week for the study, but he and Michelle from the morning show left for Rwanda on a ten-day station sponsored mission trip that Friday. Study deadlines didn't permit that much delay. All of Travis' available audio was coded for this study.

The recordings were ordered chronologically by announcer in a separate folder. The folders were ordered alphabetically, and the announcing instances were then numbered sequentially so that each coder was listening to the same cut. The audio recordings were stored on a password protected Google drive folder that was shared with coders so they could listen to each listening instance, which they coded for self-disclosure by the announcer.

To examine H1 and H2, two trained coders, one of each gender, listened to the audio over the course of several days to limit fatigue. Both coders were between 50 and 55 years of age and college educated. Training was provided in advance of the study to clarify what constituted self-disclosure, answer questions about the coding sheets and how to mark them, as well as the mechanics of sharing the Google folder where the coding spreadsheets and audio were located.

To answer H1, *respondents will express a deeper parasocial relationship with radio personalities who self-disclose intimate details about themselves on the air compared to radio personalities who do not self-disclose*, announcing instances were coded for self-disclosure. The measurement unit was each announcing instance, with coders instructed to judge whether each instance included an element of self-disclosure or was purely informational, i.e. song title, station identification, weather, traffic, news, community event, etc. Even if the majority of the content was purely informative, if the instance included an opinion or other personal utterance, then it was coded as self-disclosure, since it gives an insight into the announcer's thoughts and opinions, i.e. self-disclosure. Here is an example of self-disclosure from Michelle, discussing her daughter's impending ear surgery:

As parents you would do anything for your kids, within reason, especially if it were a surgery. It's been determined that Addison, the 5-year-old, is going to have to have a hole in her ear she's had since December repaired. The doctor determined that yesterday. And Addison is totally freaked about it. Of course, she is only 5 years old. And what she's freaked out about the most is the mask that goes over her face for surgery. They are so good about it at Dr. Beck's office. They said, "You get a mask that's magic. It has magic air in it that makes you go to sleep and makes you wake up." And then they said, "Here's one you can take home and practice with that has stars on it." And when she comes in for surgery, she gets to paint a new mask of her own for surgery.

To answer H2, *respondents will express a deeper parasocial relationship with radio personalities who self-disclose emotional details about themselves on*

the air compared with radio personalities who self-disclose primarily informative details about themselves, those instances coded as self-disclosure were additionally scored as either informative or emotional. Informative self-disclosures deal with personal facts and information, whereas emotional self-disclosures reveal private feelings, opinions, and judgments. This is an example from Nichole that was coded as an informative self-disclosure.

89.5 KTSY, Matt Redman and Your Grace Finds Me. Nicole here with you. Have you got a great marriage? Wanna know how you can make it even better? It's the Family Life Weekend to Remember. I have been and I am telling you, it is... its marriage changing. It really, really is. It helps you to connect as a couple. What does God want your marriage to look like? We'd love to giveaway a registration to that and a hotel night. The cool thing is all you have to do to get into the drawing is share your favorite wedding photo with us. Or if you're engaged, your favorite engagement photo. And then add the little hash tag KTSYlove.

This is an example from Brian that was coded as an emotional self-disclosure.

When you look at life through a child's eyes, it changes your perspective, unless it just confuses you, which is what happened to me the other night. My 5- year-old daughter came out after bedtime playing, the, you know, the inevitable game of Whack-a-Mole, that game where the little animals pop up and you hit them on the head and they pop back down. That's kind of what bedtime is like at my house. Five-year-old came out and complained to me, "Da-a-a-ad! Jocelyn (our 8-year-old)... Jocelyn is hogging my favorite song." I'm... I'm not even positive what that means.

Although both disclosures reveal personal information, those involving emotional disclosures include feelings (confusion, changed perspective) and have been shown to generate greater intimacy in an interpersonal relationship

(Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Reis & Patrick, 1996). If parasocial relationships mirror real-life relationships, then this phenomenon should be evident in an announcer's on-air comments.

Coding sheets were converted to an SPSS data table, with self-disclosure coded as "0" no and "1" yes. In a separate column, informative and emotional details were coded as "0" no disclosure, "1" informative, and "2" emotional. Testing intercoder reliability for self-disclosure, the coders were found to have Kappa = 0.848 ($p < 0.001$), showing almost perfect agreement, according to Landis & Koch (1977). Testing for intercoder reliability for informative and emotional details, the coders were found to be Kappa = 0.656 ($p < 0.001$), which indicates substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

The responses of the two coders were averaged to provide two tallies, one for self-disclosure by announcers and the second a further measure for the amount of emotional self-disclosure. Then percentages were calculated for the percentage of self-disclosure compared to total audio instances and the percentage self-disclosures that were coded informative or emotional.

Chapter 4

Results

This study explored whether the amount and type of on-air self-disclosure, or the sharing of personal information, from announcers on a non-commercial CCM radio station affects the strength of PSR with listeners and whether the strength of the PSR has an effect on a listener's decisions to become a financial supporter.

The selected audio instances were coded for self-disclosure to answer H1 and H2.

Table 4-1 Audio coding tally & percentages

Announcer	Total Audio	Self Avg.	Info Avg.	Emo Avg.	Self %	Info %	Emo %
Dave	97	13	6.5	6.5	13%	50%	50%
Michelle	69	14.5	6.5	8	21%	45%	55%
Robert	110	6	2.5	3.5	5%	42%	58%
Travis	77	4	1.5	3.5	5%	38%	88%
Nichole	138	19	6.5	12.5	14%	34%	66%
Michael	35	1.5	0.5	1	4%	33%	67%
Brian	29	5.5	2	3.5	19%	36%	64%

Averages of the audio coding for self-disclosure show Michelle with the highest percentage of self-disclosure at 21%, followed by Brian at 19%, Nichole at 14%, and Dave at 13%.

The research questions and hypotheses were explored with a 30-item survey instrument. Twenty of the questions, questions 8–27, were an adaptation of Auter and Palmgreen's (2000) Audience Persona Interaction

scale (API) and the PSI scale developed by Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985), moving from a television centric instrument to reflect a radio centric instrument (Appendices A & B). Using SPSS v.19, a scale was created to measure parasocial relationship of the respondents for testing the research questions using respondents' answers to questions 8-27. Of the 687 respondents who participated, 155 chose not to answer some or all of these questions and were excluded from the scale. The results were tested for internal reliability, which is a measure based on the correlations between different items on the same survey. It measures whether several items that propose to measure the same construct in an instrument produce similar scores within the survey. Internal reliability of a survey instrument is usually expressed as a Cronbach's alpha, a statistic calculated from paired correlations between the survey items. The Cronbach's Alpha score was .941 (Table 4-2), which indicates very high internal reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

Table 4-2 Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.941	.943	20

Survey question #6 asked respondents to indicate their favorite announcer on the station, answering subsequent questions that gauged the strength of their parasocial relationship based on their choice of

favorite announcer. Of the 687 who took the survey, 525 indicated a favorite. Of the 687 who responded to the survey, 515 left comments on this question, indicating a strong interest in sharing their thoughts on their favorite announcer. Following are some of their unedited comments:

Being a woman and mom, it is easy to relate to Michelle's stories and observations and she is funny and entertaining

Thought hard to separate out Travis, I would say I appreciate his professional demeanor, and personal approach to relating to his audience. The stories that he shares make me feel connected.

Many who commented focused on their inability to pick a favorite because they "liked" more than one or all of the announcers. The following are some of those comments:

I also love Michelle Yeager and Travis Culver but it would only let me choose one. ;o) They are all awesome people on air as well as in person. I love that they are local and involved and personable. I feel like they are friends and family as well as a celebrity.

Actually you should have put the answer "mark all that apply" since ALL of them are wonderful and are a blessing. Travis is awesome at knowing the songs and the artists...Rock on!!!

He has both strong faith and questions like I do. He doesn't live in a "perfect" bubble where he never eats at McDonalds or watches only G rated movies about kittens.

Percentages of respondents' answers for the seven announcers are listed below (Table 4-3), with 40% (n=210) choosing Michelle, followed by Dave at 21.9% (n=115), and Travis with 19% (n=100).

Table 4-3 Who is your favorite announcer?

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Dave	115	16.7	21.9	21.9
	Michelle	210	30.6	40.0	61.9
	Robert	40	5.8	7.6	69.5
	Travis	100	14.6	19.0	88.6
	Nichole	8	1.2	1.5	90.1
	Michael	4	.6	.8	90.9
	Brian	48	7.0	9.1	100.0
	Total	525	76.4	100.0	
Missing	System	162	23.6		
Total		687	100.0		

H1 posited respondents would express a deeper parasocial relationship with radio personalities who self-disclose intimate details about themselves on the air compared to radio personalities who do not self-disclose. To test H1, a means table was generated (Table 4-4) between the PSI composite score and question #6, who is your favorite announcer.

Table 4-4 PSI scale mean & favorite announcer

PSI scale			
Who is your favorite announcer?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Dave	3.50	103	.383
Michelle	3.60	192	.445
Robert	3.50	36	.419
Travis	3.39	92	.547
Nichole	3.72	6	.273
Michael	3.03	3	.752
Brian	3.27	42	.817
Total	3.50	474	.506

Michelle was coded as the announcer with the greatest percentage of self-disclosure in audio coding, was chosen as the favorite announcer

by survey respondents, and had the second highest mean PSI score behind Nichole. The top four choices of favorite announcer all had a mean score above 3, indicating a better than neutral parasocial relationship score. Brian, Michelle, Nichole, and Dave were all coded as announcers who had the greatest percentages of self-disclosure on the air (Table 4-1). H1 is supported. Self-disclosure by announcers seems to affect the PSI level of survey respondents.

H2 posited respondents will express a deeper parasocial relationship with radio personalities who self-disclose emotional details about themselves on the air compared with radio personalities who self-disclose primarily informative details about themselves. Averaging of coding found Nichole had 12.5 emotional self-disclosures. Michelle was next with eight emotional self-disclosures. Dave was third and averaged 6.5 emotional self-disclosures. These three announcers had the highest three mean scores for the PSI survey score. The announcer with the lowest PSI survey mean score, Michael, was also the announcer with the least number of self-disclosure instances and the lowest emotional self-disclosures. H2 is supported. Emotional self-disclosure seems to affect the PSI level of survey respondents.

RQ1 asked to what extent does the measured parasocial relationship of respondents who have provided financial support to the

station differ from those who have not. Survey question #5 asked respondents if they had ever been a financial supporter of the station. A new variable was created (newgiving) excluding those who chose not to answer or skipped the question. Table 4-5 shows a mean score of 3.36, with those who have never supported the station significantly lower.

Table 4-5 PSI scale mean & giving

PSIscale				
newgiving	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
Yes	3.39	441	.763	.036
No	3.19	69	.797	.096
Total	3.36	510	.770	.034

An independent samples t-test for equality of means using the PSI scale answers and whether a respondent had supported the station was run and with equal variances assumed, the test showed significance with a 2-tailed score of .049 (Table 4-6).

Table 4-6 PSI scale & support correlation

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
									Lower	Upper
PSIscale	Equal variances assumed	.025	.874	1.975	508	.049	.196	.099	.001	.391

The correlation between parasocial relationship and giving is established in this study, but the difference in mean is 0.2, not a large amount by any measure. Perhaps this is a function of the number of

people who have never contributed to the station who took the survey. Only 69 of 510 who answered the question indicated they had never supported the station. In 2013, 6.3% of the station's weekly audience (2886 donors/45,900 weekly audience) were donors, which is the opposite of the make-up of the survey respondents. Perhaps if survey recruitment had occurred on-air, as well as through an email to the station affinity list, more non-donors would have taken the survey and a clearer correlation could have been established. The survey included a preponderance of station donors, which is probably indicative of an affinity list like the one used for the survey.

RQ2 was a multi-part question that asked to what extent the measured parasocial relationship of respondents differs based on respondent gender, age, educational level, and how much a respondent listens to the station.

RQ2a asked to what extent the measured parasocial relationship of respondents differs based on respondent gender. Survey question #29 asked for the respondent's gender. Like the support question, a new variable was created (newgender), excluding those who skipped the question or preferred not to answer. Table 4-7 shows the mean for this question was 3.36, with the mean for women slightly more and men slightly less.

Table 4-7 PSI scale mean & gender

PSI scale				
newgender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
Female	3.38	422	.751	.037
Male	3.27	104	.836	.082
Total	3.36	526	.769	.034

An independent samples t-test for equality of means using the PSI scale returned a 2-tailed significance score of .170, which was not significant. However, Nielsen (2014) indicates nationally, CCM stations maintain a two-thirds to one-third ratio of women to men. The study survey respondent ratio of women to men was four to one. The mean PSI score for men is 0.09 below the survey mean and 0.11 below the mean for women. In this study, it appears gender had a slight correlation with PSI mean scores, though not a statistically significant one.

RQ2b asked to what extent the measured parasocial relationship of respondents differs based on respondent age. Question #30 asked the respondent to choose between six categories that coincide with the age categories of standard media research, including a choice preferring not to answer. Like the support question, a new variable was created (newage) excluding those who skipped the question, or preferred not to an answer, as well as the 18-24 category (n=11) that were deemed outliers. Table 4-

8 shows a mean score for this question of 3.36, with most categories scoring very close to the mean.

Table 4-8 PSI scale mean & age

PSI scale				
newage	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
25-34	3.44	44	.520	.078
35-44	3.33	152	.829	.067
45-54	3.38	159	.799	.063
55-64	3.33	123	.738	.067
65+	3.39	38	.816	.132
Total	3.36	516	.774	.034

A one-way ANOVA test, comparing the newage category with the PSI scale, returned a significance score of .843. Category 25-34 mean score was slightly higher, but not a significant amount. It's interesting the youngest category scored the highest mean, since the CCM format general targets 35-54-year-old women.

RQ2c asked to what extent the measured parasocial relationship of respondents differs based on respondent educational level. Question 31 asked respondents to choose between five categories on their educational level, from some high school to graduate or professional school. A new variable was created (neweduc), excluding those who skipped the question, preferred not to answer or answered some high school (n=4), that were deemed outliers given the small number. Table 4-9 shows a mean score for this question of 3.36, with most categories scoring very close to the mean.

Table 4-9 PSI scale mean & education

PSI scale				
neweduc	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
High School	3.39	53	.733	.101
Some college	3.41	165	.675	.053
College grad	3.34	202	.810	.057
Grad or Prof	3.30	103	.866	.085
Total	3.36	523	.773	.034

A one-way ANOVA test comparing the neweduc category with the PSI scale returned a significance score of .454. In this study, education didn't seem to have a significant correlation with the differences in the mean scores. However, the distance between the highest mean (some college) and the lowest (graduate or professional degree) of 0.11 is interesting. Though not a significant difference, the more education a respondent claims the lower the mean PSI score.

RQ2d asked to what extent the measured parasocial relationship of respondents differs based on how much a respondent listens. Question #2 asked respondents to choose between five categories that best described the number of hours in an average week they listened to the station, from less than one hour to more than ten hours per week. Only 6.6% (n=45) chose not to answer this question. Table 4-10 shows a mean score for this question of 3.35, with a significant difference between the score of those who listen least (2.71) and those who listen most (3.51).

Clearly, those individuals who report more listening time with the station also expressed a stronger PSI mean.

Table 4-10 PSI scale mean & listening

PSI scale				
In an average week, how many hours a week do you listen?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
Less than 1	2.71	27	1.242	.239
1-3	3.20	125	.755	.068
4-6	3.42	133	.625	.054
7-9	3.40	91	.832	.087
10+	3.51	151	.675	.055
Total	3.35	527	.770	.034

Since it is a question of relationship between the amount of time and their parasocial relationship, a two-tailed Pearson bivariate correlation was run, returning a correlation score of .209, which was a significant correlation at the 0.01 level (Fig. 4-11).

Table 4-11 PSI scale & listening correlation

		PSI scale	In an average week, how many hours a week do you listen to the station?
PSI scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.209**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	532	527
In an average week, how many hours a week do you listen to the station?	Pearson Correlation	.209**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	527	642

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In this study, repeated listening leads to stronger parasocial relationship, which seems to confirm the interpersonal parallel of real-life relationships, since we tend to develop bonds with the people we spend time with. The difference between those who reported listening less than

an hour per week and those who reported more than ten hours per week was substantial, 2.71 compared to 3.51, a difference of .80 on the Likert scale rating, almost a full grade on the scale. Logically, you would expect this, since in a media rich environment, you wouldn't expect individuals to continue to listen to something that didn't meet their needs.

Another telling aspect of the data collected from the survey was a textual analysis of the key words in the respondents' comments about the announcers. One of the features of the SurveyMonkey platform allows for textual analysis of comments from respondents. They are listed below in rank order, established by the number of times the words were included in respondent remarks about their favorite announcer. All of the words describe various aspects of relationships and the feelings associated with those relationships.

- Funny
- Love
- Life
- Down to earth
- Sense of humor
- Upbeat
- Honesty
- Friend
- Familiar

Using their own words, respondents conveyed their own interpretation of their feelings about their favorite announcers. They chose words that probably echo their feelings about people in their own lives:

friend, honest, upbeat, down to earth, and love.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Horton and Wohl (1956) proposed we could have intimate relationships over a distance and focused their attention on television personas and techniques they used to simulate interpersonal communication through a mediated environment. In our modern, media-rich world, it seems a majority of our relationships are at a distance and are mediated in some fashion. We form strong opinions and feelings about public figures based on what we see and hear through secondary sources. Few of us live in the towns we were born in or are close enough to our families to talk with them face-to-face every day, and we spend a fair amount of our time and resources trying to bridge those distances with phones, computers, and digital devices to maintain those important relationships.

Uncertainty reduction and interpersonal process theories point to passive and active strategies that include observation, discussion about a subject, and finally interaction to alleviate uncertainty and build intimate relationships. Mediated parasocial interactions seem to mimic those same cognitive strategies to reduce uncertainty and develop relationships.

This study explored parasocial interaction and parasocial relationship development through the lens of relationships between a non-commercial CCM radio station and its audience. Results indicate the stronger the parasocial relationship between listeners and station announcers, the more likely they are to be supporters of the station (RQ1). One respondent shared this comment that provides a listener's view of the fundraising process: "They were doing a phone fundraiser. They made my day, inspired me, so I donated \$500." The findings of this case study could be of some benefit to managers and owners of non-commercial Christian radio stations, as they work to grow their stations. The connection of financial support in RQ1 and the support of H1 and H2 seems to indicate one of the ways stations can enhance the relationship they have with their audience is by encouraging their announcers to share more about themselves on the air and not to be afraid of sharing appropriate emotional content on the air.

The correlation between the amount of time a listener spends with the station and the strength of their parasocial relationship (RQ5) was significant at the 0.01 level, which to a radio station operator, is a given. Listeners, who have almost unlimited choices now for music, information, and entertainment, will choose to spend their time with media outlets that meet their needs. Uncertainty reduction (Reis & Shaver, 1988),

interpersonal process (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), and uses and gratifications research (Rubin, 1994) all indicate listeners will make active choices about their media usage to meet needs for education and information, entertainment, escape from daily life, social interaction, and identification with media characters. For CCM radio stations, these uses also likely include called para-community needs, to vicariously fellowship with a larger Christian community, and lifestyle management, using CCM radio to manage time, and emotional and spiritual moods (Woods, 1999).

This study shows a significant correlation between the time a respondent spent listening to the station and their parasocial relationship with their favorite announcer. There is also a correlation between their parasocial relationship and whether they choose to donate to their favorite radio station. This study also found the strength of their parasocial relationship isn't a function of respondent gender, age, or education level.

As a broadcast veteran, this resonates with my experience. As audience members spend time with your station, they grow accustomed to the kind of music they hear, with the amount and kind of information they find, and the kind of events and activities the station organizes for interaction with the audience. Listeners are not forced to listen to your radio station. In a media rich environment like American culture, they are free to choose from a wide variety of entertainment and information

sources. The fact they continue to choose your station and, after a season of relationship building, get involved as a financial supporter is a testament to the strength of the bond they form with the announcers and the station.

The study also shows station operators can take an active role in enhancing the creation and growth of parasocial relationships. Support for H1 and H2 shows that as announcers share their lives on the air, it will have an impact on their listeners, strengthen the bonds of their distant relationships, and could lead some to becoming financial supporters of the station. Several respondents commented on their surveys about what the station meant to them. One said: “Your station is a church to me. The music, the wonderful uplifting words from the DJ's. It always seems to get my attention on certain songs (I cry at all of them!). They minister to my heart and soul.” Another talked of her life experience and how the station was able to help her in a difficult season of her life: “When I began listening in 2005, I was a single mother of three and it was good to have a station that was safe and uplifting to listen to.”

One of the challenges presented by the study was the choice of a favorite announcer. Almost 25% (n=162) of the respondents didn't answer the question asking for a favorite announcer, while 514 answered the next question that asked them to explain why they were their favorite

announcer. These comments are typical of the responses received:

“Actually you should have put the answer ‘mark all that apply’ since ALL of them are wonderful and are a blessing. Travis is awesome at knowing the songs and the artists. Rock on!!!” And: “It is hard to pick a favorite. Everyone brings something different. I like how real everyone is. They go through real life situations.” And finally, this one seems to capture the essence of the study: “I also love Michelle and Travis, but it would only let me choose one. ;o) They are all awesome people on air as well as in person. I love that they are local and involved and personable. I feel like they are friends and family, as well as a celebrity.” Apparently the hardest part of the survey for the respondent was choosing a favorite.

There are, of course, limitations to this study. Since there has been little research on parasocial interaction and relationships in radio, the literature is scant on how studies should be organized and executed. One of the most interesting challenges in examining the data was the issue of the gender of the coder. This study used a male and a female coder to listen to the audio for self-disclosure. The intercoder reliability Kappa score for H1 (self-disclosure) was 0.848 ($p < 0.001$), which indicates near perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). Yet the Kappa score for H2 (emotional vs. informative) was 0.656 ($p < 0.001$); while indicating substantial agreement, it was an almost 20% difference in agreement.

The coders agreed on when self-disclosure occurred but disagreed more on whether it was an informative disclosure or emotional disclosure.

This was most evident in the case of Nichole. The male coder indicated most of Nichole's disclosures were informative and the female coder indicated most were emotional. Even though both hypotheses were supported because of the mean data from the survey, I was surprised at the difference between their coding of emotional content. Were those coding differences a coder-training problem or is there a gender difference in determining what is an informative or emotional self-disclosure? If gender bias is at work, then more coders should be incorporated in future studies to compare their results, with an eye towards determining bias. Perhaps an independent study could be undertaken with a limited number of audio cuts of self-disclosure and a larger study done to see if there is a gender bias on whether it's informative or emotional in nature when coded by a large group of individuals. The test could further test gender differences by having the same audio scripts recoded by male and female voices, to test whether the gender of the announcer makes a difference in how it is coded.

Further research should ensure training with more examples of disclosures to make sure coders are coding in the same manner. Coders for this study were in different locations and trained at separate times. No

audio examples of self-disclosure were included in the training because of a desire not to bias the coders in any way as to what they considered self-disclosure.

Only a week's worth of audio was captured for coding. During those five days, Michelle was absent two of those days: home sick one day and traveling to Africa for a station-sponsored mission trip the final day of the data collection period. The mission trip also captured much of the on-air chatter of the station the week leading up to their departure, since two air personalities, Michelle and Travis, were hosting the trip that included 30 listeners and volunteer medical personnel. This gave their daily chatter focus and could have affected the amount of self-disclosure they did during the study period and a "normal" day on the air. To further test the hypothesis of emotional self-disclosure, more audio must be captured over a longer period of time. This study generated more than a thousand audio instances, of which almost two thirds was chosen for coding. The task would be daunting, but if relationships are developed over time, then self-disclosure should be monitored over a longer period of time.

Another aspect of this study not explored, but critical to a radio station and an announcer's exposure to an audience member, is when the announcer is on the air. Most radio listening occurs away from home

during morning and afternoon drive (Nielsen, 2014). The favorite announcers in rank order were Michelle, Dave, and Travis. Michelle and Dave host the morning show, and Travis hosts the afternoon drive show. Are they the most popular because they host the prime shifts? Or are they in the drive shifts because they've demonstrated they are popular with the audience? Drive time shifts also tend to be information focused, filled with traffic, weather and news reports. Evening and weekend shifts have more content opportunities for announcers to fill. Listener lifestyles are probably more relaxed during those shifts, as opposed to the busy beginnings and endings of the work day. But does that relaxation bring less attention to what's happening on the radio? All areas for further study.

Another aspect for future study would look at the station as a whole, not just the announcers. One of the survey questions asked for reasons why they listened, choosing all that applied. Overwhelmingly, music was the number one reason, with 99.23% of the respondents selecting it. Announcers were second with 33.90%, and local events and information third with 25.42%. Another question asked if they would continue listening even if the announcer no longer worked there, and 97.43% responded yes, with 58.05% of them taking the time to leave an explanation. This listener comment typifies many of their comments: "I am

not listening for one person but for the whole package. I find comfort and encouragement in the music.” Clearly more than parasocial relationship is at work when a listener chooses a favorite radio station.

This study focused on a single station. Though there was an almost 7% rate of completion from 9000+ individuals who were invited to take the survey, perhaps more could be learned with a broader spectrum of stations, with a variety of formats and target audience groups. This study was originally proposed as a study of five stations across the United States in a variety of different size markets, but station leadership and personnel changes, technical issues for audio data collection, and time made that impossible. Further study could broaden the scope of the research, perhaps even the inclusion of a national network like KLOVE or AIR1, which tends to capture the best talent available and is heard by millions of people a week.

Finally, this study, though it focused on a non-commercial Christian radio station, didn’t measure the role faith plays in media choice and its role in strengthening a parasocial relationship between a listener and announcer. Woods (1999) study showed Christians, and members of other faith communities, make choices that support their cultural perspective and tend to seek interaction with like-minded individuals occasionally, as evidenced by attendance at religious services and

activities. A majority of the comments in the “why you listen” section of the survey included a comment about various aspects of their spiritual life and the role the station plays in fulfilling those needs. For example: “It helps me stay in touch with the person that God wants me to be. The music is so uplifting and makes me feel really good when I listen to it.” Future research may want to explore the expression of faith in announcer self-disclosures, as it relates to building parasocial relationships with audience members.

As a three-decade broadcast veteran and builder of four radio stations, most of the ideas I explored in this study are ideas station operators wrestle with every day. The first time I heard about parasocial interaction in a graduate class, surrounded by a gaggle of fresh twenty-somethings, my internal response was, “Duh. They have a name for it?” Those who have been in the broadcast trenches for more than a few years have tried and failed many times in discovering what works and doesn’t work on air. The mantra in all of my stations, those I’ve built and managed, and those I have consulted through the years has varied little. “It’s always about relationships.” It was gratifying to me to discover evidence proving some of my deepest broadcast assumptions, assumptions based on layers of managerial scars, as my stations have battled for market share against larger and better funded radio groups.

The joy of my new career as a media professor and scholar is I can spend my days exploring my favorite question, "Why?"

Appendix A
Survey Questions

Surveys were collected online using Survey Monkey software.

Respondents were encouraged to participate in the study with emails from the station to their affinity marketing mailing lists which contained a link to the survey.

1. In an average week, how many hours a week do you listen to (station)?
 - a. Less than 1
 - b. 1-3
 - c. 4-6
 - d. 7-9
 - e. 10+
2. When do you usually listen to (station)? Mark all that apply.
 - a. Morning drive 6a-10a
 - b. Midday 10a-3p
 - c. Afternoon drive 3p-7p
 - d. Evenings 7p-Midnight
 - e. Overnight Midnight – 5a
 - f. Weekends
3. Why do you listen to (station)? Mark all that apply.
 - a. Music
 - b. Programs
 - c. News & information
 - d. Local event information
 - e. Announcers
 - f. Other reasons (box for comments)
4. Have you ever been a financial supporter of (station)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to answer
5. Who is your favorite announcer on (station)?
(Button or drop down of all of announcers heard on the (station))
6. Explain, in your own words, why this announcer is your favorite.
(comment box)

7. When my favorite announcer tells me how he or she feels about what's happening in the world, it helps me make up my own mind.
8. I feel sorry for my favorite announcer when he or she makes a mistake.
9. When I'm listening to the radio, I feel like I'm excluded from their group.
10. I like to compare my ideas with what my favorite announcer says.
11. I like hearing the voice of my favorite announcer in my home and car.
12. My favorite announcer makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with friends.
13. I think my favorite announcer is a natural, down-to-earth person.
14. My favorite announcer keeps me company when the radio is on.
15. I don't look forward to listening to my favorite announcer.
16. If my favorite announcer were on at a different time occasionally, I would try and listen to him or her.
17. When my favorite announcer is on the air, he or she seems to understand the kinds of things I want to know.
18. I sometimes make remarks to my favorite announcer when I'm listening.
19. If there were a story about my favorite announcer in the newspaper or on a website, I wouldn't take the time to read it.
20. I don't really miss listening to my favorite announcer when he or she is on vacation.
21. I would like to meet my favorite announcer in person.
22. I think of my favorite announcer as an old friend.
23. I make it a point to go to station public events to meet my favorite announcer, or in hope of meeting my favorite announcer.
24. My favorite announcer doesn't remind me of myself in any way.
25. I seem to have the same beliefs or attitudes as my favorite announcer.
26. I can identify with my favorite announcer.

27. Would you continue to listen to (station) if your favorite announcer no longer worked there?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Please explain why (comment box)

28. Gender

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. No answer

29. Age

- a. 18-24
- b. 25-34
- c. 35-44
- d. 45-54
- e. 55-64
- f. 65+
- g. Prefer not to answer

30. Education

- a. Some high school
- b. High school graduate
- c. Some college
- d. College graduate
- e. Graduate school & higher
- f. Prefer not to answer

Respondents answered questions 7-26 with a five-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Most questions will also offer a no answer or skip option. Questions 9, 15, 19, 20, and 24 were worded negatively to discourage survey fatigue and were scored in the reverse direction statistically. Questions 7-26 were randomized with each survey participant to further alleviate survey bias.

Appendix B

PSI & API Original Questions

Rubin, Perse & Powell (1985) Questionnaire

1. On an average week how many soap opera episodes do you watch?
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four
 - e. Five
2. Please name your favorite soap opera?
3. Identify two characters one you like and one you dislike?
4. Explain why you like the character you chose?
5. My favorite soap opera character makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
6. If my favorite soap opera character appeared on another TV program, I would watch that program.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
7. I see my favorite soap opera character as a natural down -to-earth person.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
8. My favorite soap opera character seems to understand the kinds of things I want to know.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree

- c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
9. If I saw my favorite soap opera character in a newspaper or magazine I would read it.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
10. I would like to meet my favorite soap opera character in person.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
11. I feel sorry for my favorite soap opera character when he or she makes a mistake.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
12. My favorite soap opera character keeps me company when I am lonely.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all
13. I would rather watch my favorite daytime soap opera than watch anything else on TV.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Not at all

14. Whenever I am unable to watch my favorite soap opera, I really miss it.
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not at all
15. Watching my favorite soap opera is one of the more important things I do each day.
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not at all
16. My soap opera lets me see how other people live.
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not at all
17. My favorite soap opera helps me understand some of the problems other people have.
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not at all
18. My favorite soap opera presents things as they really are in life.
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not at all

Auter & Palmgreen (2000) API Scale

FAV reminds me of myself.

I have the same qualities as FAV

I seem to have the same beliefs or attitudes of FAV

I have the same problems as FAV

I can imagine myself as FAV

I can identify with FAV

I would like to meet the actor who played FAV

I would watch the actor on another program

I enjoyed trying to predict what FAV would do.

I hoped achieved his or her goals.

I care about what happens to FAV.

I like hearing the voice of FAV.

CHARS interactions similar to mine with friends.

CHARS interactions similar to mine with family.

My friends are like CHARs.

I'd enjoy interacting with CHARs and my friends at same time.

While watching show, I felt included in the group

I can relate to CHARs attitudes.

I wish I could handle problems as well as FAV.

I like the way FAV handles problems.

I would like to be more like FAV.

I usually agreed with FAV.

FAV = My favorite character from the show I just watched

CHARs = The characters from the show I just watched

Appendix C

Coding Instructions & Coding Sheet

Coding Instructions

Samples of 558 announcing instances will be coded for self-disclosure of personal, intimate information. A spreadsheet has been provided for each announcer and each day. In the instance of the morning show, code each announcer separately. The measurement unit is each announcing instance. Judge whether each instance included an element of self-disclosure or was purely informational. Purely informational might include a song title, station identification, weather, traffic, news, community event, etc., then code it “No”. If the instance reveals personal, intimate information, then code it “Yes.” If the majority of the content was purely informative, but included an opinion or other personal utterance, for instance “I love that song and this is why,” then it should be coded “Yes,” since it gives an insight into the announcer’s thoughts and opinions, i.e. self-disclosure. Use a separate sheet for each announcer.

Those instances coded as self-disclosure of personal information (Yes), would be further scored as either informative or emotional information. Informative self-disclosures deal with personal facts and information; where emotional self-disclosures reveal private feelings, opinions and judgments. For example, “Today is my birthday” would be an example of personal fact. “My mother was diagnosed with cancer last

week and I'm scared and feeling overwhelmed" would be scored as an emotional self-disclosure. Also code instances of direct audience interaction, e.g. phone calls on air, guests in studio or at remote locations with a yes or no.

Coding sheet

Announcer
Coding Sheet
Coder Initials

Transcript #	Self-Disclosure		If Yes, Info or Emo		Direct Interaction?	
	No	Yes	Info	Emo	Yes	No
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
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Biographical Information

Mike is a man of many hats. His first and favorite hat is the worn, faded, and cherished hat he wears as husband of Wanda (32 years and counting), and dad to Caleb and Daniel. Although he is always wearing that hat, Mike has spent the past four years as founder and general manager of KJRN in Keene, TX. From 1990-2010, he built and served as general manager of KTSY in Boise, ID. KTSY is a Christian music station that was honored as Station of the Year by the Gospel Music Association three times. KTSY was also honored as Station of the Year by Radio & Records, as well as a finalist for the Marconi and Crystal Service Awards from the National Association of Broadcasters. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Communication from Southwestern Adventist University (1981), and with the completion of this thesis, a Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Texas at Arlington (2014).

He has been working for more than 36 years in the communication field, building, managing, and consulting radio stations. Mike has also been in the classroom, teaching as an instructor in the Communication Department at Andrews University in Michigan in the 1980's, and returned to his alma mater in 2010 as an instructor in the Communication Department at Southwestern Adventist University. He will follow his

mentor and first radio boss as the chair of the Communication Department at Southwestern in the fall of 2014.